

The
HOLY BIBLE
English Version for the Deaf



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Translated from the original languages.



BAKER BOOK HOUSE

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The New Testament: Easy-to-Read Version
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Books of the Old Testament

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Books of the New Testament

Book	Abbreviation	Page	Book	Abbreviation	Page
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Mark	<i>Mk.</i>	1215	2 Timothy	<i>2 Tim.</i>	1461
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Philippians	<i>Phil.</i>	1439	3 John	<i>3 Jn.</i>	1508
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1 Thessalonians	<i>1 Th.</i>	1448	Revelation	<i>Rev.</i>	1511
2 Thessalonians	<i>2 Th.</i>	1452			

Preface

This version of the Bible has been prepared to meet the special needs of the deaf. Whether it is published as the English Version for the Deaf or the Easy-to-Read Version, the text is the same. People who can hear are not usually aware of the particular problems that the deaf face in reading standard English. Hearing persons learn English largely through oral conversation. The deaf do not have this advantage, so their experience with the language is severely limited. It is this limited experience with the spoken language that causes most of the problems the deaf face in learning to read. But the deaf are not the only ones with limited language experience. Children, people who learn English as a foreign language, and many others face similar difficulties in reading. This specialized English version is designed to help such people overcome or avoid the most common obstacles to reading with understanding.

One of the basic ideas that guided the work on this version of the Scriptures was that good translation is good communication. The main concern of the translators was always to communicate to the reader the message of the Biblical writers as effectively and as naturally as the original writings did to people in that time. Faithful translation is not just matching words in a dictionary. It is a process of expressing the original message in a form that will not only have the same meaning, but will sound as relevant, attract the same interest, and have the same impact today as it did thousands of years ago.

Effective communication, then, was very important to the translators of this text. This desire to communicate did not make accuracy any less important, but "accuracy" was understood to be the faithful representation of ideas, not the exact correspondence of formal linguistic features.

The writers of Scripture, especially those who produced the New Testament writings, showed by the language style they used that they were interested in good communication. The translators of this English version considered this an important example to follow. So they worked to convey to their special audience the meaning of the Biblical text in a form that would be simple and natural. They used language that, instead of working as a barrier to understanding, would provide a key to unlock the truths of the Scriptures to a large segment of the English-speaking world.

Several special features are used in this translation to aid understanding. Brief explanations or synonyms sometimes follow difficult or ambiguous words in the text. These explanatory words are italicized within parentheses. Words or phrases that need fuller explanation are followed by an asterisk (*) and explained in footnotes at the bottom of the page. In addition, Scripture quotations are identified and variant readings are frequently given in the footnotes. Occasionally, words or statements that are implied by the context are supplied in the text to make the meaning clear. Such explanatory words or phrases are marked by half-brackets, *⌈*⌋.

Introduction

The word *Bible* comes from a Greek word meaning “books.” The Bible is actually two collections of books, often referred to as the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament.” The word translated “testament” was used to mean a “covenant” or “agreement.” It refers to God’s promise to bless his people. The Old Testament is the collection of writings that relate to the agreement God made with the Jewish people (Israel) in the time of Moses. The New Testament is the collection of writings that relate to the agreement God made with all people who believe in Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament writings give an account of God’s great acts in dealing with the Jewish people and reveal God’s plan for using those people to bring his blessings to the whole world. Those writings look forward to the coming of a Savior (or “Messiah”) that God would send to accomplish his plan. The New Testament writings are a sequel to the Old Testament story. They describe the coming of that Savior (Jesus Christ) and the meaning of his coming for all mankind. The Old Testament is important for understanding the New Testament, since it provides the necessary background. And the New Testament completes the story of salvation that began in the Old Testament.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament writings are a collection of thirty-nine different books produced by many different authors. They were written mainly in Hebrew, the language of ancient Israel. There are a few sections in Aramaic, the official language of the Babylonian empire. Portions of the Old Testament were written over 3,500 years ago, and more than 1,000 years passed between the writing of the first book and the last. In this collection there are books of law, history, prose, songs, poetry, and teachings from wise men.

The Old Testament is often divided into three main sections: the Law, the Prophets, and the Holy Writings. The Law contains five books called “The Five Books of Moses.” The first book is Genesis. It tells about the beginning of the world as we know it, the first man and woman, and their first sin against God. It tells about the Great Flood and the family God saved through that flood, and it tells about the beginnings of the nation of Israel, the people God chose to use for a special purpose.

THE STORY OF ABRAHAM

God made an agreement with Abraham, a great man of faith. In that agreement God promised to make Abraham the father of a great nation and to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan. Abraham was circumcised to show that he accepted the agreement, and circumcision became the proof of the agreement between God and his people. Abraham did not know how God would do the things he had promised, but Abraham trusted God. This pleased God very much.

God told Abraham to leave his home among the Hebrews of Mesopotamia and led him to the promised land, Canaan (also called Palestine). In his old age Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had a son named Jacob. Jacob (also called Israel) had twelve sons and a daughter. This family became the nation of Israel, but it never forgot its tribal origin. It continued to refer to itself as the twelve tribes (or "family groups") of Israel—descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, and Benjamin. The three main ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel)—are known as the "fathers" or "patriarchs" of Israel.

Abraham was also a "father" of another kind. Many times in ancient Israel, God called certain people to be his spokesmen. These spokesmen, or prophets, were God's representatives to the people. Through the prophets God gave the people of Israel promises, warnings, laws, teachings, lessons drawn from past experiences, and lessons based on future events. Abraham "the Hebrew" is the first prophet mentioned in the Scriptures.

ISRAEL FREED FROM SLAVERY

The family of Jacob (Israel) grew to include about 70 of his direct descendants. One of his sons, Joseph, became a high official in Egypt. Times were hard, so Jacob and his family moved to Egypt, where food was plentiful and life was easier. This tribe of Hebrews grew to a small nation, and the Pharaoh (the king of Egypt) made slaves of these people. The book of Exodus tells about how finally, after 400 years, God used the prophet Moses to free the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt and take them back to Palestine. The price for freedom was high; but it was the Egyptians who had to pay. The Pharaoh and all the families of Egypt lost their firstborn sons before the Pharaoh finally agreed to let the people go free. The firstborn had to die so that the people could be freed—and the people of Israel later remembered this in many ways in their worship and sacrifices.

The people of Israel were ready for their trip to freedom. They had dressed for the escape from Egypt. Each family killed and roasted a lamb. They put the blood from the lamb on their doorposts as a special sign to God. They hurriedly baked bread without yeast and ate their meal. That night the Angel

of the Lord went through the land. If the blood of the lamb was not on the doorposts, the firstborn of that family died. The people of Israel were freed. But as the slaves were about to leave Egypt, the Pharaoh changed his mind. He sent his army to catch the Israelite slaves and bring them back, but God saved his people. God split the Red Sea, led his people through to freedom on the other side, and destroyed the pursuing army of Egypt. Then, somewhere on the Arabian peninsula, at a mountain in the Sinai desert, God made a special agreement with those people.

THE LAW OF MOSES

God's rescue of the people of Israel and his agreement with them at Sinai set this nation apart from all others. This agreement contained promises and laws for the people of Israel. A part of this agreement, known as the Ten Commandments, was written by God on two stone tablets and given to the people. These commands contain the basic principles for the kind of life God expected the people of Israel to live. They cover an Israelite's duty to his God, his family, and his fellow-man.

The Ten Commandments and the rest of the rules and teachings given at Mount Sinai became known as "the Law of Moses" or simply "the Law." Many times these terms are used to refer to the first five books of the Scriptures and often to the entire Old Testament.

Besides the Ten Commandments and other rules of conduct, the Law of Moses contains rules about priests, sacrifices, worship, and holy days. These rules are found in the book of Leviticus. According to the Law of Moses, all priests and their helpers came from the tribe of Levi. These helpers were called "Levites." The most important priest was called the High Priest.

The Law includes instructions for building the Holy Tent ("tabernacle"), or Meeting Tent, the place the people of Israel went to worship God. It also has instructions for making all the things to be used in their worship. This prepared the Israelites for the building of the temple, the holy building in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, where the people would later go to worship God. The rules about sacrifices and worship forced the people to see that they sinned against each other and against God. But they also gave the people a way to be forgiven and re-united with one another and with God. These sacrifices prepared the way for a better understanding of the sacrifice God was preparing to give for all mankind.

The Law contained instructions for celebrating a number of holy days or festivals. Each festival had its own special meaning. Some festivals were happy occasions to celebrate special times of the year, such as the harvest festivals of First Fruits, Shabuoth (Pentecost or the Festival of Weeks), and Succoth (the Festival of Shelters).

Some festivals were for remembering the wonderful things God had done for his people. Passover was such a festival. Each family relived the escape from Egypt. The people sang songs of praise to God. A lamb was slaughtered and the meal prepared. Each cup of wine and morsel of food reminded the people of the things God had done to save them from a life of pain and sadness.

Other festivals were very serious. Every year, on the Day of Atonement, the people had to remember the many bad things they had done to others and to God. This was a day of sadness, and the people did not eat. But on that day the High Priest offered special sacrifices to cover over, or atone for, their sins.

The agreement between God and Israel was very important to the writers of the Old Testament. Almost all of the books of the Prophets and Holy Writings are based on the fact that the nation of Israel, and every citizen of Israel, had made a very special agreement with their God. They called it the "Agreement of the Lord" or simply "the Agreement." Their books of history interpret events in light of the Agreement: If the individual or nation was faithful to God and the Agreement, then God rewarded them. If the people abandoned the Agreement, then God punished them. God sent his prophets to remind the people of their agreement with God. The poets of Israel sang of the wonderful things God did for his obedient people, and they mourned over the pain and punishments that came to those who disobeyed God. These writers based their concepts of right and wrong on the teaching of the Agreement. And when innocent people suffered, the poets struggled to understand why.

THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The story of ancient Israel is the story of the people abandoning God, God rescuing the people, the people turning back to God and eventually abandoning God again. This cycle began immediately after the people accepted God's Agreement, and it was repeated again and again. At Mount Sinai the people of Israel agreed to follow God, and then they rebelled and were forced to wander 40 years in the desert. Finally, Moses' helper, Joshua, led the people into the promised land. There was an initial conquest and a partial settling of the land of Israel. For the first few centuries after this settlement, the people were governed by local leaders called judges.

Eventually, the people wanted a king. The first king was Saul. Saul did not obey God, so God chose a shepherd boy named David to be the new king. The prophet Samuel came and poured oil on his head, anointing him king of Israel. God promised David that the future kings of Israel would be his descendants from the tribe of Judah. David conquered the city of Jerusalem

and made it his capital and the future site of the temple. He organized the priests, prophets, song writers, musicians, and singers for the temple worship. David even wrote many of the songs (or psalms) himself, but God did not let him build the temple.

When David was old and about to die, he made his son Solomon king of Israel. David warned his son to always follow God and obey the Agreement. As king, Solomon built the temple and expanded Israel's borders. At this time Israel was at the height of its glory. Solomon became famous. Israel became strong.

JUDAH AND ISRAEL~THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

At Solomon's death there was civil strife, and the nation was divided. The northern ten tribes called themselves Israel. The southern tribes called themselves Judah. (The modern term "Jew" comes from this name.) Judah remained loyal to the Agreement, and David's dynasty (family of kings) continued ruling in Jerusalem until Judah was finally conquered and its people led away into exile by the Babylonians.

In the northern kingdom (Israel) several dynasties came and went, because the people did not follow the Agreement. The kings of Israel had several capital cities at various times, the last of which was Samaria. In order to strengthen their hold on the people, the kings of Israel changed the way to worship God. They chose new priests and they built two new temples: one at Dan (on the northern border of Israel) and the other at Bethel (along Israel's border with Judah). There were many wars between Israel and Judah.

During this time of civil war and troubles, God sent many prophets to Judah and Israel. Some of the prophets were priests; others were farmers. Some were advisors to kings; others lived a much simpler life. Some of the prophets wrote their teachings or prophecies; many others did not. But all the prophets came preaching of justice, fairness, and the need to depend on God for help.

Many prophets warned that the people would be defeated and scattered if they did not turn back to God. Some of these prophets saw visions of future glories as well as future punishments. Many of them looked forward to the time when a new king would come to rule the kingdom. Some saw this king as a descendant of David who would lead the people of God into a new Golden Age. Some spoke of this king as ruling forever over an eternal kingdom. Others saw him as a servant who would suffer many things in order to bring his people back to God. But all of them saw him as the Messiah, the one anointed (chosen) by God to bring in the new age.

THE DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH

The people of Israel did not listen to God's warnings, so in 722/721 B.C. Samaria fell to the invading Assyrians. The people of Israel were taken from their homes and scattered throughout the Assyrian empire, lost forever to their brothers and sisters in Judah. The Assyrians then brought in foreigners to re-settle the land of Israel. These people were taught about the religion of Judah and Israel, and many of them tried to follow the Agreement. These people came to be known as the Samaritans. The Assyrians tried to invade Judah. Many cities fell to the invaders, but God saved Jerusalem. The defeated king of Assyria returned to his homeland, and there he was assassinated by two of his sons. So Judah was saved.

For a short time the people of Judah changed. They began to obey God for a short time, but they too were finally defeated and scattered. The nation of Babylon rose to power and invaded Judah. At first they took only a few important people away as captives. But a few years later, in 587/586 B.C., they returned to destroy Jerusalem and the temple. Some of the people escaped to Egypt, but most of them were taken as slaves to Babylon. Again God sent prophets to the people, and they began to listen. It seems that the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon brought about a real change in the people. The prophets spoke more and more about the new king and his kingdom. One of the prophets, Jeremiah, even spoke of a New Agreement. This New Agreement would not be written on tablets of stone, but would be in the hearts of God's people.

THE JEWS RETURN TO PALESTINE

Meanwhile, Cyrus came to power over the Medo-Persian empire and conquered Babylon. Cyrus allowed people to return to their homelands. So after 70 years of exile, many of the people of Judah went back home. The people tried to rebuild their nation, but Judah remained small and weak. The people built the temple again, although it was not as beautiful as the one Solomon had built. Many of the people truly turned to God and began studying the Law, the writings of the prophets, and the other holy writings. Many men became scribes (special scholars), who made copies of the Scriptures. Eventually, these men organized schools for studying the Scriptures. The people began meeting together on the Sabbath (Saturday) to study, pray, and worship God together. In their synagogues (meetings) they studied the Scriptures, and many people began looking for the Messiah to come.

In the West, Alexander the Great gained control of Greece and soon conquered the world. He spread the Greek language and the customs and culture of Greece to many parts of the world. When he died, his kingdom was divided, and soon another empire grew and gained control of a large part of the known world, including Palestine, where the people of Judah lived.

The new rulers, the Romans, were often cruel and harsh, and the Jews were proud and defiant. In these troubled times there were many Jews who were looking for the Messiah to come in their own lifetime. The Jews wanted to be ruled only by God and the Messiah that God promised to send them. They did not understand that God planned to save the world through the Messiah. They thought that God's plan was to save the Jews from the world! Some Jews were content to wait for God to send his Messiah. But others decided to "help" God establish his new kingdom. These Jews were called "Zealots." The Zealots tried to fight against the Romans and often killed other Jews that cooperated with the Romans.

THE JEWISH RELIGIOUS GROUPS

By the first century B.C., the Law of Moses had become extremely important to the Jews. The people had studied and argued over the Law. The people understood the Law in different ways, but many Jews were ready to die for that Law. There were three major religious groups among the Jews, and there were scribes (lawyers or scholars) in each group.

The Sadducees

One of the groups was called the Sadducees. This name probably comes from the name Zadok, the High Priest in King David's time. Many of the priests and the people in authority were Sadducees. These men accepted only the Law (the five books of Moses) as their authority in religious matters. The Law taught many things about the priests and sacrifices, but it did not teach about life after death. So the Sadducees did not believe in people being raised from death.

The Pharisees

Another group was called the Pharisees. This name comes from a Hebrew word meaning "to interpret (explain)" or "to separate." These men tried to teach or interpret the Law of Moses to the common people. The Pharisees believed that there was an oral tradition going back to Moses' time. They believed that men of each generation could interpret the Law in a way that would allow it to meet the needs of that generation. This meant that the Pharisees could accept not only the Law of Moses as their authority, but also the Prophets, the Holy Writings, and even their own traditions. These men tried very hard to follow the Law and their traditions. So they were very careful about what they ate and what they touched. They were careful about washing their hands and bathing. They also believed that people would be raised from death, because they understood many of the prophets to say that would happen.

The Essenes

The third major group was the Essenes. Many of the priests in Jerusalem did not live the way God wanted them to. Also, the Romans had appointed many of the High Priests, and some of these men were not qualified according to the Law of Moses. Because of this, the Essenes did not think the worship and sacrifices were being done properly in Jerusalem. So the Essenes moved out into the Judean desert to live. They formed their own community, where only other Essenes could come and live. The Essenes fasted and prayed and waited for God to send the Messiah and purify the temple and the priesthood.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

God had begun his plan. He had chosen a special nation. He had made an Agreement with those people that would prepare them to understand his justice and his goodness. Through prophets and poets he had revealed his plan to bless the world by establishing a perfect spiritual "kingdom" based on a new and better Agreement. This plan would begin with the coming of the promised Messiah. The prophets had spoken of his coming in great detail. They had told where the Messiah would be born, the type of person he would be, and the work he would have to do. It was now time for the Messiah to come and begin the New Agreement.

The writings of the New Testament describe how God's New Agreement was revealed and put into effect by Jesus, who was the Christ (meaning "the Anointed One," the Messiah). They teach that this New Agreement was to be for all people. And they tell how people in the first century responded to God's gracious offer of love and became a part of the New Agreement. These writings give instructions to God's people about how to live in this world. They also describe the blessings that God promises his people for a full and meaningful life here and for life with him after death.

The New Testament writings include twenty-seven different "books" by at least eight different writers. All of them wrote in Greek, which was widely spoken in the first-century world. More than half of the total writing was done by four "apostles," men chosen by Jesus to be his special representatives or helpers. Three of these, Matthew, John, and Peter, were among the twelve closest followers of Jesus during his life on earth. The other writer, Paul, was chosen as an apostle later by Jesus through a miraculous appearance.

The first four books, called "Gospels," are separate accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ. Generally, these books emphasize Jesus' teaching, the purpose of his appearance on earth, and the crucial significance of his death, rather than just the historical facts of his life. This is especially true of the fourth book, the Gospel of John. The first three Gospels are very similar

in content. In fact, much of the material in one is found in one or both of the others. Each writer, however, is writing to a different audience and seems to have a slightly different goal in view.

The four Gospels are followed by Acts, a history of the events following the death of Jesus. It describes how God's offer of love to all people was announced throughout the world by Jesus' followers. It tells how the proclaiming of this "gospel" or "Good News" resulted in the widespread acceptance of Christian faith throughout Palestine and the Roman world. The book of Acts was written by Luke, an eyewitness of much that he recorded. Luke was also the author of the third Gospel. His two books make a logical unit, Acts being the natural sequel to his account of the life of Jesus.

Following Acts, there is a collection of letters written to individuals or groups of Christians. These letters were sent from Christian leaders such as Paul and Peter, two of Jesus' apostles. These letters were written to help the people of that time deal with problems they were facing. They serve to inform, correct, teach, and encourage not only those people but all Christians in regard to their faith, their life together, and their life in the world.

The final book of the New Testament, Revelation, is different from all the other books. It uses highly figurative language and tells of visions seen by the author, the apostle John. Many of the figures and images are from the Old Testament and can best be understood by comparing them to the Old Testament writings. This last book assures Christians of ultimate victory over the forces of evil through the power of God and Jesus Christ, their leader and helper.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE MODERN READER

Today's reader of the Bible should keep in mind that these books were written thousands of years ago for people who lived in a culture very different from our own. Generally, the writings focus on principles that are universally true, though many of the historical accounts, illustrations they use and references they make can only be understood with some knowledge of the time and culture in which they lived. For example, Jesus told a story about a man sowing grain in a field that had different types of soil conditions. Those exact conditions may be unfamiliar to a person today, but the lesson Jesus draws from the example fits people in any time or place.

The modern reader may find the world of the Bible somewhat strange. The customs, the attitudes, the way people talk may be quite unfamiliar. It is only reasonable to evaluate these things by the standards of that time and place, not by modern standards. It is also important to note that the Bible was not written as a book of science. It was written mainly to describe

historical events and present the significance of those events for mankind. It's teachings involve universal truths that are beyond the realm of science. It remains relevant even in this modern age, because it deals with people's basic spiritual needs, which never change.

Any person who reads the Bible objectively can expect to gain many benefits. He will acquire knowledge about the history and culture of the ancient world. He will learn about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and what it means to be his follower. He will gain basic spiritual insights and learn practical lessons for living a dynamic and joy-filled life. He will find answers to life's most difficult questions. There are, therefore, many good reasons for reading this book, and the person who reads it with an open and inquisitive mind will likely discover God's purpose for his life.

The Old Testament

Genesis

THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD

The First Day—Light

1 God made the sky and earth. At first, ²the earth was completely empty; nothing was on the earth. Darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit moved over* the water. ³Then God said, "Let there be light!"* And light began to shine. ⁴God saw the light, and he knew it was good. Then God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵God named the light "day," and he named the darkness "night."

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the first day.

The Second Day—Sky

⁶Then God said, "Let there be air* to separate the water into two parts!" ⁷So God made the air and separated the water. Some of the water was above the air, and some of the water was below the air. ⁸God named the air "sky."

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the second day.

moved over The Hebrew word means "to fly over" or "to swoop down," like a bird flying over its nest to protect its babies.

God made ... light Or, "God made the heavens and the earth. While ¹the earth had no special shape, and darkness covered the ocean, and God's Spirit hovered over the water, ²God said, 'Let there be light!'" Or, "When God began to create the sky and the earth, while the earth was completely empty, and darkness covered the ocean, and a powerful wind blew over the water, ³God said, 'Let there be light.'"

air This Hebrew word means "bow1," or "dome."

The Third Day—Dry Land and Plants

⁹Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together so the dry land will appear." And it happened. ¹⁰God named the dry land "earth." And God named the water that was gathered together "seas." God saw this was good.

¹¹Then God said, "Let the earth grow many plants. There will be plants with seeds on them. And there will be trees with fruit that has seeds in it. Every plant will make its own kind of seed." And it happened. ¹²Plants grew on the earth. There were plants with seeds on them. And there were trees with fruit that had seeds in it. Every plant made its own kind of seeds. And God saw this was good.

¹³There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the third day.

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon, and Stars

¹⁴Then God said, "Let there be lights in the sky. These lights will separate the days from the nights. These lights will be used for special signs and to show when seasons,* days, and years begin. ¹⁵These lights will be in the sky to shine light on the earth." And it happened.

¹⁶So God made the two large lights. God made the larger light to rule during the day. He made the smaller light to rule during the night. God also made the stars. ¹⁷God put these lights in the sky to shine on the earth. ¹⁸God put these

seasons Or, "special meetings." Many Jewish holidays and special meetings began at the time of a new moon and a full moon.

lights in the sky to rule over the day and over the night. These lights separated the light from the darkness. And God saw this was good.

¹⁹There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fourth day.

The Fifth Day—Fish and Birds

²⁰Then God said, "Let there be many living things in the water. And let there be birds to fly in the air above the earth."²¹So God made the large sea animals.* God made every living thing that moves in the sea. There are many different kinds of sea animals—and God made them all! God also made every kind of bird that flies in the sky. And God saw this was good.

²²God blessed the animals. God said, "Grow and make many more animals. Spread, and fill the seas. And let the birds make many more birds and spread across the earth."

²³There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the fifth day.

The Sixth Day—Land Animals and People

²⁴Then God said, "Let the animals spread across the earth. Let there be many different kinds of animals. Let there be large animals and small crawling animals of every kind. And let all these animals make more of their kind." And all these things happened.

²⁵So God made every kind of animal. God made the wild animals, the tame animals, and all the small crawling animals. And God saw this was good.

²⁶Then God said, "Now we will make man.* We will make man as a copy of ourselves. Man will be like us. Man will rule over all the fish in the sea and the birds in the air. We will make man to rule over all the large animals and all the small animals crawling on the earth."

²⁷So God made people in his Image. God made people as a copy of himself.* God made

them male and female. ²⁸God gave them a blessing. God said to them, "Have many children and spread across the earth. Fill the earth and control it. Rule over the fish in the sea and over the birds in the air. Rule over every living thing that moves on the earth."

²⁹God said, "I have given you all the plants that have seeds and all the trees that have fruit with seeds in it. These plants will be food for you. ³⁰I have given the green plants to the animals for their food. Every animal on earth, every bird in the air, and everything that crawls on the earth will eat that food." And all these things happened.

³¹God looked at everything he had made, and God saw that everything was very good.

There was evening, and then there was morning. This was the sixth day.

The Seventh Day—Rest

2 So the earth, the sky, and everything in them were finished. ²God finished the work he was doing. So on the seventh day, God rested from his work. ³God blessed the seventh day and made it a holy day. God made that day special because on that day he rested from all the work he did while making the world.

The Beginning of Mankind, Earth's Ruler

¹This is the history of the sky and the earth.

This story is about the things that happened at the time God made the earth and the sky. ²There were no plants on the earth; nothing was growing in the fields. No plants had grown anywhere yet. The Lord had not yet caused rain to fall on earth. And there was no man to care for the plants. ³A mist rose from the earth and the water spread over the ground.

⁴Then the Lord God took dust from the ground and made a man.* The Lord breathed the breath of life into the man's nose, and the man became a living thing. ⁵Then the Lord God planted a garden in the East, in a place named Eden. The Lord God put the man he made in that garden. ⁶The Lord God made every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow in the garden. In the middle of the

large sea animals Or, "sea monsters."

man The Hebrew word means "man," "human beings," or the name "Adam." It is like the Hebrew word meaning "earth," or "red clay."

So God made people ... himself Compare Gen. 5:1,3.

garden, the Lord God put the tree of life and also the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil.

¹⁰A river flowed through Eden and watered the garden. That river then separated and became four smaller rivers. ¹¹The name of the first river was Pishon. This is the river that flows around the entire country of Havilah.*

¹²(There is gold in that land, and that gold is good. Bdelium* and Onyx* are also in that land.) ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon. That is the river that flows around the entire country of Ethiopia.* ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris.* That river flows east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates.*

¹⁵The Lord God put the man in the garden of Eden. The man had the work of planting and caring for the garden. ¹⁶The Lord God gave the man this command. The Lord God said, "You may eat from any tree in the garden. ¹⁷But you must not eat from the tree that gives knowledge about good and evil. You will die if you eat from that tree!"

The First Woman

¹⁸Then the Lord God said, "I see that it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper for him. That helper will be right for him.*

¹⁹From the ground, the Lord God made every animal in the fields and every bird in the air. The Lord God brought all these animals to the man, and the man gave everything a name. ²⁰The man gave names to all the tame animals, to all the birds in the air, and to all the wild animals of the forest. The man saw many, many animals and birds, but the man could not find a helper that was right for him. ²¹So the Lord God caused the man to sleep very deeply.

Havilah The land along the west coast of the Arabian peninsula and, possibly, the part of Africa south of Ethiopia.

Bdelium An expensive, sweet-smelling gum.

Onyx A precious stone with many layers of blue or gray.

Ethiopia Or, "Cush," a country in Africa by the Red Sea.

Tigris, Euphrates The two largest rivers flowing through the countries of Babylonia and Assyria.

helper for him ... right for him Or, "a person like him to help him."

While the man was asleep, the Lord God took one of the ribs from the man's body. Then, the Lord God closed the man's skin at the place where he took the rib. ²²The Lord God used the rib from the man to make a woman. Then the Lord God brought the woman to the man.

²³And the man said,

"Now, this is a person like me,

Her bones came from my bones.

Her body came from my body.

I will name her woman,

because she was taken out of man."

²⁴So a man will leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife. And the two people will become one.

²⁵In the garden, the man and his wife were naked, but they were not ashamed.

The Beginning of Sin

3 At that time, the snake spoke to the woman. (The snake was the most clever of all the animals the Lord God had made, and the snake wanted to trick the woman.) The snake said, "Woman, did God really tell you that you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"

²The woman answered the snake, "No! God did not say that! We can eat fruit from the trees in the garden. ³But there is one tree we must not eat from. God told us, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden. You must not even touch that tree or you will die.'"

⁴But the snake said to the woman, "You will not die. ⁵God knows that if you eat the fruit from that tree, you will learn about good and evil. And then you will be the same as God!"

⁶The woman saw the tree was beautiful. She saw the fruit was good to eat. And she saw the tree would make her wise. So the woman took fruit from the tree and ate it. Her husband was there with her, so she gave some of the fruit to him and he ate it.

⁷Then, both the man and the woman changed. It was like, their eyes opened, and they saw things differently. They saw that they had no clothes—they were naked. So they used

fig leaves and sewed them together and wore the fig leaves for clothes.

⁹During the cool part of the day, the Lord God was walking in the garden. The man and the woman heard him, and they hid among the trees in the garden. ¹⁰But the Lord God called to the man. The Lord God said, "Where are you?"

¹¹The man said, "I heard you walking in the garden, and I was afraid. I was naked, so I hid."

¹²God said to the man, "Who told you that you were naked? What caused you to be ashamed? Did you eat fruit from that special tree? I commanded you not to eat from that tree!"

¹³The man said, "You made this woman for me. She gave me fruit from that tree, so I ate it."

¹⁴Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What have you done?"

The woman said, "The snake tricked me. He fooled me and I ate the fruit."

¹⁵So the Lord God said to the snake,

"You did this very bad thing.
So bad things will happen to you.*

It will be worse for you than for any other animal.

You will be forced to crawl on your stomach,
and you will be forced to eat dust
all the days of your life.

¹⁶ I will make you and the woman
enemies to each other.

Your children and her children
will be enemies.

You will bite her child's foot.
But he will crush your head."

¹⁷Then God said to the woman,

"I will cause you to have much trouble
when you are pregnant.

And when you give birth to children,
you will have much pain.

You will want your husband very much,

but he will rule over you."*

¹⁸Then God said to the man,

"I commanded you not to eat from that
special tree.

But you listened to the things your wife
said,
and you ate from that tree.

So I will put a curse on the ground
because of you.

You will have to work very hard
all the days of your life
for the food that the ground gives.

¹⁹ You will want to eat the plants
that grow in the field.
But the ground will cause thorns and
weeds

to grow for you.

²⁰ You will work hard for your food.
You will work until your face is
covered with sweat.

You will work hard until the day you die.
And then you will become dust again.

I used dust to make you,
and when you die you will become dust
again."

²¹Adam named his wife Eve.* Adam gave her this name because Eve is the mother of every person that ever lived.

²²The Lord God used animal skins and made some clothes for the man and his wife. Then God put the clothes on them.

²³The Lord God said, "Look, the man has become like us—he knows about good and evil. And now the man might take the fruit from the tree of life. If the man eats that fruit, he will live forever."

²⁴So the Lord God forced the man to leave the garden of Eden. Adam* was forced to go and work the ground he was made from. ²⁵God forced the man to leave the garden. Then God

You will want ... over you Or, "You will want to rule, your husband, but he will rule over you." The Hebrew is like Gen. 4:7.

Eve This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "life."

Adam This name means, "man" or "human beings." It is like the Hebrew word meaning "earth" or "red clay."

bad things will happen to you Literally, "You are cursed!"

put Cherub angels* at the entrance to the garden to protect it. God also put a sword of fire there. This sword flashed around and around guarding the way to the tree of life.

The First Family

4 Adam and his wife Eve had sexual relations. And Eve gave birth to a baby. The baby was named Cain.* Eve said, "With the Lord's help, I have made a man!"

²After that, Eve gave birth to another baby. This baby was Cain's brother, Abel. Abel became a shepherd. Cain became a farmer.

The First Murder

^{3,4}At harvest time,* Cain brought a gift to show honor to God. Cain brought some of the food that he grew from the ground. Abel brought some animals from his flock. Abel brought the best parts of his best sheep.* The Lord accepted Abel's gift. ⁵But God did not accept Cain's offering. Cain was sad because of this, and he became very angry. "The Lord asked Cain, "Why are you angry? Why does your face look sad? ⁶If you do good things, you will be right with me. Then I will accept you. But if you do wrong things, then that sin is in your life. Your sin will want to control you, but you must control that sin."*

⁷Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." So Cain and Abel went to the field. Then Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁸Later, the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

Cain answered, "I don't know. Is it my job to watch and care for my brother?"

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Cain This is like the Hebrew word meaning "to make" or "to get."

At harvest time Literally, "at the end of days."

Abel brought ... best sheep Literally, "Abel brought some of his firstborn sheep, especially their fat."

But if you ... control that sin Or, "But if you don't do right, then sin is crouching at your door. It wants you, but you must rule over it."

⁹Then the Lord said, "What have you done? You killed your brother! His blood is like a voice shouting to me from the ground. ¹⁰You killed your brother, and the ground opened up to take his blood from your hands. So now, I will cause bad things to happen to that ground. ¹¹In the past, you planted, and your plants grew well. But now, you will plant, and the ground will not help your plants grow. You will not have a home on the earth. You will wander from place to place."

¹²Then Cain said, "This punishment is more than I can bear! ¹³Look at me! You are sending me away from my land. I won't be able to see you or be near you! I won't have a home! I will be forced to wander from place to place on the earth. And if anyone finds me, he will kill me."

¹⁴Then the Lord said to Cain, "I will not let that happen! If anyone kills you, Cain, then I will punish that person much, much more." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain. This mark showed that no person should kill him.

Cain's Family

¹⁵Cain went away from the Lord. Cain lived in the land of Nod.*

¹⁶Cain had sexual relations with his wife. She gave birth to a son named Enoch. Cain built a city and gave the city the same name as his son Enoch.

¹⁷Enoch had a son named Irad. Irad had a son named Mehujael. Mehujael had a son named Methushael. And Methushael had a son named Lamech.

¹⁸Lamech married two women. One wife was named Adah, and the other wife was named Zillah. ¹⁹Adah gave birth to Jabal. Jabal was the father* of people that live in tents and earn their living by keeping cattle. ²⁰Adah also had another son Jubal. (Jubal was Jabal's brother.) Jubal was the father of people that play the harp and flute. ²¹Zillah gave birth to Tubal-Cain. Tubal-Cain was the father of people that work with bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was named Naamah.

Nod This name means "wandering."

father This probably means that this man invented these things, or was the first person to use them.

²Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice!
You wives of Lamech, listen to the
things I say.

A man hurt me, so I killed him.

A child hit me, so I killed him.

* The punishment for killing Cain was very
great!

So the punishment for killing me
will be much, much greater!"

Adam and Eve Have a New Son

²Adam had sexual relations with Eve. And Eve gave birth to another son. They named this son Seth.* Eve said, "God has given me another son. Cain killed Abel, but now I have Seth." ³Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time, the people began to worship the Lord.*

Adam's Family History

5 This is the book about the family of Adam.* God made people a copy of himself.* ²God made them male and female. And on the same day he made them, God blessed them and named them "Adam."*

³After Adam was 130 years old, he had another son. This son looked just like Adam.* Adam named his son Seth. ⁴After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years. During that time, Adam had other sons and daughters. ⁵So Adam lived a total of 930 years; then he died.

⁶After Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enosh. ⁷After Enosh was born, Seth lived 807 years. During that time, Seth had other sons and daughters. ⁸So Seth lived a total of 912 years; then he died.

Seth This is like a Hebrew word meaning "to give." people began to worship the Lord Literally, "people began calling on the name Yahweh."

Adam This name means "man" or "human beings." It is like the Hebrew word meaning "earth" or "red clay."

God made people ... himself Literally, "He made him in the image of God." See Gen. 1:27; 5:3.

he had another ... just like Adam Or, "he fathered a son in his image and likeness." In Hebrew, this is like Gen. 1:27; 5:1.

⁹After Enosh was 90 years old, he had a son named Kenan. ¹⁰After Kenan was born, Enosh lived 815 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹¹So Enosh lived a total of 905 years; then he died.

¹²After Kenan was 70 years old, he had a son named Mahalalel. ¹³After Mahalalel was born, Kenan lived 840 years. During that time, Kenan had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴So Kenan lived a total of 910 years; then he died.

¹⁵When Mahalalel was 65 years old, he had a son named Jared. ¹⁶After Jared was born, Mahalalel lived 830 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷So Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years; then he died.

¹⁸After Jared was 162 years old, he had a son named Enoch. ¹⁹After Enoch was born, Jared lived 800 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁰So Jared lived a total of 962 years; then he died.

²¹After Enoch was 65 years old, he had a son named Methuselah. ²²After Methuselah was born, Enoch walked with God for 300 years more. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²³So Enoch lived a total of 365 years. ²⁴One day Enoch was walking with God, and Enoch disappeared. God took him.*

²⁵After Methuselah was 187 years old, he had a son named Lamech. ²⁶After Lamech was born, Methuselah lived 782 years. During that time, he had other sons and daughters. ²⁷So Methuselah lived a total of 969 years; then he died.

²⁸When Lamech was 182 years old, he became the father of a son. ²⁹Lamech named his son Noah.* Lamech said, "We work very hard as farmers because God cursed the ground. But Noah will bring us rest."

³⁰After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters. ³¹So Lamech lived a total of 777 years; then he died.

³²After Noah was 500 years old, he had sons named Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

One day ... God took him Or, "Enoch lived the way God wanted. One day, Enoch disappeared because God took him."

Noah This name means "rest."

People Become Evil

6 The number of people on earth continued to increase. There were girls born to these people. ²⁴The sons of God saw that these girls were beautiful. So the sons of God married any of the girls they chose.

These women gave birth to children. During that time, and later, the Nephilim* people lived in the land. They were famous people. They were heroes from ancient times.*

Then the Lord said, "People are human; I will not let my Spirit be troubled by them forever. I will let them live 120 years."^{*}

¹The Lord saw that the people on the earth were very evil. The Lord saw that people thought only about evil things all the time. ⁴The Lord was sorry that he had made people on the earth. It made the Lord very sad in his heart. ⁷So the Lord said, "I will destroy all people that I made on the earth. I will destroy every man and every animal and everything that crawls on the earth. I will also destroy the birds of the air. Why? Because I am sorry that I have made all these things."

¹But there was one man on earth that pleased the Lord—Noah.*

Noah and the Great Flood

¹Noah was a good man all his life. Noah always followed God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

¹¹⁻¹²God looked at the earth, and he saw that people had ruined it. Violence was everywhere—people had become evil and cruel, and had ruined their life on earth.

Nephilim This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "People that have fallen." Later, the Nephilim were a famous family of large fighting men. See Num. 13:32-33.

These women ... ancient times. Or, "The Nephilim people lived in the land in those days. They also lived there later, when the sons of God married the daughters of men, and these women had given birth to children. These children were famous. They were heroes from ancient times."

People are human ... 120 years Or, "My Spirit will not live with people forever, because they are flesh. They will live only 120 years." Or, "My Spirit will not judge people forever because they will all die in 120 years."

Noah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "to be sorry," "to comfort," or "to rest."

¹³So God said to Noah, "All people have filled the earth with anger and violence. So I will destroy all living things. I will remove them from the earth. ¹⁴Use cypress wood* and build a boat for yourself. Make rooms in the boat,* and cover the boat with tar.*

¹⁵This is the size I want you to make the boat: 450 feet* long, 75 feet* wide, and 45 feet* high. ¹⁶Make a window for the boat about 18 inches* below the roof.* Put a door in the side of the boat. Make three floors in the boat; a top deck, a middle deck, and a lower deck.

¹⁷Understand what I am telling you. I will bring a great flood of water on the earth. I will destroy all living things that live under heaven. Everything on the earth will die. ¹⁸I will make a special agreement with you, your sons, your wife, and your son's wives will all go into the boat. ¹⁹Also, you must find two of every living thing on the earth. Find male and female and bring them on the boat. Keep them alive with you. ²⁰Find two of every kind of bird on the earth. And find two of every kind of animal on the earth. And find two of every kind of thing that crawls on the ground. Male and female of every kind of animal on the earth will be with you. Keep them alive on the boat. ²¹Also bring every kind of food on earth into the boat. The food will be for you and for the animals."

²²Noah did all these things. Noah obeyed all the things that God commanded.

The Flood Begins

7 Then the Lord said to Noah, "I have seen that you are a good man, even among the

cypress wood Literally, "gopher-wood." We do not know exactly what kind of wood this is. It might be a kind of tree or squared timbers.

Make rooms in the boat Or, "Make caulking for the boat." This could be small plants that were stuffed into the cracks and covered with tar.

tar Or, "pitch," a very thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

450 feet Literally, "300 cubits."

75 feet Literally, "50 cubits."

45 feet Literally, "30 cubits."

18 inches Literally, "one cubit."

Make a window ... below the roof Or "Make an opening for the boat about 18 inches tall."

evil people of this time. So gather your family and all of you go into the boat. ²Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of every kind of clean animal.* And get one pair (one male and one female) of every other animal on the earth. Lead all these animals into the boat with you. ³Get seven pairs (seven males and seven females) of all the birds. This will allow all these animals to continue living on the earth after the other animals are destroyed. ⁴Seven days from now I will send much rain on the earth. It will rain for 40 days and 40 nights. Every living thing on the earth will be destroyed. All the things I made will be gone.” ⁵Noah obeyed all these things that the Lord commanded him.

⁶Noah was 600 years old at the time the rains came. ⁷Noah and his family went into the boat to be saved from the flood. Noah’s wife and his sons and their wives were on the boat with him. ⁸All the clean animals,* all the other animals on the earth, the birds, and everything that crawls on the earth ⁹went into the boat with Noah. These animals went into the boat in groups of two, male and female, just like God commanded. ¹⁰Seven days later the flood started. The rain began to fall on the earth.

¹¹⁻¹²On the 17th day of the second month all the springs under the ground split open, and water began flowing from the ground. That same day all the rains began falling hard on the earth. It was like windows in the sky were opened. The rain fell on the earth for 40 days and 40 nights. That very same day Noah and his wife, his sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth—and their wives went into the boat. At this time, Noah was 600 years old.

¹³“Those people and every kind of animal on the earth were in the boat. Every kind of cattle, every kind of animal that crawls on the earth, and every kind of bird were in the boat. ¹⁴All these animals went into the boat with Noah. They came in groups of two from every kind of animal that had the breath of life. ¹⁵All these animals entered the boat just like God had

commanded. Then the Lord closed the door behind them.

¹⁶Water flooded the earth for 40 days. The water began rising and lifted the boat off the ground. ¹⁷The water continued to rise, and the boat floated on the water high above the earth. ¹⁸The water rose so much that even the highest mountains were covered by the water. ¹⁹The water continued to rise above the mountains. The water was more than 20 feet* above the highest mountain.

²⁰⁻²²Every living thing on earth was killed. Every man and woman died. And all the birds, cattle, animals, and every kind of thing that flies were killed. ²³So God destroyed every living thing that was on the earth—every man, every animal, everything that crawls, and every bird. All these things were destroyed from the earth. The only life that was left was Noah and those people and animals that were with him in the boat. ²⁴And the water continued to cover the earth for 150 days.

The Flood Ends

8 But God did not forget about Noah. God remembered Noah and all the animals that were with him in the boat. God made a wind blow over the earth. And all the water began to disappear.

²Rain stopped falling from the sky. And water stopped flowing from under the earth. ³The water that covered the earth began to go down and down. After 150 days, the water was low enough that the boat touched land again. The boat stopped on one of the mountains of Ararat.* This was the 17th day of the seventh month. ⁴The water continued to go down, and by the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains were above the water.

⁵Forty days later, Noah opened the window he had made in the boat. ⁶Noah sent out a raven.* The raven flew from place to place until the ground was dry and the water was gone. ⁷Noah also sent out a dove. Noah wanted

clean animal(s) Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

20 feet Literally, “15 cubits.”

Ararat Or, “Urartu,” an area in Eastern Turkey.

raven A kind of bird.

the dove to find dry ground. He wanted to know if water still covered the earth.

¹Water still covered the earth, so the dove came back to the boat. Noah reached out his hand and caught the dove. Noah brought the dove back into the boat.

¹⁰After seven days, Noah again sent out the dove. ¹¹And that afternoon the dove came back to Noah. The dove had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. This was a sign to show Noah that there was dry ground on the earth. ¹²Seven days later, Noah sent the dove out again. But this time the dove never came back.

¹³After that, Noah opened the door* of the boat. Noah looked and saw that the ground was dry. This was the first day of the first month of the year. Noah was 601 years old. ¹⁴By the 27th day of the second month the ground was completely dry.

¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Leave the boat. You, your wife, your sons, and your son's wives should go out now. ¹⁷Bring every living animal out of the boat with you—all the birds, animals, and everything that crawls on the earth. Those animals will make many more animals, and they will fill the earth again."

¹⁸So Noah went out with his sons, his wife, and his son's wives. ¹⁹All the animals, everything that crawls, and every bird left the boat. All the animals came out of the boat in family groups.

²⁰Then Noah built an altar* to the Lord. Noah took some of all the clean birds and some of all the clean animals,* and Noah burned them on the altar as a gift to God.

²¹The Lord smelled these sacrifices, and it pleased him. The Lord said to himself, "I will never again curse the ground as a way to punish people. People are evil from the time that they are young. So I will never again destroy everything living on the earth. No! I will not do this again. ²²As long as the earth continues, there will always be a time for planting and a

time for harvest. There will always be cold and hot, summer and winter, day and night on earth."

The New Beginning

9 God blessed Noah and his sons. God said to him, "Have many children and fill the earth with your people. ²Every animal on the earth will respect you and fear you. And every bird in the air will respect you and fear you. And every animal that crawls on the ground and every fish in the sea will respect you and fear you. You will be the ruler over all of them.

³In the past, I gave you the green plants to eat. Now, every animal will also be food for you. I give you everything on earth—it is yours. ⁴But I give you one command. You must not eat meat that still has its life (blood) in it. ⁵I will demand your blood for your lives. That is, I will demand the life of any animal that kills a person. And I will demand the life of any person that takes another person's life.

⁶ "God made people as a copy of himself. So anyone that kills a person must be killed by a person.

⁷"Noah, may you and your sons have many children and fill the earth with your people."

⁸Then God said to Noah and his sons, ⁹"I now make my promise to you and to your people that will live after you. ¹⁰I make my promise to all the birds, and to all the cattle, and to all the animals that came out of the boat with you. I make my promise to every living thing on earth. ¹¹This is my promise to you: All life on the earth was destroyed by the flood. But that will never happen again. A flood will never again destroy all the life on the earth."

¹²And God said, "And I will give you something to prove that I made this promise to you. This proof will show that I have made an agreement with you and every living thing on earth. This agreement will continue for all times to come. This is the proof: ¹³I have made a rainbow in the clouds. That rainbow is proof of the agreement between me and the earth. ¹⁴When I bring clouds over the earth, you will see the rainbow in the clouds. ¹⁵When I see this

opened the door Literally, "removed the covering."

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

clean birds ... animals Birds and animals that God said could be used for sacrifices.

rainbow, I will remember the agreement between me and you and every living thing on the earth. That agreement says that a flood will never again destroy all life on the earth. "When I look and see the rainbow in the clouds, I will remember the agreement that continues forever. I will remember the agreement between me and every living thing on the earth."

"So God said to Noah, "That rainbow is proof of the agreement that I made with all living things on earth."

Problems Begin Again

"Noah's sons came out of the boat with him. Their names were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.)

"Those three men were Noah's sons. And all the people on earth came from those three sons.

"Noah became a farmer. He planted a field of grapes. "Noah made wine and drank it. He became drunk and lay in his tent. Noah was not wearing any clothes. "Ham, the father of Canaan, looked at his naked father. Ham told his brothers outside the tent. "Then Shem and Japheth got a coat. They carried the coat on their backs into the tent. They walked backwards into the tent. In this way, they did not see their father without clothes.

"Later, Noah woke up. (He was sleeping because of the wine.) Then he learned what his youngest son, Ham, had done to him. "So Noah said,

"May there be a curse on Canaan*!

May Canaan be the lowest slave to his brothers."

"Noah also said,

"Bless the Lord, God of Shem!

May Canaan be Shem's slave.

" May God give more land to Japheth.

May God live in Shem's tents.

And may Canaan be their slave."

"After the flood Noah lived 350 years. "Noah lived a total of 950 years; then he died.

Nations Grow and Spread

10 Noah's sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. After the flood, these three men became the fathers of many more sons. Here is a list of the sons that came from Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Japheth's Descendants

"Japheth's sons were: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

"Gomer's sons were: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togamah.

"Javan's sons were: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.*

"All the people that lived in the lands around the Mediterranean Sea came from these sons of Japheth. Each son had his own land. All the families grew and became different nations. Each nation had its own language.

Ham's Descendants

"Ham's sons were: Cush,* Mizraim,* Put, and Canaan.

"Cush's sons were: Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecah.

Raamah's sons were: Sheba and Dedan.

"Cush also had a son named Nimrod. Nimrod became a very powerful man on earth. "Nimrod was a great hunter before the Lord. That is why people compare other men to Nimrod and say, "That man is like Nimrod, a great hunter before the Lord."

"Nimrod's kingdom began in Babylon, Erech, and Akkad in the land of Shinar. "Nimrod also went into Assyria. In Assyria, Nimrod built the cities of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, and "Resen. (Resen is the city between Nineveh and Calah, the big city.)

Canaan Ham's son. The people of Canaan lived along the coast of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. Later, God gave this land to the people of Israel.

Dodanim Or, "Rodanim." This could mean "the people of Rhodes."

Cush This is also another name for Ethiopia.

Mizraim This is also another name for Egypt.

¹³Mizraim was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, ¹⁴Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. (The Philistine people came from there.)

¹⁵Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was Canaan's first son. Canaan was also the father of ¹⁶Het, the father of, the Hittite people. ¹⁷And Canaan was the father of the Jebusite people, the Amorite people, the Girgashite people, ¹⁸the Hivite people, the Arkite people, the Sinitite people, ¹⁹the Arvadite people, the Zemarite people, and the people from Hamath. The families of Canaan spread to different parts of the world.

²⁰The land of the people of Canaan was from Sidon in the north to Gerar in the south, from Gaza in the west to Sodom and Gomorrah in the east, from Admah and Zeboiim to Lasha.

²¹All those people were descendants* of Ham. All those families had their own languages and their own lands. They became separate nations.

Shem's Descendants

¹Shem was Japheth's older brother. One of Shem's descendants was Eber, the father of all the Hebrew people.*

²Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, Lud, and Aram.

³Aram's sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.

⁴Arphaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber. ⁵Eber was the father of two sons. One son was named Peleg.* He was given this name because the earth was divided during his life. The other brother was named Joktan.

⁶Joktan was the father of Almodad, Shaleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ⁷Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ⁸Obal, Abimael, Sheba, ⁹Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All those people were Joktan's sons. ¹⁰Those people lived in the area between Mesha and the hill country in the East.

Mesha was toward the land of Sephar. ¹¹Those are the people from the family of Shem. They are arranged by families, languages, countries, and nations.

¹²That is the list of the families from Noah's sons. They are arranged according to their nations. From those families came all the people that spread across the earth after the flood.

The World Divided

11 After the flood, the whole world spoke one language. All people used the same words. ²People moved from the East. They found a plain in the land of Shinar. The people stayed there to live.

³The people said, "We should make bricks and put them in fire so that they will become very hard." So the people used bricks, not stones, to build their houses. And the people used tar,* not mortar.*

⁴Then the people said, "We should build a city for ourselves. And we should build a very tall building that will go high into the sky. We will become famous. If we do this, we will not be scattered all over the earth—we will stay together in one place."

⁵The Lord came down to see the city and the very tall building. The Lord saw the people building these things. ⁶The Lord said, "These people all speak the same language. And I see that they are joined together to do this work. This is only the beginning of what they can do. Soon they will be able to do anything they want. ⁷So let's go down and confuse their language. Then they will not understand each other."

⁸So the Lord caused the people to spread all over the earth. So the people did not finish building the city. ⁹That is the place where the Lord confused the language of the whole world. So that place is called Babel.* So the Lord caused the people to spread out from that

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

One ... Hebrew people Literally, "To Shem was born the father of Eber's sons."

Peleg This name means, "division."

tar Or, "pitch," a very thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

mortar Cement used when building with bricks.

Babel Or, "Babylon." This name is like the Hebrew word that means "confuse."

place to all the other places on earth.

The Story of Shem's Family

¹⁰This is the story of Shem's family. Two years after the flood, when Shem was 100 years old, his son Arphaxad was born. ¹¹After that Shem lived 500 years. He had other sons and daughters.

¹²When Arphaxad was 35 years old, his son Shelah was born. ¹³After Shelah was born, Arphaxad lived 403 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁴After Shelah was 30 years old, his son Eber was born. ¹⁵After Eber was born, Shelah lived 403 years. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁶After Eber was 34 years old, his son Peleg was born. ¹⁷After Peleg was born, Eber lived 430 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

¹⁸After Peleg was 30 years old, his son Reu was born. ¹⁹After Reu was born, Peleg lived 209 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁰After Reu was 32 years old, his son Serug was born. ²¹After Serug was born, Reu lived 207 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²²After Serug was 30 years old, his son Nahor was born. ²³After Nahor was born, Serug lived 200 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁴After Nahor was 29 years old, his son Terah was born. ²⁵After Terah was born, Nahor lived 119 years more. During that time he had other sons and daughters.

²⁶After Terah was 70 years old, his sons Abram, Nahor, and Haran were born.

The Story of Terah's Family

²⁷This is the story of Terah's family. Terah was the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran was the father of Lot. ²⁸Haran died in his home town, Ur of Babylonia.* Haran died

while his father Terah was still alive. ²⁹Abram and Nahor both married. Abram's wife was named Sarai. Nahor's wife was named Milcah. Milcah was the daughter of Haran. Haran was the father of Milcah and Iscah. ³⁰Sarai did not have any children because she was not able to have children.

³¹Terah took his family and left Ur of Babylonia.* They planned to travel to Canaan. Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai (Abram's wife). They traveled to the city of Haran and decided to stay there.

³²Terah lived 205 years. Then he died in Haran.

God Calls Abram

12 The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country and your people. Leave your father's family and go to the land I will show you.

- ² "I will bless you.
I will cause you to become a great nation.
I will make your name famous.
People will use your name to bless other people.
- ³ I will bless people that do good to you,
and I will punish people that do bad to you.
All people on earth will be blessed because of you."

Abram Goes to Canaan

⁴So Abram obeyed the Lord. He left Haran, and Lot went with him. At this time Abram was 75 years old. ⁵Abram was not alone when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and everything that they owned in Haran. Also, all the slaves that Abram got in Haran went with them. Abram and his group left Haran and traveled to the land of Canaan.

⁶Abram traveled through the land of Canaan. Abram traveled to the town of Shechem and to the big trees at Moreh. The Canaanite people lived in that land at this time.

Ur of Babylonia Literally, "Ur of the Chaldeans." This might be the city Ur in southern Babylonia, or it might be a city closer to the city called Haran.

⁷The Lord appeared* to Abram. The Lord said, "I will give this land to your descendants.*"

The Lord appeared to Abram at that place. So Abram built an altar* for worshiping the Lord there. ⁸Then Abram left that place and traveled to the mountains east of Bethel. Abram set up his tent there. The city of Bethel was to the west. The city of Ai was to the east. At that place Abram built another altar to the Lord. And Abram worshiped the Lord there. ⁹After this, Abram began traveling again. He traveled toward the Negev.*

Abram in Egypt

¹⁰During this time, the land was very dry. There was no rain, and no food was able to grow. So Abram went down to Egypt to live. ¹¹Abram saw how beautiful his wife Sarai was. So just before they arrived in Egypt, Abram told Sarai, "I know that you are a very beautiful woman. ¹²The Egyptian men will see you. They will say, 'This woman is his wife.' Then they will kill me because they want you. ¹³So tell people that you are my sister. Then they will not kill me. They will be kind to me because they will think I am your brother. In this way, you will save my life."

¹⁴So Abram went into Egypt. The men of Egypt saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman. ¹⁵Some of the Egyptian leaders saw her also. They told Pharaoh that she was a very beautiful woman. Those leaders took Sarai to Pharaoh's home. ¹⁶Pharaoh was kind to Abram because he thought Abram was Sarai's brother. Pharaoh gave Abram sheep, cattle, and donkeys. Abram also got men servants, women servants, and camels.

¹⁷Pharaoh took Abram's wife. So the Lord caused Pharaoh and all the people in his house

to have very bad diseases. ¹⁸So Pharaoh called Abram. Pharaoh said, "You have done a very bad thing to me! You didn't tell me Sarai was your wife! Why? ¹⁹You said, 'She is my sister.' Why did you say that? I took her so she could be my wife. But now I give your wife back to you. Take her and go!" ²⁰Then Pharaoh commanded his men to lead Abram out of Egypt. So Abram and his wife left that place. And they carried everything they had with them.

Abram Returns to Canaan

13 So Abram left Egypt. Abram traveled through the Negev* with his wife and everything he owned. Lot was also with them. ²At this time, Abram was very rich. He had many animals and much silver and gold.

³Abram continued traveling around. He left the Negev* and went back to Bethel. He went to the place between the city of Bethel and the city of Ai. This was the same place Abram and his family had camped before. ⁴This was the place Abram had built an altar.* So Abram worshiped the Lord at this place.

Abram and Lot Separate

⁵During this time, Lot was also traveling with Abram. Lot had many animals and tents. ⁶Abram and Lot had so many animals that the land could not support both of them together. ⁷Abram's workers and Lot's workers began to argue. The Canaanite people and the Perizzite people were also living in this land at the same time.

⁸So Abram said to Lot, "There should be no arguing between you and me. Your people and my people should not argue. We are all brothers. ⁹We should separate. You can choose any place you want. If you go to the left, I will go to the right. If you go to the right, I will go to the left."

¹⁰Lot looked and saw the Jordan Valley. Lot saw that there was much water there. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. At that time the Jordan Valley all the way to Zoar was like the Lord's Garden.

The Lord appeared God often used special shapes so people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light.

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

This was good land, like the land of Egypt.)
 "So Lot chose to live in the Jordan Valley. The two men separated, and Lot began traveling east. "Abram stayed in the land of Canaan, and Lot lived among the cities in the valley. Lot moved far south to Sodom and made his camp there. "The people of Sodom were very evil. They were always sinning against the Lord.

"After Lot left, the Lord said to Abram, "Look around you. Look north and south and east and west. "All this land that you see I will give to you and your people that live after you. This will be your land forever. "I will make your people as many as the dust of the earth. If any person could count the dust on the earth, that would be the number of your people. "So go. Walk through your land. I now give it to you."

"So Abram moved his tents. He went to live near Mamre's big trees. This was near the city of Hebron. At that place Abram built an altar* for worshipping the Lord.

Lot Is Captured

14 Amraphel was the king of Shinar. Arioch was the king of Ellasar. Kedorlaomer was the king of Elam. And Tidal was the king of Goiim. "All these kings fought a war against Bera the king of Sodom, Birsha the king of Gomorrah, Shinab the king of Admah, Shemeber the king of Zebaiim, and the king of Bela. (Bela is also called Zoar.)

"All these kings joined their armies in the Valley of Siddim. (The Valley of Siddim is now the Salt Sea.) "These kings had served Kedorlaomer for twelve years. But in the 13th year they all turned against him. "So in the 14th year, King Kedorlaomer and the kings with him came to fight against them. Kedorlaomer and the kings with him defeated the Rephaim people in Ashteroth-Karnaim. They also defeated the Zuzim people in Ham. They defeated the Emim people in Shaveh-Kiriathaim. "And they defeated the

Horite people from the hill-country of Seir* to El Paran.* (El Paran is near the desert.) "Then King Kedorlaomer turned north and went to En Mishpat (that is Kadesh) and defeated all the Amalekite people. He also defeated the Amorite people. These people lived in Hazazon-Tamar.

"At that time, the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zebaiim, and the king of Bela (Zoar) joined together and went to fight against their enemies. (They went to fight, in the Valley of Siddim.* "They fought against Kedorlaomer the king of Elam, Tidal the king of Goiim, Amraphel the king of Shinar, and Arioch the king of Ellasar. So there were four kings fighting against five.

"There were very many holes filled with tar* in the Valley of Siddim.* The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies, ran away. Many of the soldiers fell into those holes. But the others ran away to the mountains.

"So their enemies took all the things that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah owned. They took all their food and clothing and left. "Lot, the son of Abram's brother, was living in Sodom, and the enemy captured him. The enemy also took everything he owned and left. "One of the men that was not captured went to Abram the Hebrew and told him what happened. Abram was camped near the trees of Mamre the Amorite. Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner had made an agreement* to help each other. And they had also signed an agreement to help Abram.

Seir Or, "Edom."

El Paran Probably the town Elath, at the southern tip of Israel near the Red Sea.

Valley of Siddim The valley or plain along the eastern or southeastern side of the Dead Sea.

tar Or, "pitch," a very thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

Mamre, Eshcol, and Aner ... agreement

Literally, "Mamre ... was a brother of Eshcol and a brother of Aner."

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

Abram Rescues Lot

¹⁴Abram learned that Lot was captured. So Abram called all of his family together. There were 318 trained soldiers. Abram led the men and chased the enemy all the way to the town of Dan. ¹⁵That night, he and his men made a surprise attack against the enemy. They defeated the enemy and chased them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶Then Abram brought back all the things that the enemy had stolen. Abram brought back the women and servants, and also Lot and everything Lot owned.

¹⁷Then Abram went home after he defeated Kedorlaomer and the kings with Kedorlaomer. When he came home, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh. (This is now called King's Valley.)

Melchizedek

¹⁸Melchizedek, the king of Salem, also went to meet Abram. Melchizedek was a priest of God Most High. Melchizedek brought bread and wine. ¹⁹Melchizedek blessed Abram and said,

"Abram, may God Most High give you blessings.

God is the One who made heaven and earth.

²⁰ And we praise God Most High.

He has helped you to defeat your enemies."

Abram gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had taken during the battle. ²¹Then the king of Sodom told Abram, "You can keep all these things for yourself. Just give me my people that the enemy took away."

²²But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I promise to the Lord, the God Most High, the One who made heaven and earth—²³I promise that I will not keep anything that is yours. I promise that I will keep nothing. I don't want you to say, 'I made Abram rich.' ²⁴The only thing I will accept is the food that my young men have eaten. But you should give the other men their share. Take the things we won in battle and give some to Aner, Eshcol, and

Mamre. These men helped me in the battle."

God's Agreement With Abram

15 After all these things happened, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.* God said, "Abram, don't be afraid. I will defend you. And I will give you a great reward."

²But Abram said, "Lord God, there is nothing you can give me that will make me happy. Why? Because I have no son. So my slave Eliezer from Damascus will get all the things I own after I die." ³Abram said, "You have given me no son. So a slave born in my house will get everything I have."

⁴Then the Lord spoke to Abram. God said, "That slave will not be the one to get the things you have. You will have a son. And your son will get the things you have."

⁵Then God led Abram outside. God said, "Look at the sky. See the many stars. There are so many you can't count them. In the future, your family will be like that."

⁶Abram believed God. And God accepted Abram's belief like it was a very good work.*

⁷God said to Abram, "I am the Lord who led you from Ur of Babylonia.* I did this so I could give you this land—you will own this land."

⁸But Abram said, "Lord, my Master, how can I be sure that I will get this land?"

⁹God said to Abram, "We will make an agreement. Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram.* Also, bring me a dove and a young pigeon."

¹⁰Abram brought all these things to God. Abram killed these animals and cut each of them into two pieces. Then Abram laid each half across from the other half. Abram did not cut the birds into two pieces. ¹¹Later, large birds flew down to eat the animals. But Abram chased them away.

vision Like a dream, God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

very good work The Hebrew word can mean "goodness," "righteousness," or "a good work."

Ur of Babylonia Literally, "Ur of the Chaldeans." A city in southern Babylonia.

ram A male sheep.

¹²Later in the day, the sun was going down. Abram became very sleepy and fell asleep. While he was asleep a very terrible darkness came. ¹³Then the Lord said to Abram, "You should know these things: Your descendants* will be foreigners and travel in a land they don't own. They will be slaves there. And they will be treated badly for 400 years. ¹⁴But after 400 years I will punish the nation that is their master. And your people will leave that land. When your people leave, they will take many good things with them.

¹⁵"You yourself will live to be very old. You will die in peace. And you will be buried with your family. ¹⁶After four generations your people will come to this land again. At that time, your people will defeat the Amorite people. I will use your people to punish the Amorites living here. (This will be in the future, because the Amorite people are not yet evil enough to punish)."

¹⁷After the sun went down, it was very dark. The dead animals still lay on the ground—each animal cut in two pieces. At that time, a column of smoke and fire* passed between the halves of the dead animals.*

¹⁸So on that day, the Lord made a promise and an agreement with Abram. The Lord said, "I will give this land to your descendants.* I will give them the land between the river of Egypt and the great river Euphrates. ¹⁹This is the land of the Kenite people, the Kenizzite people, the Kadmonite people, ²⁰the Hittite people, the Perizzite people, the Rephaim people, ²¹the Amorite people, the Canaanite people, the Girgashite people, and the Jebusite people."

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

column ... fire A sign that God used to show that he was with his people.

passed ... animals This showed that God "signed" or "sealed" the agreement he made with Abraham. In those days, a person making an agreement showed he was sincere by walking between the cut animals and saying something like, "May this same thing happen to me if I don't keep the agreement."

Hagar the Servant Girl

16 Sarai was Abram's wife. She and Abram had no children. Sarai had a servant from Egypt. Her name was Hagar. ²Sarai said to Abram, "The Lord has not allowed me to have children. So go with my servant Hagar. I will accept the child that is born from her like it is my own."

Abram obeyed his wife Sarai. ³This was after Abram lived ten years in the land of Canaan. And Sarai gave Hagar to her husband Abram. (Hagar was her servant from Egypt.)

⁴Hagar became pregnant from Abram. When Hagar saw this, she became very proud and began to feel that she was better than Sarai her master. ⁵But Sarai said to Abram, "My servant now hates me. And I blame you for this. I gave her to you. She became pregnant. And then she began to feel that she is better than I am. I want the Lord to judge what is right."

⁶But Abram said to Sarai, "You are Hagar's master. You can do anything you want to her." So Sarai punished her servant Hagar. And Hagar ran away.

Hagar's Son Ishmael

⁷The Angel of the Lord found Hagar near a pool of water in the desert. The pool was by the road to Shur. ⁸The Angel said, "Hagar, you are Sarai's servant. Why are you here? Where are you going?"

Hagar said, "I am running from my master, Sarai."

⁹The Angel of the Lord said to Hagar, "Sarai is your master. Go home to her and obey her." ¹⁰The Angel of the Lord also said to Hagar, "From you will come many people. There will be so many people that they cannot be counted."

¹¹The Angel also said,

"Hagar, you are now pregnant, and you will have a son. You will name him Ishmael,*

Ishmael This name means "God hears."

because the Lord has heard about your troubles,
and he will help you.

- ¹² "Ishmael will be wild and free,
like a wild donkey.
He will be against everyone.
And everyone will be against him.
He will move from place to place and
camp near his brothers,
but he will be against them."

¹³ The Lord talked to Hagar. Hagar began to use a new name for God. She said to him, "You are 'God Who Sees Me.'" She said this because she thought, "I see that even in this place God sees me and cares for me!" So the well there was called Beer Lahai Roi.* That well was between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁴ Hagar gave birth to Abram's son. And Abram named the son Ishmael. ¹⁵ Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born from Hagar.

Circumcision—Proof of the Agreement

17 When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord spoke to him. The Lord said, "I am God All-Powerful.* Do these things for me: Obey me and live the right way. ² If you do this, I will prepare an agreement between us. I will promise to make your people a great nation."

³ Then Abram bowed down before God. God said to him, "This is my part of our agreement: I will make you the father of many nations. ⁴ I will change your name. Your name will not be Abram*—your name will be Abraham.* I give you this name because you will be the father of many nations. ⁵ I will give you a great reward. New nations will be born from you. Kings will come from you. ⁶ And I will prepare an agreement between you and me. This agreement will also be for all your

descendants.* This agreement will continue forever. I will be your God and the God of all your descendants. ⁷ And I will give this land to you and to all your descendants. I will give you the land you are traveling through—the land of Canaan. I will give you this land forever. And I will be your God."

⁸ And God said to Abraham, "Now, this is your part of the agreement. You and all your descendants* will obey my agreement. ⁹ This is the agreement that you will obey. This is the agreement between you and me. This is for all your descendants: Every boy that is born must be circumcised.* ¹⁰ You will cut the skin to show that you follow the agreement between me and you. ¹¹ When the baby boy is eight days old, you will circumcise him. Every boy born among your people and every boy that is a slave of your people must be circumcised. ¹² So every baby boy in your nation will be circumcised. Every boy that is born from your family or bought as a slave will be circumcised. ¹³ Abraham, this is the agreement between you and me: Any male that is not circumcised will be cut off from his people.* Why? Because that person has broken my agreement."

Isaac—The Promised Son

¹⁴ God said to Abraham, "I will give Sarai,* your wife, a new name. Her new name will be Sarah.* ¹⁵ I will bless her. I will give her a son, and you will be the father. She will be the mother of many new nations. Kings of nations will come from her."

¹⁶ Abraham bowed his face to the ground to show he respected God. But he laughed and said to himself, "I am 100 years old. I can't have a son. And Sarah is 90 years old. She can't have a child." ¹⁷ Then Abraham said to God, "I hope Ishmael will live and serve you."

Beer Lahai Roi This means "The well of the Living One who sees me."

God All-Powerful Literally, "El Shaddai."

Abram This name means "honored father."

Abraham This name means "great father" or "father of many."

Descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

cut ... people This means a person must be separated from his family and lose his share of the inheritance.

Sarai Possibly, an Aramaic name meaning "princess."

Sarah A Hebrew name meaning "princess."

¹⁹God said, "No! I said that Sarah your wife will have a son. You will name him Isaac.* I will make my agreement with him. That agreement will be an agreement that continues forever with all his descendants.*

²⁰"You asked me about Ishmael, and I heard you. I will bless him. He will have many children. He will be the father of twelve great leaders. His family will become a great nation. ²¹But I will make my agreement with Isaac. Isaac will be the son that Sarah will have. This son will be born at this same time next year."

²²After God finished talking with Abraham, Abraham was alone. God left Abraham and went up into heaven. ²³God had told Abraham to circumcise* all the men and boys in his family. So Abraham gathered Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house together. Abraham also gathered together the slaves that were bought with money. Every man and boy in Abraham's house was gathered together, and they were all circumcised. They were all circumcised that same day.

²⁴Abraham was 99 years old when he was circumcised. ²⁵And Ishmael, his son, was 13 years old when he was circumcised. ²⁶Abraham and his son were circumcised on that same day. ²⁷Also, on that day all the men in Abraham's house were circumcised. All the slaves born in his house and all the slaves that he had bought were circumcised.

The Three Visitors

18 Later, the Lord again appeared to Abraham. Abraham was living near the oak trees of Mamre. One day, at the hottest part of the day, Abraham was sitting at the door of his tent. ²Abraham looked up and saw three men standing in front of him. When Abraham saw the men, he went to them and bowed

before them. ³Abraham said, "Sirs,* please stay awhile with me, your servant. ⁴I will bring some water to wash your feet. You can rest under the trees. ⁵I will get some food for you, and you can eat as much as you want. Then you can continue your journey."

The three men said, "That is fine. We will do as you said."

⁶Abraham hurried to the tent. Abraham said to Sarah, "Quickly, prepare enough wheat for three loaves of bread." ⁷Then Abraham ran to his cattle. Abraham took his best young calf. Abraham gave the calf to the servant. Abraham told the servant to hurry, kill the calf, and prepare it for food. ⁸Abraham gave the meat to the three men to eat. He also gave them milk and butter. Abraham stood near the men under the tree while the three men ate.

⁹The men said to Abraham, "Where is your wife Sarah?"

Abraham said, "She is there in the tent."

¹⁰Then the Lord said, "I will come again in the spring time. At that time, your wife Sarah will have a son."

Sarah was listening in the tent, and she heard these things. ¹¹Abraham and Sarah were very old. Sarah was past the right age for women to have children. ¹²So Sarah did not believe what she heard. She said to herself, "Now I am old and my husband is old. I am too old to have a baby."

¹³Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Sarah does not believe what I say. She laughed and said, 'I am too old to have a baby.' ¹⁴Is anything too hard for the Lord? No! I will come again in the spring, at the time I said, and your wife Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵But Sarah said, "I didn't laugh!" (She said this because she was afraid.)

But the Lord said, "No. I know that is not true. You did laugh!"

¹⁶Then the men got up to leave. They looked toward Sodom and began walking in that direction. Abraham walked with them a short time to say good-bye to them.

Isaac This name means "he laughs."

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

Sirs This Hebrew word can mean "sirs" or "Lord." This might show that these were not ordinary men.

Abraham's Bargain With God

¹⁷The Lord said to himself, "Should I tell Abraham the thing that I will now do? ¹⁸Abraham will become a great and powerful nation. And all the people on earth will be blessed because of him. ¹⁹I have made a special agreement with Abraham. I did this so he would command his children and his descendants* to live the way the Lord wants them to. I did this so they would live right and be fair. Then I, the Lord, can give him the things I promised."

²⁰Then the Lord said, "I have heard many times that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are very evil. ²¹So I will go and see if things are as bad as I have heard. Then I will know for sure."

²²So the men turned and started walking toward Sodom. But Abraham stood there before the Lord. ²³Then Abraham approached the Lord and asked, "Lord, do you plan to destroy the good people while you are destroying the evil people? ²⁴What if there are 50 good people in that city? Will you still destroy the city? Surely you will save the city for the 50 good people living there. ²⁵Surely you would not destroy the city. You would not destroy 50 good people to kill the evil people. If that happened, then good people and evil people would be the same—they would both be punished. You are the judge of all the earth. I know you will do the right thing."

²⁶Then the Lord said, "If I find 50 good people in the city of Sodom, I will save the whole city."

²⁷Then Abraham said, "Compared to you, Lord, I am only dust and ashes. But let me bother you again and ask you this question: ²⁸What if five good people are missing? What if there are only 45 good people in the city? Will you destroy a whole city for just five people?"

The Lord said, "If I find 45 good people here, I will not destroy the city."

²⁹Again Abraham said to God, "And if you find only 40 good people there, will you destroy the city?"

The Lord said, "If I find 40 good people, I will not destroy the city."

³⁰Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me. Let me ask you this: If only 30 good people are in the city, will you destroy the city?"

The Lord said, "If I find 30 good people there, I will not destroy the city."

³¹Then Abraham said, "May I bother my Lord again and ask, what if there are 20 good people?"

The Lord answered, "If I find 20 good people, I will not destroy the city."

³²Then Abraham said, "Lord, please don't be angry with me, but let me bother you this one last time. If you find ten good people there, what will you do?"

The Lord said, "If I find ten good people in the city, I will not destroy it."

³³The Lord was finished speaking to Abraham, so the Lord left. And Abraham went back to his home.

Lot's Visitors

19 That evening the two angels came to the city of Sodom. Lot was sitting near the city gates and saw the angels. Lot thought they were men traveling through town. Lot got up and went to them and bowed down on the ground. ²Lot said, "Sirs, please come to my house, and I will serve you. There you can wash your feet and stay the night. Then tomorrow you can continue your journey."

The angels answered, "No, we will stay the night in the square."*

³But Lot continued to ask them to come to his house. So the angels agreed to go to Lot's house. They went to Lot's house. Lot gave them something to drink. Lot cooked some bread for the angels, and they ate it.

⁴That evening, just before bedtime, men from every part of town came to Lot's house. The men from Sodom stood around the house and called to Lot. They said, ⁵"Where are the two men (angels) that came to you tonight?

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

square An open area in a city near the city gates. Travelers often camped there when they came to town.

Bring those men out to us. We want to have sex with them."

"Lot went outside, and closed the door behind him. 'Lot said to the men, "No! My brothers, I beg you, please don't do this evil thing! 'Look! I have two daughters. They have never slept with a man before. I will give my daughters to you. You can do anything you want with them. But please don't do anything to these men. These men have come to my house, and I must protect them."

"The men around the house answered, "Move out of the way!" Then the men said to themselves, "This man Lot came to our city as a visitor. Now he wants to tell us what we should do!" Then the men said to Lot, "We will do worse things to you than to them." So the men started moving closer and closer to Lot. They were ready to break the door open.

"But the two men staying with Lot opened the door and pulled Lot back inside the house. Then the men closed the door. "The two men caused the men outside the door to become blind. So the men trying to enter the house, young and old, were blind and could not find the door.

The Escape From Sodom

"The two men said to Lot, "Are there any other people in this city that are in your family? Do you have any sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or any other people in your family? If there is anyone in this city that is from your family, then you should tell them to leave now. "We will destroy this city. The Lord has heard of all the evil that is in this city. So the Lord has sent us to destroy it."

"So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, the men who had married his other, daughters. Lot said, "Hurry and leave this city! The Lord will soon destroy it!" But those men thought Lot was joking.

"The next morning at dawn, the angels were trying to make Lot hurry. They said, "This city will be punished. So take your wife and your two daughters who are still with you and leave this place. Then you will not be destroyed with the city."

"But Lot was confused, and did not hurry to leave. So the two men (*angels*) held the hands of Lot and his wife and his two daughters. The two men led Lot and his family out of the city safely. The Lord was kind to Lot and his family. "So the two men brought Lot and his family out of the city. After they were out, one of the men said, "Now run to save your life! Don't look back at the city. And don't stop any place in the valley. Run until you are in the mountains. If you stop, then you will be destroyed with the city!"

"But Lot said to the two men, "Sirs, please don't force me to run so far! "I am like a servant to you. But you have shown great kindness to me. You have been very kind to save me. But I can't run to the mountains. If I am too slow, then something bad will happen and I will be killed. "But look, there is a very small town near here. Let me run to that town. I can run to that town and be safe."

"The angel said to Lot, "Fine. I will allow you to do this also. I will not destroy that town. "But run there fast. I can't destroy Sodom until you are safely in that town." (That town is named Zoar,* because it is a small town.)

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

"Lot was entering Zoar when the morning sun began to shine. "And the Lord began to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord sent a rain of burning sulfur down from the sky. "So the Lord destroyed those cities, and he also destroyed the whole valley—all the people living in the cities and all the plants.

"While they were running away, Lot's wife looked back at the city. When she looked back, she became a block of salt.

"Early that same morning, Abraham got up and went to the place where he stood before the Lord. "Abraham looked down toward the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham looked at all the land in the valley. Abraham saw much smoke rising from the land. It looked like smoke from a very big fire.

Zoar This name means "small."

²⁰God destroyed the cities in the valley. But when God did this, he remembered the thing that Abraham asked. God saved Lot's life, but God destroyed the city where Lot had lived.

Lot and His Daughters

¹Lot was afraid to continue living in Zoar. So he and his two daughters went and lived in the mountains. They lived in a cave there. ²One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Everywhere on the earth, women and men marry. But there are no men around here for us to marry. Our father is old. ³But we should use our father to have children so that we can continue our family. We will go to our father and drink wine with him and make him drunk. Then we can sleep with him."

⁴That night the two girls went to their father and drank wine with him. Then the older daughter went into her father's bed and slept with him. [Lot was drunk, so Lot did not know that she had slept with him.

⁵The next day, the older daughter said to the younger daughter, "Last night I slept with my father. Let's drink wine with him again tonight. Then you can go into his bed and sleep with him. In this way we can use our father to have children to continue our family." ⁶So that night the two girls drank wine with their father until he was drunk. Then the younger daughter went into his bed and slept with him. Again, Lot did not know that his daughter had slept with him.

⁷So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant. Their father was the father of their babies. ⁸The older daughter gave birth to a son. She named the son Moab. Moab is the father of all the Moabite people who are still living today. ⁹The younger daughter also gave birth to a son. She named her son Ben-Ammi. Ben-Ammi is the father of all the Ammonite people who are still living today.

Abraham Goes to Gerar

20 Abraham left that place and traveled to the Negev.* Abraham settled in the

city of Gerar, between Kadesh and Shur. While in Gerar, ²Abraham told people that Sarah was his sister. Abimelech, king of Gerar, heard this. Abimelech wanted Sarah, so he sent some servants to take her. ³But one night, God spoke to Abimelech in a dream. God said, "You will die. That woman you took is married."

⁴But Abimelech had not yet slept with Sarah. So Abimelech said, "Lord, I am not guilty. Would you kill an innocent person? ⁵Abraham himself told me, 'This woman is my sister.' And the woman also said, 'This man is my brother.' I am innocent. I did not know what I was doing."

⁶Then God said to Abimelech in a dream, "Yes, I know that you are innocent. And I know that you did not know what you were doing. I saved you. I did not allow you to sin against me. I was the One who did not allow you to sleep with her. ⁷So give Abraham his wife again. Abraham is a prophet.* He will pray for you, and you will live. But if you do not give Sarah back to Abraham, then I promise that you will die. And all your family will die with you."

⁸So very early the next morning, Abimelech called all his servants. Abimelech told them all these things that happened in the dream. The servants were very afraid. ⁹Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "Why have you done this to us? What wrong did I do against you? Why did you lie and say that she was your sister? You brought much trouble to my kingdom. You should not have done these things to me. ¹⁰What were you afraid of? Why did you do these things to me?"

¹¹Then Abraham said, "I was afraid, I thought no one in this place respected God. I thought someone would kill me to get Sarah. ¹²She is my wife, but she is also my sister. She is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. ¹³God led me away from my father's house. God led me to wander to many different places. When that happened, I told Sarah, 'Do something for me; tell people you are my sister.'"

¹¹Then Abimelech understood what had happened. So Abimelech gave Sarah back to Abraham. Abimelech also gave Abraham some sheep, cattle, and slaves. ¹²And Abimelech said, "Look all around you. This is my land. You may live any place you want."

¹³Abimelech said to Sarah, "I gave your brother Abraham 1,000 pieces of silver. I did this to show that I am sorry for all these things. I want everyone to see that I did the right thing."

¹⁴The Lord made all the women in Abimelech's family not able to have children. God did this because Abimelech had taken Sarah, Abraham's wife. But Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and his servant girls.

Finally, a Baby for Sarah

21 The Lord kept the promise he had made to Sarah. The Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. ²Sarah became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham in his old age. All these things happened exactly like God promised. ³Sarah gave birth to a son, and Abraham named him Isaac. ⁴Abraham circumcised* Isaac when Isaac was eight days old like God had commanded.

⁵Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac* was born. ⁶And Sarah said, "God has made me happy. Every person who hears about this will be happy with me. ⁷No one thought that I, Sarah, would be able to have Abraham's child. But I have given Abraham a son even though he is old."

Trouble at Home

¹Isaac continued to grow. Soon he was old enough to begin eating food. At that time, Abraham gave a great feast. ²In the past, Hagar, the slave woman from Egypt, had given birth to a son. Abraham was the father of that son also. But now Sarah saw that this son was making

trouble for Isaac. ³So Sarah said to Abraham, "Force that slave woman and her son to leave. When we die, our son Isaac will get everything we have. I don't want her son to share in those things with Isaac."

⁴All this worried Abraham very much. He was worried about his son, Ishmael. ⁵But God said to Abraham, "Don't be worried about the boy. And don't be worried about the slave woman. Do the thing that Sarah wants. Isaac will be your only heir." ⁶But I will also bless the son of your slave woman. He is your son, so I will make a great nation from his family also.

⁷Early the next morning, Abraham got some food and some water. Abraham gave these things to Hagar. Hagar carried these things and left with her boy. Hagar left that place and wandered in the desert of Beersheba.

⁸After some time, all the water was gone. There was none left to drink. So Hagar put her son under a bush. ⁹Hagar walked a short distance away. Then she stopped and sat down. Hagar thought her son would die because there was no water. She did not want to watch him die. She sat there and began to cry.

¹⁰God heard the boy crying. And God's angel called to Hagar from heaven. He said, "What is wrong, Hagar? Don't be afraid! The Lord has heard the boy crying there. ¹¹Go help the boy. Hold his hand and lead him. I will make him the father of many, many people."

¹²Then God allowed Hagar to see a well of water. So Hagar went to the well and filled her bag. Then she gave water to the boy to drink.

¹³God continued to be with the boy while he grew up. Ishmael lived in the desert and became a hunter. He learned to shoot a bow very well. ¹⁴His mother found a wife for him in Egypt. They continued living in the Paran desert.

Abraham's Bargain With Abimelech

¹Then Abimelech and Phicol spoke with Abraham. Phicol was the commander of

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

Isaac This name means "he laughs" or "he is happy."

heir A person that receives his parents' property when they die.

Abimelech's army. They said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do." ²³So make a promise to me here before God. Promise that you will be fair with me and with my children. Promise that you will be kind to me and the land here where you have lived. Promise you will be as kind to me as I have been to you."

²⁴And Abraham said, "I promise I will treat you the same way you have treated me." ²⁵Then Abraham complained to Abimelech. Abraham complained because Abimelech's servants had captured a well of water.

²⁶But Abimelech said, "I don't know who has done this thing. You never told me about this before today!"

²⁷So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement. Abraham gave Abimelech some sheep and cattle as proof of the agreement. ²⁸Abraham also put seven* female lambs in front of Abimelech.

²⁹Abimelech asked Abraham, "Why did you put these seven female lambs by themselves?"

³⁰Abraham answered, "When you accept these lambs from me, it will be proof that I dug this well."

³¹So after that, the well was called Beersheba.* They gave the well this name because it was the place where they made a promise to each other.

³²So Abraham and Abimelech made an agreement at Beersheba. Then Abimelech and his military commander went back to the land of the Philistines.

³³Abraham planted a special tree at Beersheba. At that place, Abraham prayed to the Lord, the God who lives forever. ³⁴And Abraham stayed a long time in the land of the Philistines.

Abraham, Kill Your Son!

22 After those things, God decided to test Abraham's faith. God said to him, "Abraham!"

And Abraham said, "Yes!"

²Then God said, "Take your son to the land of Moriah. At Moriah kill your son as a sacrifice* for me. This must be Isaac, your only son—the son you love. Use him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains there. I will tell you which mountain."

³In the morning Abraham got up and prepared his donkey. Abraham took Isaac and two servants with him. Abraham cut the wood for the sacrifice.* Then they went to the place God told them to go. ⁴After they traveled three days, Abraham looked up and in the distance, he saw the place they were going to. ⁵Then Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. I will take my son and go to that place and worship. Then we will come back to you later."

⁶Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice* and put it on his son's [shoulder]. Abraham took the special knife and fire. Then both Abraham and his son went together to the place for worship.

⁷Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!"

Abraham answered, "Yes, son."

Isaac said, "I see the wood and the fire. But where is the lamb we will burn as a sacrifice*?"

⁸Abraham answered, "God will give us the lamb for the sacrifice* at the right time, my son."

Isaac Is Saved

So both Abraham and his son went together to that place. ²They came to the place where God told them to go. There, Abraham built an altar.* Abraham laid the wood on the altar. Then Abraham tied his son Isaac. Abraham laid Isaac on the altar on the wood. ³Then Abraham took his knife and prepared to kill his son.

seven The Hebrew word for "seven" is like the Hebrew word for "oath" or "promise." The seven animals were proof of this promise. This Hebrew word is like the last part of the name Beersheba.

Beersheba A town in Judah. This name means "well of the oath."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices that were offered as gifts to God.

¹¹But then the Angel of the Lord stopped Abraham. The angel called from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

Abraham answered, "Yes."

¹²The angel said, "Don't kill your son or hurt him in any way. Now I can see that you do respect and obey God. I see that you are ready to kill your son, your only son, for me."

¹³And Abraham looked away and saw a ram. The ram's horns were caught in a bush. So Abraham went and took the ram and killed it. Abraham used the ram as a sacrifice* to God. Abraham's son was saved. ¹⁴So Abraham gave that place a name, "Yahweh Yireh."¹⁵ Even today people say, "On this mountain, the Lord can be seen."

¹⁶The Angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time. "The angel said, 'You were ready to kill your son for me. This was your only son. Because you did this for me, I make you this promise: I, the Lord, promise that ¹⁷I will truly bless you. I will give you many, many descendants,* as many as the stars in the sky. There will be as many people as sand on the seashore. And your people will defeat all their enemies. ¹⁸Every nation on the earth will be blessed through your descendants. I will do this because you obeyed me.'"

¹⁹Then Abraham went back to his servants. They all traveled back to Beersheba and Abraham stayed there.

²⁰After all these things happened, a message was sent to Abraham. The message said, "Your brother Nahor and his wife Milcah have children now. ²¹The first son is Uz. The second son is Buz. The third son is Kemuel, the father of Aram. ²²Then there are Kesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." ²³Bethuel was the father of Rebekah. Milcah was the mother of these eight sons, and Nahor was the father. Nahor was Abraham's brother. ²⁴Also Nahor

had four other sons from his woman servant* Reumah. The sons were Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

Sarah Dies

23 Sarah lived to be 127 years old. ¹She died in the city of Kiriath Arba (that is Hebron) in the land of Canaan. Abraham was very sad and cried for her there. ²Then Abraham left his dead wife and went to talk to the Hittite people. He said, "I do not live in this land. I am only a traveler here. So I have no place to bury my wife. I need some land so that I can bury my wife."

³The Hittite people answered Abraham, "Sir, you are one of God's great leaders among us. You can have the best place we have to bury your dead. You can have any of our burying places that you want. None of us will stop you from burying your wife there."

⁴Abraham rose and bowed to the people. ⁵Abraham said to them, "If you truly want to help me bury my dead wife, then speak to Ephron the son of Zohar for me. ⁶I would like to buy the cave of Machpelah. Ephron owns this. It is at the end of his field. I will pay him the full price—all that it is worth. I want all of you to be witnesses that I am buying it as a burial place."

⁷Ephron was sitting there among the people. Ephron answered Abraham, "No, sir. I will give you the land. I will give you that cave. I give it to you so that you can bury your wife."

⁸Then Abraham bowed before the Hittite people. ⁹Abraham said to Ephron before all the people, "But I want to pay you the full price for the field. Accept my money, and I will bury my dead."

¹⁰Ephron answered Abraham, "Sir, listen to me. The land is worth 10 pounds* of silver. But what does 10 pounds of silver mean to you and me? Take the land, and bury your dead wife."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Yahweh Yireh Or, "Jehovah Jireh." This means "the Lord sees" or "the Lord gives."

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

woman servant Literally, "concubine." A slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

10 pounds Literally, "400 shekels."

¹⁶Abraham understood (that Ephron was telling him and the Hittite people the price of the land). So Abraham paid him for the land. Abraham weighed 10 pounds* of silver for Ephron and gave it to the merchant.*

^{17,18}So the field of Ephron changed owners. This field was in Machpelah, east of Mamre. Abraham became the owner of the field, the cave on the field, and all the trees that were on that field. All the people in the city saw the agreement between Ephron and Abraham. ¹⁹After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of that field near Mamre (that is Hebron in the land of Canaan). ²⁰Abraham bought the field and the cave on it from the Hittite people. This became his property, and he used it as a burying place.

A Wife for Isaac

24 Abraham lived to be a very old man. The Lord blessed Abraham and everything that he did. ²Abraham had a servant who was in charge of everything Abraham owned. Abraham called that servant to him and said, "Put your hand under my leg.*" ³Now I want you to make a promise to me. Promise to me before the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, that you will not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among those people but don't let him marry a Canaanite girl. "Go back to my country to my own people. There find a wife for my son Isaac. Then bring her here to him."

⁴The servant said to him, "Maybe this woman will not want to come back with me to this land. Then, should I take your son with me to your homeland?"

⁵Abraham said to him, "No! Don't take my son to that land." ⁶The Lord, the God of heaven, brought me from my homeland to this place. That land was the home of my father and the home of my family. But the Lord promised that

this new land here would belong to my family. May the Lord send his angel before you so you can choose a wife for my son. ⁷But if the girl refuses to come with you, then you will be free from this promise. But you must not take my son back to that land."

⁸So the servant put his hand under his master's leg and made the promise.

The Search Begins

⁹The servant took ten of Abraham's camels and left that place. The servant carried with him many different kinds of beautiful gifts. The servant went to Mesopotamia to Nahor's city. ¹⁰The servant went to the water well outside the city. It was in the evening when the women come out to get water. The servant made the camels kneel down there.

¹¹The servant said, "Lord, you are the God of my master Abraham. Allow me to find a wife for his son today. Please show this kindness to my master Abraham." ¹²Here I am, standing by this well of water, and the young women from the city are coming out to get water. ¹³I am waiting for a special sign to know which is the right young woman for Isaac. (This is the special sign: I will say to the girl, 'Please put your jar down so I can drink.' I will know if she is the right young woman if she says, 'Drink, and I will also give water to your camels.' If that happens, then you will have proved that she is the right young woman for Isaac. And I will know you have shown kindness to my master.")

A Wife Is Found

¹⁴Then, before the servant finished praying, a young woman named Rebekah came to the well. Rebekah was the daughter of Bethuel. Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham's brother. Rebekah came to the well with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁵She was very pretty. She was a virgin; she had never slept with a man. She went down to the well and filled her jar. ¹⁶Then the servant ran to her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar."

10 pounds Literally, "400 shekels."

merchant A person who earns his living buying and selling things. This might be Ephron or another person.

Put ... leg This showed that this was a very important promise and that Abraham trusted his servant to do what he promised.

"Rebekah quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. Rebekah said, "Drink this, sir." "As soon as she finished giving him something to drink, Rebekah said, "I will also pour some water for your camels."

"So Rebekah quickly poured all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she ran to the well to get more water. And she gave water to all the camels.

"The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure that the Lord had given him an answer and had made his trip successful.

"After the camels finished drinking, he gave Rebekah a gold ring that weighed 1/4 ounce.* He also gave her two gold arm bracelets that weighed 5 ounces* each. "The servant asked, "Who is your father? And is there a place in your father's house for my group to sleep?"

"Rebekah answered, "My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor." "Then she said, "And yes, we have straw for your camels and a place for you to sleep."

"The servant bowed and worshiped the Lord. "The servant said, "Blessed is the Lord, the God of my master Abraham. The Lord has been kind and loyal to my master. The Lord has led me to the right girl for my master's son."

"Then Rebekah ran and told her family about all these things. "Rebekah had a brother. His name was Laban. Rebekah told about the things the man had said to her. Laban was listening to her. And when Laban saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, he ran out to the well. And there the man was—standing by the camels at the well. "Laban said, "Sir, you are welcome to come in!* You don't have to stand outside here. I have prepared a room for you to sleep in and a place for your camels."

"So Abraham's servant went into the house. Laban helped him with the camels and gave him straw for the camels to eat. Then Laban gave him water so he and the other men with him could wash their feet. "Then Laban gave him food to eat. But the servant refused to eat.

He said, "I will not eat until I have told you why I came."

So Laban said, "Then tell us."

Bargaining for Rebekah

"The servant said, "I am Abraham's servant. "The Lord has greatly blessed my master in everything. My master has become a great man. The Lord has given Abraham many flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. Abraham has much silver and gold and many servants. Abraham has many camels and donkeys. "Sarah was my master's wife. When she was very old, she gave birth to a son. And my master has given everything he owns to that son. "My master forced me to make a promise to him. My master said to me, 'You must not allow my son to marry a girl from Canaan. We live among those people, but I don't want him to marry one of the Canaanite girls.' "So you must promise to go to the land of my father. Go to my family and choose a wife for my son.' "I said to my master, 'Maybe the woman will not come back to this land with me.' "But my master said to me, 'I serve the Lord, and the Lord will send his angel with you and help you. You will find a wife for my son among my people there.' "But if you go to the land of my father, and they refuse to give you a wife for my son, then you will be free from this promise."

"Today I came to this well and said, 'Lord, God of my master Abraham, please make my trip successful. "I will stand by this well and wait for a young woman to come to get water. Then I will say; Please give me water from your jar to drink. "The right young woman will answer in a special way. She will say; Drink this water, and I will also get water for your camels. That way I will know that she is the woman the Lord has chosen for my master's son."

"Before I finished praying, Rebekah came out to the well to get water. She had her water jar on her shoulder. She went down to the well and got water. I said to her, 'Please give me some water.' "She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and poured water for me and said,

1/4 ounce Literally, "one beka."

5 ounces Literally, "five measures."

Sir ... in Literally, "Come in, blessed of the Lord!"

'Drink this and I will also get water for your camels.' So I drank the water, and she gave water to my camels also. "Then I asked her, 'Who is your father?' She answered, 'My father is Bethuel the son of Milkah and Nahor.' Then I gave her the ring and bracelets for her arms. "At that time I bowed my head and thanked the Lord. I blessed the Lord the God of my master Abraham. I thanked him because he led me straight to the granddaughter of my master's brother. "Now, tell me what you will do. Will you be kind and loyal to my master and give your daughter to him? Or will you refuse to give your daughter? Tell me so that I will know what I should do."

"Then Laban and Bethuel answered, "We see that you are from the Lord. We can't change what must happen. "Rebekah is yours. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son. This is what the Lord wants."

"Abraham's servant heard these words, and he bowed to the ground before the Lord. "Then the servant gave Rebekah the gifts he had brought. He gave Rebekah gold and silver jewelry and many beautiful clothes. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and her mother. "The servant and the men with him stayed there and ate and drank. They stayed there for the night. They rose the next morning and said, "Now we will go back to my master."

"Rebekah's mother and her brother said, "Let Rebekah stay with us for a short time. Let her stay with us ten days. After that she can go."

"But the servant said to them, "Do not make me wait. The Lord has made my trip successful. Now let me go back to my master."

"Rebekah's brother and mother said, "We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants." "They called Rebekah and asked her, "Do you want to go with this man now?"

Rebekah said, "Yes, I will go."

"So they allowed Rebekah to go with Abraham's servant and his men. Rebekah's nurse also went with them. "When they were leaving, they said to Rebekah,

"Our sister, may you be the mother of millions of people.

And may your descendants* defeat their enemies and take their cities."

"Then Rebekah and her nurse got on the camels and followed the servant and his men. So the servant took Rebekah and left on the trip back home.

"At this time, Isaac had left Beer Lahai Roi and was living in the Negev.* "One evening, Isaac went out to the field to think.* Isaac looked up and saw the camels coming from far away.

"Rebekah looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel. "She said to the servant, "Who is that young man walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "That is my master's son." So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

"The servant told Isaac about all the things that had happened. "Then Isaac brought the girl into his mother's tent. Rebekah became Isaac's wife that day. Isaac loved her very much. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Abraham's Family

25 Abraham married again. His new wife was named Keturah. "Keturah gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. "Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan. Dedan's descendants were the people of Asshur* and Leum. "The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these sons came from the marriage of Abraham and Keturah. "Before Abraham died, he gave some gifts to the sons of his women servants.* Abraham sent the sons to the East. He sent them away from Isaac. Then Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac.

"Abraham lived to be 175 years old. "Then Abraham grew weak and died. He had lived a

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

think Or, "to go for a stroll." It might also be a polite way of saying "to go to the restroom."

Asshur Or, "Assyria."

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

long and satisfying life. He died and was gathered to his people. ⁹His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah. This cave is in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar. It was east of Mamre. ¹⁰This is the same cave that Abraham bought from the Hittite people. Abraham was buried there with his wife Sarah. ¹¹After Abraham died, God blessed Isaac. And Isaac continued to live at Beer Lahai Roi.

¹²This is the list of Ishmael's family. Ishmael was Abraham and Hagar's son. (Hagar was Sarah's Egyptian maid.) ¹³These are the names of Ishmael's sons. The first son was Nebaioth, then Kedar was born, then Adbeel, Mibsam, ¹⁴Mishma, Dumah, Massa, ¹⁵Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. ¹⁶Those were the names of Ishmael's sons. Each son had his own camp that became a small town. The twelve sons were like twelve princes with their own people. ¹⁷Ishmael lived 137 years. ¹⁸Ishmael's descendants* camped throughout the desert area. This area went from Havilah and Shur, near Egypt, all the way to Assyria. Ishmael's descendants often attacked his brothers' people.*

Isaac's Family

¹This is the story of Isaac. Abraham had a son named Isaac. ²When Isaac was 40 years old he married Rebekah. Rebekah was from Paddan Aram. She was Bethuel's daughter and the sister of Laban the Aramean. ³Isaac's wife could not have children. So Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife. The Lord heard Isaac's prayer. And the Lord allowed Rebekah to become pregnant.

⁴While Rebekah was pregnant, she had much trouble with the baby inside her. Rebekah prayed to the Lord and said, "Why is this happening to me?" ⁵The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your body. The rulers of two families will be born from you. And they will be divided. One son will be stronger than

the other. The older son will serve the younger." ⁶And when the right time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. ⁷The first baby was red. His skin was like a hairy robe. So he was named Esau.* ⁸When the second baby was born, he was holding tightly to Esau's heel. So that baby was named Jacob.* Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob and Esau were born.

⁹The boys grew up. Esau became a skilled hunter. He loved to be out in the fields. But Jacob was a quiet man. He stayed in his tent. ¹⁰Isaac loved Esau. He liked to eat the animals Esau killed. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

¹¹One time Esau came back from hunting. He was tired and weak from hunger. Jacob was boiling a pot of beans.* ¹²So Esau said to Jacob, "I am weak with hunger. Let me have some of those red beans." (That is why people call him Edom.*)

¹³But Jacob said, "You must sell me your rights as the firstborn son* today."

¹⁴Esau said, "I am almost dead with hunger. If I die, all of my father's wealth will not help me. So I will give you my share."

¹⁵But Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give it to me." So Esau made a promise to Jacob. Esau sold his part of their father's wealth to Jacob. ¹⁶Then Jacob gave Esau bread and food. Esau ate and drank and then left. So Esau showed that he did not care about his rights as the firstborn son.*

Isaac Lies to Abimelech

26 Once there was a time of famine.* This was like the famine that happened during Abraham's life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar, to Abimelech the king of the Philistine people. ²The Lord spoke to Isaac:

Esau This name is like the word meaning "hairy."

Jacob This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "heel." It also means "the one who follows" or "tricky."

beans Or, "lentils."

Edom This name means "red."

rights as the firstborn son Usually, after the father died, the firstborn son got half of the father's property and became the new head of the family.

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die because there is not enough food or water.

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

attacked ... people See Genesis 16:12.

The Lord said, "Don't go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I commanded you to live in. ³Stay in that land, and I will be with you. I will bless you. I will give you and your family all these lands. I will do what I promised to Abraham your father. ⁴I will make your family as many as the stars of heaven. And I will give all these lands to your family. All the nations of the earth will be blessed because of your family. ⁵I will do this because your father Abraham obeyed my words and did the things I said. Abraham obeyed my commands, my laws, and my rules."

⁶So Isaac stayed and lived in Gerar. ⁷Isaac's wife Rebekah was very beautiful. The men of that place asked Isaac about Rebekah. Isaac said, "She is my sister." Isaac was afraid to tell them Rebekah was his wife. Isaac was afraid the men would kill him so that they could have her.

⁸After Isaac had lived there a long time, Abimelech looked out his window and saw Isaac and his wife playing. ⁹Abimelech called for Isaac and said, "This woman is your wife. Why did you tell us that she was your sister?"

Isaac said to him, "I was afraid that you would kill me so you could have her."

¹⁰Abimelech said, "You have done a bad thing to us. One of our men might have slept with your wife. Then he would be guilty of a great sin."

¹¹So Abimelech gave a warning to all the people. He said, "No person must hurt this man or this woman. If any person hurts them, then that person will be killed."

Isaac Becomes Rich

¹²Isaac planted fields in that land. And that year he gathered a great harvest. The Lord blessed him very much. ¹³Isaac became rich. He gathered more and more wealth until he became a very rich man. ¹⁴He had many flocks and herds of animals. He also had many slaves. All the Philistine people were jealous of him. ¹⁵So the Philistine people destroyed all the wells that Isaac's father Abraham and his servants had dug many years before. The Philistines filled those wells with dirt. ¹⁶And

Abimelech said to Isaac, "Leave our country. You have become much more powerful than we are."

¹⁷So Isaac left that place and camped near the little river of Gerar. Isaac stayed there and lived. ¹⁸Long before this time, Abraham had dug many wells. After Abraham died, the Philistines filled the wells with dirt. So Isaac went back and dug those wells again. Isaac gave them the same names his father had given them. ¹⁹Isaac's servants dug a well near the little river. A spring of water flowed from that well. ²⁰But the men who herded sheep in the Valley of Gerar argued with Isaac's servants. They said, "This water is ours." So Isaac named that well Esek.* He gave it that name because that was the place where those people argued with him.

²¹Then Isaac's servants dug another well. The people of that place also argued because of that well. So Isaac named that well Sitnah.*

²²Isaac moved from there and dug another well. No men came to argue about that well. So Isaac named that well Rehoboth.* Isaac said, "Now the Lord has found a place for us. We will grow and be successful in this land."

²³From that place Isaac went to Beersheba. ²⁴The Lord spoke to Isaac that night. The Lord said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Don't be afraid. I am with you, and I will bless you. I will make your family great. I will do this because of my servant Abraham." ²⁵So Isaac built and worshiped the Lord in that place. Isaac made a camp there and his servants dug a well.

²⁶Abimelech came from Gerar to see Isaac. Abimelech brought with him Ahuzzath, his adviser, and Phicol, the commander of his army.

²⁷Isaac asked, "Why have you come to see me? You were not friendly with me before. You even forced me to leave your country."

²⁸They answered, "Now we know that the Lord is with you. We think that we should make an agreement. We want you to make a

Esek This means "argument" or "fight."

Sitnah This means "hated" or "being an enemy."

Rehoboth This means "open place" or "crossroads."

promise to us. ²⁸We did not hurt you, now you should promise not to hurt us. We sent you away, but we sent you away in peace. Now it is clear that the Lord has blessed you."

²⁹So Isaac gave a party for them. They all ate and drank. ³⁰Early the next morning, each man made a promise and vow. ³¹Then the men left in peace.

³²On that day, Isaac's servants came and told them about the well they had dug. The servants said, "We found water in that well."

³³So Isaac named that well Shibah. ³⁴And that city is called Beersheba* even now.

Esau's Wives

¹When Esau was 40 years old, he married two Hittite women. One was Judith the daughter of Beeri. The other was Basemath the daughter of Elon. ²These marriages made Isaac and Rebekah very upset.

Inheritance Problems

27 When Isaac was old, his eyes were not good. Isaac could not see clearly. One day he called his older son Esau to him. Isaac said, "Son!"

Esau answered, "Here I am."

²Isaac said, "I am old. Maybe I will die soon! ³So take your bow and arrows and go hunting. Kill an animal for me to eat. ⁴Prepare the food that I love. Bring it to me, and I will eat. Then I will bless you before I die." ⁵So Esau went hunting.

Jacob Tricks Isaac

Rebekah was listening when Isaac told those things to his son Esau. ¹Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Listen, I heard your father talking to your brother Esau. ²Your father said, 'Kill an animal for me to eat. Prepare the food for me, and I will eat. Then I will bless you before I die.' ³So listen son, and do what I tell

you. ⁴Go out to our goats and bring me two young goats. I will prepare them the way your father loves them. ⁵Then you will carry the food to your father. And he will bless you before he dies."

⁶But Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am not hairy like him. ⁷If my father feels me, he will know that I am not Esau. Then he will not bless me. He will curse* me because I tried to trick him."

⁸So Rebekah said to him, "I will accept the blame if there is trouble. Do the things I said. Go and get the goats for me."

⁹So Jacob went out and got two goats and brought them to his mother. His mother cooked the goats in the special way that Isaac loved. ¹⁰Then Rebekah took the clothes that her older son Esau loved to wear. Rebekah put those clothes on the younger son Jacob. ¹¹Rebekah took the skins of the goats and put them on Jacob's hands and on his neck. ¹²Then Rebekah got the food she had cooked and gave it to Jacob.

¹³Jacob went in to his father and said, "Father."

And his father said, "Yes, son. Who are you?"

¹⁴Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau, your first son. I have done the things you told me. Now sit up and eat the animals that I hunted for you. Then you can bless me."

¹⁵But Isaac said to his son, "How have you hunted and killed the animals so quickly?"

Jacob answered, "Because the Lord your God allowed me to find the animals quickly."

¹⁶Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near to me so that I can feel you, my son. If I can feel you, then I will know if you are really my son." ¹⁷Esau.

¹⁸So Jacob went to Isaac his father. Isaac felt him and said, "Your voice sounds like Jacob's voice. But your arms are hairy like the arms of Esau." ¹⁹Isaac did not know it was Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esau's arms. ²⁰So Isaac blessed Jacob.

vow A special promise to God.

Shibah A Hebrew word meaning "seven" or "oath."

Beersheba A town in Judah. This name means "well of the oath."

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

²¹Isaac said, "Are you really my son Esau?"
Jacob answered, "Yes, I am."

The Blessing for Jacob

²²Then Isaac said, "Bring me the food. I will eat it and bless you." So Jacob gave him the food, and he ate. Jacob gave him wine, and he drank.

²³Then Isaac said to him. "Son, come near and kiss me." ²⁴So Jacob went to his father and kissed him. Isaac smelled Esau's clothes and blessed him. Isaac said,

My son smells like the fields that the
Lord has blessed.

²⁵ May the Lord give you plenty of rain
so that you will have great harvests and
wine.

²⁶ May all people serve you.
May nations bow down to you.
You will be the ruler over your brothers.
Your mother's sons will bow down and
obey you.

Every person who curses* you will be
cursed.

And every person who blesses you will
be blessed."

Esau's "Blessing"

²⁷Isaac finished blessing Jacob. Then, just as Jacob left his father Isaac, Esau came in from hunting. ²⁸Esau prepared the food in the special way his father loved. Esau brought it to his father. He said to his father, "Father, rise and eat the food that your son killed for you. Then you can bless me."

²⁹But Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"

He answered, "I am your son—your first son—Esau."

³⁰Then Isaac became very worried and said, "Then who was it that cooked and brought me food before you came? I ate it all and I blessed him. Now it is too late to take back my blessing."

³¹Esau heard his father's words. He became very angry and bitter. He cried out. He said to his father, "Then bless me also, father!"

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

³²Isaac said, "Your brother tricked me! He came and took your blessing!"

³³Esau said, "His name is Jacob (*'Tricky'*). That is the right name for him. He has tricked me twice. He took away my rights as the firstborn son.* And now he has taken away my blessing." Then Esau said, "Have you saved any blessing for me?"

³⁴Isaac answered, "No, it's too late. I gave Jacob the power to rule over you. And I said all his brothers will be his servants. And I have given him the blessing for much grain and wine. There is nothing left to give you son."

³⁵But Esau continued to beg with his father. "Do you have only one blessing, father? Bless me also, father!" Esau began to cry.

³⁶Then Isaac said to him,

"You will not live on good land.
And you will not have much rain.

³⁷ You will have to fight to live.
And you will be a slave to your brother.
But you will fight to be free.
And you will break away from his
control."

"After that Esau hated Jacob because of this blessing. Esau thought to himself, "My father will soon die, and I will be sad for him. But after that I will kill Jacob."

³⁸Rebekah heard about Esau's plan to kill Jacob. She sent for Jacob and said to him, "Listen, your brother Esau is planning to kill you. "So, son, do what I say. My brother Laban is living in Haran. Go to him and hide. "Stay with him for a short time. Stay with him until your brother stops being angry. "After a short time; your brother will forget what you did to him. Then I will send a servant to bring you back. I don't want to lose both of my sons in the same day."

³⁹Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "Your son Esau has married Hittite women. I am tired of these women, because they are not our people. If Jacob also marries one of these women, then I want to die."

rights as the firstborn son Usually, after the father died, the firstborn son got half of the father's property and became the new head of the family.

Jacob Searches for a Wife

28 Isaac called Jacob and blessed him. Then Isaac gave him a command. Isaac said, "You must not marry a Canaanite woman. ²So leave this place and go to Paddan Aram. Go to the house of Bethuel, your mother's father. Laban, your mother's brother, lives there. Marry one of his daughters. ³I pray that God All-Powerful* will bless you and give you many children. I pray that you will become the father of a great nation. ⁴I pray that God will bless you and your children the same way he blessed Abraham. And I pray that you will own the land where you live. This is the land God gave to Abraham."

⁵So Isaac sent Jacob to the land of Paddan Aram. Jacob went to Laban, the brother of Rebekah. Bethuel was the father of Laban and Rebekah. And Rebekah was the mother of Jacob and Esau.

⁶Esau learned that his father Isaac blessed Jacob. And Esau learned that Isaac sent Jacob away to Paddan Aram to find a wife there. Esau learned that Isaac commanded Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman. ⁷And Esau learned that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and went to Paddan Aram. ⁸Esau saw from this that his father did not want his sons to marry Canaanite women. ⁹Esau already had two wives. But he went to Ishmael and married another woman. He married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael was Abraham's son. Mahalath was Nebaioth's sister.

God's House—Bethel

¹⁰Jacob left Beersheba and went to Haran. ¹¹While Jacob was traveling, the sun set. So Jacob went to a place to stay the night. Jacob found a rock at that place and laid his head on it to sleep. ¹²Jacob had a dream. He dreamed there was a ladder that was on the ground and reached up into heaven. Jacob saw the angels of God going up and down the ladder. ¹³And then Jacob saw the Lord standing by the ladder. The Lord said, "I am the Lord, the God of your

grandfather Abraham. I am the God of Isaac. I will give you the land that you are lying on now. I will give this land to you and to your children. ¹⁴You will have many, many descendants,* like the many pieces of dust on earth. They will spread east and west, north and south. All the families on earth will be blessed because of you and your descendants.

¹⁵"I am with you, and I will protect you every place you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I promised."

¹⁶Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "I know that the Lord is in this place. But I did not know he was here until I slept."

¹⁷Jacob was afraid. He said, "This is a very great place. This is the house of God. This is the gate to heaven."

¹⁸Jacob rose very early in the morning. Jacob took the rock he had slept on and set it up on its edge. Then he poured oil on the rock. In this way, he made this rock a memorial to God.

¹⁹The name of that place was Luz. But Jacob named it Bethel.*

²⁰Then Jacob made a promise. He said, "If God will be with me, and if God will protect me wherever I go, and if God gives me food to eat and clothes to wear, ²¹and if I return in peace to my father's house—if God does all these things—then the Lord will be my God. ²²I will stand this stone in this place. This will show it is a holy place for God. And I will give God one tenth of all he gives me."

Jacob Meets His Uncle

29 Then Jacob continued his trip. He went to the land in the East. ²Jacob looked, and he saw a well in the field. There were three flocks of sheep lying near the well. This well was the place where these sheep drank water. There was a large rock covering the mouth of the well. ³When all the flocks gathered there, the shepherds rolled the rock away from the well. Then all the sheep could drink from the

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

Bethel This name means "God's house."

God All-Powerful Literally, "El Shaddai."

water. After the sheep were full, the shepherds put the rock back in its place.

"Jacob said to the shepherds there, "Brothers, where are you from?"

They answered, "We are from Haran."

"Then Jacob said, "Do you know Laban, the son of Nahor?"

The shepherds answered, "We know him."

"Then Jacob said, "How is he?"

They answered, "He is well. Everything is fine. Look, that is his daughter Rachel coming now with his sheep."

"Jacob said, "Look, it is still day and long before the sun sets. It is not yet time for the animals to be gathered together for the night. So give them water and let them go back into the field."

"But this shepherd said, "We can't do that until all the flocks are gathered together. Then we will move the rock from the well, and all the sheep will drink."

"While Jacob was talking with the shepherds, Rachel came with her father's sheep. (It was Rachel's job to take care of the sheep.) "Rachel was Laban's daughter. Laban was the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's mother. When Jacob saw Rachel, he went and moved the rock and gave water to the sheep. "Then Jacob kissed Rachel and cried. "Jacob told Rachel that he was from her father's family. He told Rachel that he was the son of Rebekah. So Rachel ran home and told her father.

"Laban heard the news about his sister's son Jacob. So Laban ran to meet him. Laban hugged him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban everything that had happened.

"Then Laban said, "This is wonderful! You are from my own family." So Jacob stayed with Laban for a month.

Jacob Is Tricked

"One day Laban said to Jacob, "It is not right for you to continue working for me without pay. You are a relative, not a slave. What should I pay you?"

"Laban had two daughters. The older was Leah and the younger was Rachel.

"Rachel was beautiful. And Leah's eyes were gentle.* "Jacob loved Rachel. Jacob said to Laban, "I will work seven years for you if you will allow me to marry your daughter Rachel."

"Laban said, "It would be better for her to marry you than someone else. So stay with me."

"So Jacob stayed and worked for Laban for seven years. But it seemed like a very short time because he loved Rachel very much.

"After seven years Jacob said to Laban, "Give me Rachel so that I can marry her. My time of work for you is finished."

"So Laban gave a party for all the people in that place. "That night, Laban brought his daughter Leah to Jacob. Jacob and Leah had sexual relations together. "Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter to be her maid.)

"In the morning Jacob saw that it was Leah he had slept with. Jacob said to Laban, "You have tricked me. I worked hard for you so that I could marry Rachel. Why did you trick me?"

"Laban said, "In our country we do not allow the younger daughter to marry before the older daughter. "But continue for the full week of the marriage ceremony, and I will also give you Rachel to marry. But you must serve me another seven years."

"So Jacob did this and finished the week. Then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. "Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her maid.) "So Jacob had sexual relations with Rachel also. And Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Jacob worked for Laban for another seven years.

Jacob's Family Grows

"The Lord saw that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. So the Lord made it possible for Leah to have children. But Rachel did not have any children.

"Leah gave birth to a son. She named him

Leah's ... gentle This might be a polite way of saying Leah was not very pretty.

Reuben This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "Look, a son."

Reuben.* Leah named him this because she said, "The Lord has seen my troubles. My husband doesn't love me. So now maybe my husband will love me."

³¹Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named this son Simeon.* Leah said, "The Lord has heard that I am not loved, so he gave me this son."

³²Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to another son. She named the son Levi.* Leah said, "Now, surely my husband will love me. I have given him three sons."

³³Then Leah gave birth to another son. She named this son Judah.* Leah named him this because she said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Then Leah stopped having children.

30 Rachel saw that she was giving Jacob no children. Rachel became jealous of her sister Leah. So Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children or I will die!"

¹Jacob became angry with Rachel. He said, "I am not God. God is the One who has caused you to not have children."

²Then Rachel said, "You can have my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her and she will have a child for me.* Then I can become a mother because of her."

³So Rachel gave Bilhah to her husband Jacob. Jacob had sexual relations with Bilhah. ⁴And Bilhah became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.

⁵Rachel said, "God has listened to my prayer. He decided to give me a son." So Rachel named this son Dan.*

⁶Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. ⁷Rachel said, "I have fought hard to compete with my sister. And I

have won." So she named that son Naphtali.*

⁸Leah saw that she could have no more children. So she gave her slave girl Zilpah to Jacob. ⁹Then Zilpah had a son. ¹⁰Leah said, "I am lucky." So she named the son Gad.* ¹¹Zilpah gave birth to another son. ¹²Leah said, "I am very happy! Now women will call me happy." So she named that son Asher.*

¹³During the wheat harvest, Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers.* Reuben brought these flowers to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's flowers."

¹⁴Leah answered, "You have already taken away my husband. Now you are trying to take away my son's flowers."

But Rachel answered, "If you will give me your son's flowers, then you can sleep with Jacob tonight."

¹⁵Jacob came in from the fields that night. Leah saw him and went out to meet him. She said, "You will sleep with me tonight. I have paid for you with my son's flowers." So Jacob slept with Leah that night.

¹⁶Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son. ¹⁷Leah said, "God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband." So Leah named her son Issachar.*

¹⁸Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son. ¹⁹Leah said, "God has given me a fine gift. Now surely Jacob will accept me, because I have given him six sons." So Leah named the son Zebulun.*

²⁰Later Leah gave birth to a daughter. She named the daughter Dinah.

Reuben This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "Look, a son."

Simeon This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "He hears."

Levi This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "accompany," "be joined together," or "become close."

Judah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "He is praised."

she ... me Literally, "She will give birth on my knees, and I too will have a son through her."

Dan This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "to decide" or "to judge."

Naphtali This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "my struggle."

Gad This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "lucky," or "good fortune."

Asher This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "happy" or "blessed."

special flowers Or, "mandrakes." The Hebrew word means "love plant." People thought these plants could help women have babies.

Issachar This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "reward" or "salary."

Zebulun This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "praise" or "honor."

²²Then God heard Rachel's prayer. God made it possible for Rachel to have children.

²³Rachel became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Rachel said, "God has taken away my shame and given me a son." So Rachel named the son Joseph.*

Jacob Tricks Laban

²⁴After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Now let me go to my own home.

²⁵Give me my wives and my children. I have earned them by working for you 14 years. You know that I served you well."

²⁶Laban said to him, "Let me say something! I know* that the Lord has blessed me because of you. ²⁷Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you."

²⁸Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown and been well while I cared for them. ²⁹When I came, you had little. Now you have much, much more. Every time I did something for you, the Lord blessed you. Now it is time for me to work for myself—it is time to build my own house.

³⁰Laban asked, "Then what should I give you?"

Jacob answered, "I don't want you to give me anything. I only want you to pay me for the work I have done. Just do this one thing: I will go back and take care of your sheep. ³¹But let me go through all your flocks today and take every lamb with spots or stripes. And let me take every black young goat. And let me take every female goat with stripes or spots. That will be my pay. ³²In the future, you can easily see if I am honest. You can come to look at my flocks. If I have any goat that isn't spotted or any sheep that isn't black, then you will know that I stole it."

³³Laban answered, "I agree to that. We will do what you ask." ³⁴But that day Laban hid all the male goats that had spots. And Laban hid

all the female goats that had spots on them. Laban also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep. ³⁵So the sons took all the spotted animals and led them to another place. They traveled for three days. Jacob stayed and took care of all the animals that were left. But there were no animals there that were spotted or black.

³⁶So Jacob cut green branches from poplar and almond trees. Jacob stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them. ³⁷Jacob put the branches in front of the flocks at the watering places. When the animals came to drink, they also mated in that place. ³⁸Then when the goats mated in front of the branches, the young that were born were spotted, striped, or black.

³⁹Jacob separated the spotted and the black animals from the other animals in the flock. Jacob kept his animals separate from Laban's. ⁴⁰Any time the stronger animals in the flock were mating, Jacob put the branches before their eyes. The animals mated near those branches. ⁴¹But when the weaker animals mated, Jacob did not put the branches there. So the young animals born from the weak parents were Laban's. And the young animals born from the stronger parents were Jacob's. ⁴²In this way, Jacob became very rich. He had large flocks, many servants, camels, and donkeys.

Time To Leave—Jacob Runs Away

31 One day, Jacob heard Laban's sons talking. They said, "Jacob has taken everything that our father owned. Jacob has become rich—and he has taken all this wealth from our father." ²Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been in the past. ³The Lord said to Jacob, "Go back to your own land where your ancestors* lived. I will be with you."

⁴So Jacob told Rachel and Leah to meet him in the field where he kept his flocks of sheep and goats. ⁵Jacob said to Rachel and Leah, "I

Joseph This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "to add," "collect," or "gather."

Let me say something Literally, "If I find favor in your sight." This is a polite way to ask permission to speak.

know Or, "guessed," "divined," or "concluded."

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

have seen that your father is angry with me. He was always friendly with me in the past, but now he is not. 'You both know that I have worked as hard as I can for your father.' But your father cheated me. Your father has changed my pay ten times. But during all this time, God protected me from all of Laban's tricks.

"At one time Laban said, 'You can keep all the goats with spots. This will be your pay.' After he said this, all the animals gave birth to spotted babies. So they were all mine. But then Laban said, 'I will keep the spotted goats. You can have all the striped goats. That will be your pay.' After he said this, then all the animals gave birth to striped babies. So God has taken the animals away from your father and has given them to me.

"I had a dream during the time when the animals were mating. I saw that the only male goats who were mating were the ones with stripes and spots. The angel of God spoke to me in that dream. The angel said, 'Jacob!'

"I answered, 'Yes!'

"The angel said, 'Look, only the striped and spotted goats are mating. I am causing this to happen. I have seen all the wrong things Laban is doing to you. I am doing this so that you can have all the new baby goats. I am the God who came to you at Bethel. At that place, you made an altar. You poured olive oil on the altar. And you made a promise to me. Now I want you to be ready to go back to the land where you were born.'

"Rachel and Leah answered Jacob, "Our father has nothing to give us when he dies. He treated us like strangers. He sold us to you, and then he spent all of our money. God took all this wealth from our father, and now it belongs to us. So you should do whatever God told you to do!"

"So Jacob prepared for his trip. He put his sons and his wives on camels. Then they began traveling back to the land of Canaan where his father lived. All the flocks of animals that Jacob owned walked ahead of them. He carried everything that he had gotten while he lived in Paddan Aram.

"At this time, Laban was gone to cut the wool from his sheep. While he was gone, Rachel went into his house and stole the false gods that belonged to her father.

"Jacob tricked Laban the Aramean. He did not tell Laban he was leaving. Jacob took his family and everything he owned and left quickly. They crossed the Euphrates River and traveled toward the hill country of Gilead.

"Three days later, Laban learned that Jacob had run away. So Laban gathered his men together and began to chase Jacob. After seven days, Laban found Jacob near the hill country in Gilead. That night God went to Laban in a dream. God said, "Be careful! Be careful of every word you say to Jacob."

The Search for the Stolen Gods

"The next morning Laban caught Jacob. Jacob had set his camp on the mountain. So Laban and all his men set their camp in the hill country of Gilead.

"Laban said to Jacob, "Why did you trick me? Why did you take my daughters like they were women you captured during war? Why did you run away without telling me? If you had told me, I would have given you a party. There would have been singing and dancing with music. You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters good-bye. You were very foolish to do this! I have the power to really hurt you. But last night your father's God came to me in a dream. He warned me not to hurt you in any way. I know that you want to go back to your home. That is why you left. But why did you steal the gods from my house?"

"Jacob answered, "I left without telling you, because I was afraid! I thought you would take your daughters away from me. But I did not steal your gods. If you find any one here with me that has taken your gods, then that person will be killed. Your men will be my witnesses. You can look for anything that belongs to you. Take anything that is yours." (Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban's gods.)

"So Laban went and looked through Jacob's camp. He looked in Jacob's tent and then in

Leah's tent. Then he looked in the tent where the two slave women stayed. But he did not find the gods from his house. Then Laban went into Rachel's tent. *Rachel had hidden the gods inside her camel's saddle, and she was sitting on them. Laban looked through the whole tent, but he did not find the gods.

*And Rachel said to her father, "Father, don't be angry with me. I am not able to stand up before you. I am having my monthly time of bleeding." So Laban looked through the camp, but he did not find the gods from his house.

*Then Jacob became very angry. Jacob said, "What wrong have I done? What law have I broken? Why do you have the right to chase me and stop me?" *You have looked through everything I own. You have found nothing that belongs to you. If you have found anything, then show it to me. Put it here where our men can see it. Let our men decide which one of us is right. *I have worked 20 years for you. During all that time, none of the baby sheep and goats died during birth. And I have not eaten any of the rams* from your flocks. *Any time a sheep was killed by wild animals, I always paid for that myself. I did not take the dead animal to you and say that it was not my fault. But I was robbed day and night. *In the daytime, the sun took away my strength, and at night sleep was taken from my eyes by the cold. *I worked 20 years like a slave for you. For the first 14 years I worked to win your two daughters. The last six years I worked to earn your animals. And during that time you changed my pay ten times. *But the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac,* was with me. If God had not been with me, then you would have sent me away with nothing. But God saw the trouble that I had. God saw the work that I did. And last night God proved that I am right."

Jacob and Laban's Treaty

*Laban said to Jacob, "These girls are my daughters. Their children belong to me. And

these animals are mine. Everything you see here belongs to me. But I can do nothing to keep my daughters and their children. "So I am ready to make an agreement with you. We will set up a pile of stones to show that we have an agreement."

*So Jacob found a large rock and put it there to show that he had made an agreement. *He told his men to find some more rocks and make a pile of rocks. Then they ate beside the pile of rocks. *Laban named that place Jegar Sahadutha.* But Jacob named that place Galeed.*

*Laban said to Jacob, "This pile of rocks will help us both remember our agreement." That is why Jacob called the place Galeed.

Then Laban said, "Let the Lord watch over us while we are separated from each other." So that place was also named Mizpah.

*Then Laban said, "If you hurt my daughters, remember that God will punish you. If you marry other women, remember that God is watching. *Here are the rocks that I have put between us. And here is the special rock to show that we made an agreement. *This pile of rocks and this one special rock both help us remember our agreement. I will never go past these rocks to fight against you. And you must never go on my side of these rocks to fight against me. *May the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their fathers judge us guilty if we break this agreement."

Jacob's father, Isaac, called God "Fear." So Jacob used that name to make the promise. *Then Jacob killed an animal and offered it as a sacrifice* on the mountain. And he invited his men to come and share a meal. After they finished eating, they spent the night on the mountain. *Early the next morning, Laban kissed his grandchildren and his daughters good-bye. He blessed them and went back home.

Jegar Sahadutha Aramaic words meaning "rock pile of the agreement."

Galeed Another name for Gilead. This Hebrew name means "rock pile of the agreement."

Mizpah This means "a place to watch from."

sacrifice A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

rams Male sheep.

Fear of Isaac A name for God.

Reunion With Esau

32 Jacob also left that place. While he was traveling, he saw God's angels. ¹When Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So Jacob named that place Mahanaim.*

²Jacob's brother Esau was living in the area called Seir. This area was the hill-country of Edom.* Jacob sent messengers to Esau. "Jacob told the messengers, 'Tell these things to my master Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says, I have lived with Laban all these years. I have many cows, donkeys, flocks, and men and women servants. Sir, I am sending you this message to ask you to accept us.'"

³The messengers came back to Jacob and said, "We went to your brother Esau. He is coming to meet you. He has 400 men with him."

⁴That message scared Jacob. He divided the people that were with him into two groups. He divided all the flocks and the herds and the camels into two groups. ⁵Jacob thought, "If Esau comes and destroys one group, then the other group can run away and be saved."

⁶Jacob said, "God of my father Abraham! God of my father Isaac! Lord, you told me to come back to my country and to my family. You said that you would do good to me. ⁷You have been very kind to me. You did many good things for me. The first time I traveled across the Jordan River, I owned nothing—only my walking stick. But now I own enough things to have two full groups. ⁸I ask you to please save me from my brother. Save me from Esau. I am afraid of him. I am afraid that he will come and kill all of us, even the mothers with the children. ⁹Lord, you said to me, 'I will be good to you. I will increase your family and make your children as many as the sands of the sea. There will be too many to count.'"

¹⁰Jacob stayed in that place for the night. Jacob prepared some things to give to Esau as a gift. ¹¹Jacob took 200 female goats and 20 male goats, 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep. ¹²Jacob took 30 camels and their colts, 40 cows

and 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 male donkeys. ¹³Jacob gave each flock of animals to his servants. Then Jacob said to the servants, "Separate each group of animals. Go ahead of me and keep some space between each herd." ¹⁴Jacob gave them their orders. To the servant with the first group of animals Jacob said, "When Esau my brother comes to you and asks you, 'Whose animals are these? Where are you going? Whose servant are you?' ¹⁵Then you should answer, 'These animals belong to your servant Jacob. Jacob sent them as a gift to you my master, Esau. And Jacob is also coming behind us.'"

¹⁶Jacob also ordered the second servant, the third servant, and all the other servants to do the same thing. He said, "You will do the same thing to Esau when you meet him. ¹⁷You will say, 'This is a gift to you, and your servant Jacob is behind us.'"

Jacob thought, "If I send these men ahead with gifts, then maybe Esau will forgive me and accept me." ¹⁸So Jacob sent the gifts to Esau. But Jacob stayed that night in the camp.

¹⁹Later that night, Jacob rose and left that place. Jacob took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven sons with him. Jacob crossed the Jabbok River at the crossing. ²⁰Jacob sent his family across the river. Then Jacob sent everything he had across the river.

The Fight With God

²¹Jacob was the last person to cross the river. But before he could cross, while he was still alone, a man came and wrestled with him. The man fought with him until the sun came up. ²²The man saw that he could not defeat Jacob. So he touched Jacob's leg. At that time, Jacob's leg was put out of joint.

²³Then the man said to Jacob, "Let me go. The sun is coming up."

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go. You must bless me."

²⁴And the man said to him, "What is your name?"

And Jacob said, "My name is Jacob."

²⁵Then the man said, "Your name will not be

Mahanaim This name means "Two camps."

Edom A country east of Judah.

Jacob. Your name will now be Israel.* I give you this name because you have fought with God and with men, and you have not been defeated."

²Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name."

But the man said, "Why must you ask my name?" At that time, the man blessed Jacob.

³So Jacob named that place Peniel.* Jacob said, "At this place I have seen God face to face. But my life was saved."⁴Then the sun rose as he passed Peniel.* Jacob was walking crippled because of his leg. ⁵So even today, the people of Israel don't eat the muscle that is on the hip joint, because this is the muscle where Jacob was hurt.

Jacob Shows His Bravery

33 Jacob looked and saw Esau coming. Esau was coming and 400 men were with him. Jacob divided his family into four groups. Leah and her children were in one group, Rachel and Joseph were in one group, and the two maids and their children were in two groups. ²Jacob put the maids with their children first. Then Jacob put Leah and her children behind them. And Jacob put Rachel and Joseph in the last place.

³Jacob himself went out toward Esau. So he was the first person Esau came to. Jacob bowed on the ground seven times while he was walking toward his brother.

⁴When Esau saw Jacob, he ran to meet him. Esau put his arms around Jacob and hugged him. Then Esau kissed him on his neck, and they both cried. ⁵Esau looked and saw the women and children. He said, "Who are these people with you?"

Jacob answered, "These are the children that God gave me. God has been good to me."

⁷Then the two maids and the children with them went to Esau. They bowed down before him. ⁸Then Leah and the children with her went

to Esau and bowed down. And then, Rachel and Joseph went to Esau and bowed down.

⁹Esau said, "Who were all those people I saw while I was coming here? And what were all those animals for?"

Jacob answered, "Those are my gifts to you so that you might accept me."

¹⁰But Esau said, "You don't have to give me gifts, brother. I have enough for myself."

¹¹Jacob said, "No! I beg you! If you truly accept me, then please accept the gifts I give you. I am very happy to see your face again. It is like seeing the face of God. I am very happy to see that you accept me. ¹²So I beg that you also accept the gifts I give you. God has been very good to me. I have more than I need." In this way Jacob begged Esau to take the gifts. So Esau accepted the gifts.

¹³Then Esau said, "Now you can continue your journey. I will go with you."

¹⁴But Jacob said to him, "You know that my children are weak. And I must be careful with my flocks and their young animals. If I force them to walk too far in one day, all the animals will die. ¹⁵So you go on ahead. I will follow you slowly. I will go slow enough for the cattle and other animals to be safe. And I will go slow enough so that my children will not become too tired. I will meet you in Seir."

¹⁶So Esau said, "Then I will leave some of my men with you to help you."

But Jacob said, "That is very kind of you. But there is no need to do that." ¹⁷So that day Esau started on his trip back to Seir. ¹⁸But Jacob went to Succoth. In that place he built a house for himself and small barns for his cattle. That is why the place was named Succoth.*

¹⁹Later, Jacob moved all he owned to the city of Shechem in the land of Canaan. Jacob made his camp in a field near the city. ²⁰Jacob bought that field from the family of Hamor, father of Shechem. Jacob paid 100 pieces of silver. ²¹Jacob built an altar there to worship God. Jacob named the place "El, the God of Israel."

Israel This name might mean "he fights for God," "he fights with God," or "God fights."

Peniel, Penuel Two forms of the same name which means "the face of God."

Succoth A town east of the Jordan River. This name means "temporary shelters."

The Rape of Dinah

34 Dinah was the daughter of Leah and Jacob. One day, Dinah went out to see the women of that land. ²Shechem, the son of Hamor the king of that land, saw Dinah. He captured her and forced her to have sexual relations with him. ³Shechem fell in love with Dinah and wanted to marry her. ⁴Shechem told his father, "Please get this girl for me so that I can marry her."

⁵Jacob learned that the boy had done this very bad thing to his daughter. But all Jacob's sons were out in the field with the cattle. So Jacob did nothing until they came home. ⁶At that time, Shechem's father, Hamor, went to talk with Jacob.

⁷In the fields, Jacob's sons heard the news about what happened. They were very angry when they heard this. They were mad because Shechem had brought shame to Israel by sleeping with Jacob's daughter. Shechem had done a very bad thing. So the brothers came in from the fields.

⁸But Hamor talked to the brothers. He said, "My son Shechem wants Dinah very much. Please let him marry her. ⁹This marriage will show we have a special agreement. Then our men can marry your women, and your men can marry our women. ¹⁰You can live in the same land with us. You will be free to own the land and to trade here."

¹¹Shechem also talked to Jacob and the brothers. Shechem said, "Please accept me. I will do anything you ask me to do. ¹²I will give you any gift* you want if you only allow me to marry Dinah. I will give you anything you ask, but let me marry Dinah."

¹³Jacob's sons decided to lie to Shechem and his father. The brothers were still mad because Shechem had done such a bad thing to their sister Dinah. ¹⁴So the brothers said to him, "We cannot allow you to marry our sister because you are not yet circumcised.* It would be

wrong for our sister to marry you. ¹⁵But we will allow you to marry her if you do this one thing: Every man in your town must become circumcised like us. ¹⁶Then your men can marry our women, and our men can marry your women. Then we will become one people. ¹⁷If you refuse to be circumcised, then we will take Dinah away."

¹⁸This agreement made Hamor and Shechem very happy. ¹⁹Shechem was very happy to do what Dinah's brothers asked.

Revenge

Shechem was the most honored man in his family. ²⁰Hamor and Shechem went to the meeting place of their city. They spoke to the men of the city and said, ²¹"These people of Israel want to be friends with us. We want to let them live in our land and be at peace with us. We have enough land for all of us. We are free to marry their women. And we are happy to give them our women for marriage. ²²But there is one thing that all our men must agree to do. All our men must agree to become circumcised* the same as the people of Israel. ²³If we do this, then we will become rich from all their cattle and animals. So we should make this agreement with them, and they will stay here with us." ²⁴All the men who heard this in the meeting place agreed with Hamor and Shechem. And every man was circumcised at that time.

²⁵Three days later, the men who were circumcised were still sore. Two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, knew that the men would be weak at this time. So they went to the city and killed all the men there. ²⁶Dinah's brothers, Simeon and Levi, killed Hamor and his son Shechem. Then they took Dinah out of Shechem's house and left. ²⁷Jacob's sons went to the city and stole everything that was there. They were still angry because of what Shechem did to their sister. ²⁸So the brothers took all their animals. They took all their donkeys and everything else in the city and in the fields. ²⁹The brothers took everything those people owned. The brothers even took the wives and children.

gift Or, "dowry." Here this means the money a man paid for a wife.

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

³⁰But Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have given me much trouble. All the people in this land will hate me. All the Canaanite people and the Perizzite people will turn against me. There are only a few of us. If the people in this land gather together to fight against us, then I will be destroyed. And all our people will be destroyed with me."

³¹But the brothers said, "Should we let those people treat our sister like a prostitute?* No! Those people were wrong to do that to our sister!"

Jacob in Bethel

35 God said to Jacob, "Go to the town of Bethel.* Live there and make an altar* for worship. Remember El,* the God who appeared* to you there when you were running away from your brother Esau. Make your altar to worship that God there."

¹So Jacob said to his family and to all his servants, "Destroy all those foreign gods made of wood and metal that you have. Make yourselves pure. Put on clean clothes. ²We will leave here and go to Bethel. In that place, I will build an altar to the God who helped me during my time of trouble. And that God has been with me everywhere I went."

³So the people gave Jacob all the foreign gods that they had. And they gave Jacob all the rings they were wearing in their ears. Jacob buried all these things under an oak tree near the town called Shechem.

⁴Jacob and his sons left that place. The people in that area wanted to follow and kill them. But they became very afraid and did not follow Jacob. ⁵So Jacob and his people went to Luz. Luz is now called Bethel.* It is in the land of Canaan. ⁶Jacob built an altar* there. Jacob named the place "El Bethel." Jacob chose this

name because that is the place God first appeared to him when he was running from his brother.

⁷Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died there. They buried her under the oak tree at Bethel. They named that place Allon Bacuth.*

Jacob's New Name

⁸When Jacob came back from Paddan Aram, God appeared to him again. And God blessed Jacob. ⁹God said to Jacob, "Your name is Jacob. But I will change that name. You will not be called Jacob now. Your new name will be Israel.*" So God named him Israel.

¹⁰God said to him, "I am God All-Powerful. And I give you this blessing: Have many children and grow into a great nation. Other nations and other kings will come out of you."

¹¹I gave Abraham and Isaac some special land. Now I give that land to you. And I also give that land to all your people who live after you."

¹²Then God left that place. ¹³Jacob set up a memorial stone* in this place. Jacob made the rock holy by pouring wine and oil on it. This was a special place because God spoke to Jacob there. And Jacob named the place Bethel.*

Rachel Dies Giving Birth

¹Jacob and his group left Bethel. Just before they came to Ephrath (*Bethlehem*), Rachel began giving birth to her baby. ²But Rachel was having much trouble with this birth. She was having great pain. Rachel's nurse saw this and said, "Don't be afraid Rachel. You are giving birth to another son."

³Rachel died while giving birth to the son. Before dying, Rachel named the boy Benoni.* But Jacob called him Benjamin.*

Allon Bacuth This name means "the oak tree of sadness."

Israel This name might mean "he fights for God" or "he fights with God."

memorial stone A stone that was set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Benoni This name means "son of my suffering."

Benjamin This name means "right-hand son" or "favorite son."

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin.

Bethel This name means "God's house."

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

El A Hebrew name for God.

God who appeared God often used special shapes so people could see him. Sometimes he was like a man, an angel, a fire, or a bright light.

¹⁹Rachel was buried on the road to Ephrath. (Ephrath is Bethlehem.) ²⁰And Jacob put a special rock on her grave to honor Rachel. That special rock is still there today. ²¹Then Israel (Jacob) continued his journey. He camped just south of Eder tower.*

²²Israel stayed there for a short time. While he was there, Reuben slept with Israel's woman servant* Bilhah. Israel heard about this and was very angry.

The Family of Israel

Jacob (Israel) had twelve sons.

²³ Leah's sons were:
Jacob's firstborn son Reuben,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and
Zebulun.

²⁴ Rachel's sons were:
Joseph and Benjamin.

²⁵ Bilhah was Rachel's maid. Bilhah's sons were:
Dan and Naphtali.

²⁶ Zilpah was Leah's maid. Zilpah's sons were:
Gad and Asher.

Those are Jacob's (Israel's) sons who were born in Paddan Aram.

²⁷Jacob went to his father Isaac at Mamre in Kiriath Arba (Hebron). This is where Abraham and Isaac had lived. ²⁸Isaac lived 180 years. ²⁹Then Isaac became weak and died. Isaac lived a long and full life. His sons Esau and Jacob buried him in the same place as his father.

Esau's Family

36 The family history of Esau (Edom). ²Esau married women from the land of Canaan. Esau's wives were: Adah, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the son of Zibeon the Hivite, and ³Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ⁴Esau and Adah had a son named

Eliphaz. Basemath had a son named Reuel. ⁵And Oholibamah had three sons: Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. Those were Esau's sons that were born in the land of Canaan.

⁶Jacob and Esau's families became too big for the land in Canaan to support them all. So Esau moved away from his brother Jacob. Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, all his slaves, cows and other animals, and everything else that he got in Canaan and moved to the hill country of Seir.* (Esau is also named Edom—and this is another name for the country Seir.)

⁷Esau is the father of the people of Edom.* These are the names of Esau's family living in the hill country of Seir (Edom):

¹⁰ Esau's sons were:
Eliphaz, the son of Adah and Esau and
Reuel, the son of Basemath and Esau.

¹¹ Eliphaz had five sons:
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and
Kenaz.

¹² Eliphaz also had a woman servant*
named Timna.
Timna and Eliphaz had a son named
Amalek.

¹³ Reuel had four sons:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and
Mizzah.

Those were Esau's grandsons from his wife Basemath.

¹⁴Esau's third wife was Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah. (Anah was the son of Zibeon.) Esau and Oholibamah's children were: Jeush, Jalam, Korah.

¹⁵ These are the family groups* that came from Esau:

Esau's first son was Eliphaz.
From Eliphaz came:

Seir A mountain range in Edom.

Edom A country east of Judah.

family groups Or, "family leaders." These families became large tribes and nations.

Eder tower Or, "Migdal Eder."

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, ¹⁶Korah, Gatam, and Amalek.

All those family groups* came from Esau's wife Adah.

- ¹⁷ Esau's son Reuel was the father of these families:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

All those families came from Esau's wife Basemath.

¹⁸Esau's wife Oholibamah, daughter of Anah, gave birth to Jeush, Jalam, and Korah. Those three men were the fathers of their families. ¹⁹All those families came from Esau.

²⁰Seir, a Horite man, lived in Edom* before Esau. These are the sons of Seir: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, ²¹Dishon, Ezer, Dishan. Those sons were the heads of their families.

- ²² Lotan was the father of:
Hori and Heman.
(Timna was Lotan's sister.)
- ²³ Shobal was the father of:
Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
- ²⁴ Zibeon had two sons:
Aiah and Anah.
(Anah is the man who found the hot spring in the mountains while he was caring for his father's donkeys.)
- ²⁵ Anah was the father of:
Dishon and Oholibamah.
- ²⁶ Dishon had four sons:
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.
- ²⁷ Ezer had three sons:
Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
- ²⁸ Dishan had two sons:
Uz and Aran.

²⁹These are the names of the leaders of the Horite families: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,

family groups Or, "family leaders." These families became large tribes and nations.
Edom A country east of Judah.

²⁰Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. Those men were the leaders of the families that lived in the land of Seir (*Edom**). ²¹At that time, there were kings in Edom. Edom had kings a long time before Israel did.

²²Bela son of Beor was a king who ruled in Edom.* He ruled over the city of Dinhabah. ²³When Bela died, Jobab became king. Jobab was the son of Zerah from Bozrah. ²⁴When Jobab died, Husham ruled. Husham was from the land of the Temanite people. ²⁵When Husham died, Hadad ruled that area. Hadad was the son of Bedad. (Hadad was the man who defeated Midian in the country of Moab.) Hadad was from the city of Avith. ²⁶When Hadad died, Samlah ruled that land. Samlah was from Masrekah. ²⁷When Samlah died, Shaul ruled that area. Shaul was from Rehoboth on the Euphrates River. ²⁸When Shaul died, Baal Hanan ruled that country. Baal Hanan was the son of Acbor. ²⁹When Baal Hanan died, Hadad* ruled that country. Hadad was from the city of Pau. Hadad's wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred. (Mezahab was Matred's father.)

³⁰Esau was the father of the Edomite families: Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, Magdiel, and Iram. Each of these families lived in an area that was called by the same name as their family.

Joseph the Dreamer

37 Jacob stayed and lived in the land of Canaan. This is the same land where his father had lived. ²This is the story of Jacob's family.

Joseph was a young man, 17 years old. His job was to care for the sheep and the goats. Joseph did this work with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. (Bilhah and Zilpah were his father's wives.) Joseph told his father about the bad things that his brothers did. ³Joseph was born at a time when his father Israel (*Jacob*) was very old. So Israel (*Jacob*) loved Joseph more than he loved his other sons. Jacob gave

Hadad Or, "Hadar."

his son a special coat. This coat was long and was very beautiful. "Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved Joseph more than he loved them. They hated their brother because of this. They refused to say nice things to Joseph.

"One time Joseph had a special dream. Later, Joseph told his brothers about this dream. After this, his brothers hated him even more.

"Joseph said, "I had a dream. 'We were all working in the field. We were tying sheaves* of wheat together. My sheaf stood, and all of your sheaves made a circle around my sheaf. Then all of your sheaves bowed down to mine."

"His brothers said, "Do you think this means you will be a king and rule over us?" His brothers hated Joseph more now because of the dreams he had about them.

"Then Joseph had another dream. Joseph told his brothers about this dream. Joseph said, "I had another dream. I saw the sun, the moon, and eleven stars bowing down to me."

"Joseph also told his father about this dream. But his father criticized him. His father said, "What kind of dream is this? Do you believe that your mother, your brothers, and I will bow down to you?" "Joseph's brothers continued to be jealous of him. But Joseph's father thought much about all these things and wondered what they could mean.

"One day, Joseph's brothers went to Shechem to care for their father's sheep. "Jacob said to Joseph, "Go to Shechem. Your brothers are there with my sheep."

Joseph answered, "I will go."

"Joseph's father said, "Go and see if your brothers are safe. Come back and tell me if my sheep are all fine." So Joseph's father sent him from the Valley of Hebron to Shechem.

"At Shechem, Joseph became lost. A man found him wandering in the fields. The man said, "What are you looking for?"

"Joseph answered, "I am looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are with their sheep?"

"The man said, "They have already gone away. I heard them say that they were going to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers and found them in Dothan.

Joseph Sold Into Slavery

"Joseph's brothers saw him coming from far away. They decided to make a plan to kill him. "The brothers said to each other, "Here comes Joseph, the one who dreams. "We should kill him now while we can. We can throw his body into one of the empty wells. We can tell our father that a wild animal killed him. Then we will show him that his dreams are useless."

"But Reuben wanted to save Joseph. Reuben said, "Let's not kill him. "We can put him into a well without hurting him." Reuben planned to save Joseph and send him back to his father. "Joseph came to his brothers. They attacked him and tore off his long and beautiful coat. "Then they threw him into an empty well that was dry.

"While Joseph was in the well, the brothers sat down to eat. Then they looked and saw a group of traders* traveling from Gilead to Egypt. Their camels were carrying many different spices and riches. "So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit will we get if we kill our brother and hide his death? "We will profit more if we sell him to these traders. Then we will not be guilty of killing our own brother." The other brothers agreed. "When the Midianite traders came by, the brothers took Joseph out of the well. They sold him to the traders for 20 pieces of silver. The traders took him to Egypt.

"During all this time, Reuben was not there with the brothers. He did not know they had sold Joseph. When Reuben came back to the well, he saw that Joseph was not there. Reuben tore his clothes to show his sadness. "Reuben went to the brothers and said, "The boy is not in the well! What will I do?" "The brothers killed a goat and put the goat's blood on Joseph's beautiful coat. "Then the brothers

sheaves Stacks of grain.

traders Literally, "Ishmaelites."

showed the coat to their father. And the brothers said, "We found this coat. Is this Joseph's coat?"

³³The father saw the coat and knew that it was Joseph's. The father said, "Yes, that is his! Maybe some wild animal has killed him. My son Joseph has been eaten by a wild animal!"

³⁴Jacob was so sorry about his son that he tore his clothes. Then Jacob put on special clothes to show that he was sad. Jacob continued to be sad about his son for a long time. ³⁵All of Jacob's sons and daughters tried to comfort him. But Jacob was never comforted. Jacob said, "I will be sorry for my son until the day I die." ³⁶So Jacob continued to be sad for his son Joseph.

³⁷The Midianite traders later sold Joseph in Egypt. They sold him to Potiphar, the captain of the Pharaoh's guards.

Judah and Tamar

38 About that time, Judah left his brothers and went to stay with a man named Hirah. Hirah was from the town of Adullam. ²Judah met a Canaanite girl there and married her. The girl's father was named Shua. ³The Canaanite girl gave birth to a son. They named him Er. ⁴Later, she gave birth to another son. They named the son Onan. ⁵Later she had another son named Shelah. Judah lived in Kezib when his third son was born.

⁶Judah chose a woman to be the wife of his first son Er. The woman's name was Tamar. ⁷But Er did many bad things. The Lord was not happy with him. So the Lord killed him. ⁸Then Judah said to Er's brother Onan, "Go and sleep with your dead brother's wife.* Become like a husband to her. If children are born, then they will belong to your brother Er."

⁹Onan knew that the children from this union would not belong to him. Onan had sexual relations with Tamar, but he did not allow himself to stay inside her. ¹⁰This made

the Lord angry. So the Lord killed Onan also. ¹¹Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Go back to your father's house. Stay there and don't marry until my young son Shelah grows up." Judah was afraid that Shelah would also be killed like his brothers. Tamar went back to her father's home.

¹²Later, Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. After Judah's time of sadness, he went to Timnah with his friend Hirah from Adullam. Judah went to Timnah to have the wool cut from his sheep. ¹³Tamar learned that Judah, her father-in-law, was going to Timnah to cut the wool from his sheep. ¹⁴Tamar always wore clothes that showed that she was a widow. So she put on some different clothes and covered her face with a veil. Then she sat down near the road going to Enaim, a town near Timnah. Tamar knew that Judah's younger son Shelah was now grown up. But Judah would not make plans for her to marry him.

¹⁵Judah traveled on that road. He saw her but thought that she was a prostitute.* (Her face was covered with a veil like a prostitute.) ¹⁶So Judah went to her and said, "Let me have sexual relations with you" (Judah did not know that she was Tamar, his daughter-in-law.)

She said, "How much will you give me?"

¹⁷Judah answered, "I will send you a young goat from my flock."

She answered, "I agree to that. But first you must give me something to keep until you send me the goat."

¹⁸Judah asked, "What do you want me to give you as proof that I will send you the goat?"

Tamar answered, "Give me your seal and its string* that you use on your letters. And give me your walking stick." Judah gave these things to her. Then Judah and Tamar had sexual relations, and Tamar became pregnant. ¹⁹Tamar went home and took off the veil that covered her face. Then she again wore the special clothes that showed she was a widow.

I will be sorry ... die Literally, "I will go down to my son in Sheol (the place of death) in sadness."

Go and sleep ... wife In Israel if a man died without children, one of his brothers would take the widow. If a child was born, it would be considered the dead man's child.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sins.

seal ... string People wrote a contract, folded it, tied it with string, put wax or clay on the string, and pressed the seal onto it as a signature.

²Judah sent his friend Hirah to Enaim the prostitute to give her the goat he promised. Also Judah told Hirah to get the special seal and the walking stick from her. But Hirah could not find her. ³Hirah asked some of the men at the town of Enaim, "Where is the prostitute* that was here by the road?"

The men answered, "There has never been a prostitute here."

⁴So Judah's friend went back to Judah and said, "I could not find the woman. The men that lived in that place said that there was never a prostitute there."

⁵So Judah said, "Let her keep the things. I don't want people to laugh at us. I tried to give her the goat, but we could not find her. That is enough."

Tamar Is Pregnant

⁶About three months later, someone told Judah, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar sinned like a prostitute,* and now she is pregnant."

Then Judah said, "Take her out and burn her."

⁷The men went to Tamar to kill her. But she sent a message to her father-in-law. Tamar said, "The man who made me pregnant is the man who owns these things. Look at these things. Whose are they? Whose special seal and string* is this? Whose walking stick is this?"

⁸Judah recognized those things and said, "She is right. I was wrong. I did not give her my son Shelah like I promised." And Judah did not sleep with her again.

⁹The time came for Tamar to give birth. They saw she was going to have twins. ¹⁰While she was giving birth, one baby put his hand out. The nurse tied a red string on the hand and said, "This baby was born first." ¹¹But that baby pulled his hand back in. Then the other baby was born first. So the nurse said, "So you were

able to break out first!" So they named him Perez.* ¹²After this, the other baby was born. This was the baby with the red string on his hand. They named him Zerah*

Joseph Is Sold to Potiphar in Egypt

39 The traders* who bought Joseph took him down to Egypt. They sold him to the captain of Pharaoh's guard, Potiphar. ²But the Lord helped Joseph. Joseph became a successful man. Joseph lived in the house of his master, Potiphar the Egyptian.

³Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph. Potiphar saw that the Lord helped Joseph be successful in everything he did. ⁴So Potiphar was very happy for Joseph. Potiphar allowed Joseph to work for him and help him to rule the house. Joseph was the ruler over everything Potiphar owned. ⁵After Joseph was made the ruler over the house, the Lord blessed the house and everything that Potiphar owned. The Lord did this because of Joseph. And the Lord blessed everything that grew in the fields of Potiphar. ⁶So Potiphar allowed Joseph to take responsibility for everything in the house. Potiphar worried about nothing, only the food he ate.

Joseph Refuses Potiphar's Wife

Joseph was a very handsome, good-looking man. ²After some time, the wife of Joseph's master began to like Joseph. One day she said to him, "Sleep with me."

³But Joseph refused. He said, "My master trusts me with everything in his house. He has given me responsibility for everything here. ⁴My master has made me almost equal to him in his house. I must not sleep with his wife! That is wrong! It is a sin against God."

⁵The woman talked with Joseph every day, but Joseph refused to sleep with her. ⁶One day Joseph went into the house to do his work. He was the only man in the house at that time.

prostitute A woman that sells her body for sex. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

seal and string People write a contract, folded it, tied it with a string, put wax or clay on the string, and pressed the seal onto it as a signature.

Perez This name is like the Hebrew word meaning, "to break out."

Zerah This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "bright." **traders** Literally, "Ishmaelites."

¹²His master's wife grabbed his coat and said to him, "Come and sleep with me." But Joseph ran out of the house. And he left his coat in her hand.

¹³The woman saw Joseph had left his coat in her hands and had run out of the house. So she decided to lie about what had happened. "And she called to the men outside. She said, 'Look! This Hebrew slave was brought here to make fun of us. He came in and tried to sleep with me. But I cried out with a loud voice. ¹⁵My cry scared him and he ran away. But he left his coat with me.' ¹⁶Then she kept his coat until her husband, Joseph's master, came home. ¹⁷And she told her husband the same story. She said, 'This Hebrew slave you brought here tried to attack me! ¹⁸But when he came near me I cried out. He ran away, but he left his coat.'"

Joseph Put in Prison

¹⁹Joseph's master heard what his wife said. And he became very angry. ²⁰There was a prison where the king's enemies were put. So Potiphar put Joseph into that prison. And Joseph stayed there.

²¹But the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord continued to show his kindness to Joseph. After some time, the leader of the prison guards began to like Joseph. ²²The leader of the guards put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners. Joseph was their leader, but he still did the same work they did. ²³The ruler of the guards trusted Joseph with everything that was in the prison. This happened because the Lord was with Joseph. The Lord helped Joseph be successful in everything he did.

Joseph Interprets Two Dreams

40 Later, two of Pharaoh's servants did something wrong to Pharaoh. These servants were the baker and the man who served wine to Pharaoh. ²Pharaoh became angry with his baker and wine server. ³So Pharaoh put them in the same prison as Joseph. Potiphar, the commander of Pharaoh's guards, was in charge of this prison. ⁴The commander put the two prisoners under Joseph's care. The

two men continued to stay in prison for some time. ⁵One night, both of the prisoners had a dream. (The two prisoners were the servants of the king of Egypt—the baker and the wine server.) Each prisoner had his own dream. And each dream had its own meaning. ⁶Joseph went to them the next morning. Joseph saw that the two men were worried. ⁷Joseph asked them, "Why do you look so worried today?"

⁸The two men answered, "We dreamed last night, but we don't understand what we dreamed. There is no one to interpret or explain the dreams to us."

Joseph said to them, "God is the One who can understand and interpret dreams. So I beg you, tell me your dreams."

The Wine Server's Dream

⁹So the wine server told Joseph his dream. The server said, "I dreamed I saw a vine. ¹⁰On the vine there were three branches. I watched the branches grow flowers and then become grapes. ¹¹I was holding Pharaoh's cup. So I took the grapes and squeezed the juice into the cup. Then I gave the cup to Pharaoh."

¹²Then Joseph said, "I will explain the dream to you. The three branches mean three days. ¹³Before the end of three days, Pharaoh will forgive you and allow you to go back to your work. You will do the same work for Pharaoh as you did before. ¹⁴But when you are free, remember me. Be good to me and help me. Tell Pharaoh about me so that I can get out of this prison. ¹⁵I was taken from my own home, the land of my people, the Hebrews. I have done nothing wrong. So I should not be in prison."

The Baker's Dream

¹⁶The baker saw that the other servant's dream was good. So the baker said to Joseph, "I also had a dream. I dreamed there were three bread baskets on my head. ¹⁷In the top basket there were all kinds of baked food. This food was for the king. But birds were eating this food."

¹¹Joseph answered, "I will tell you what the dream means. The three baskets mean three days. ¹²Before the end of three days, the king will take you out of this prison. Then the king will cut your head off! He will hang your body on a pole. And birds will eat your body."

Joseph Is Forgotten

²³Three days later, it was Pharaoh's birthday. Pharaoh gave a party for all his servants. At the party, Pharaoh allowed the wine server and the baker to leave the prison. ²⁴Pharaoh freed the wine server. Pharaoh gave him his job back. And the wine server put a cup of wine in Pharaoh's hand. ²⁵But Pharaoh killed the baker. Everything happened the way Joseph said it would. ²⁶But the wine server did not remember to help Joseph. He said nothing about Joseph to Pharaoh. The wine server forgot about Joseph.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 Two years later, Pharaoh had a dream. Pharaoh dreamed he was standing beside the Nile River. ²Then Pharaoh saw seven cows come out of the river. The cows were fat and beautiful. The cows stood there and ate the grass. ³Then seven more cows came out of the river, but these cows were thin and ugly. These seven cows stood beside the seven beautiful cows. ⁴The seven ugly cows ate the seven beautiful fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. ⁵Pharaoh slept again and dreamed a second time. He dreamed he saw seven heads of grain growing on one plant. The heads of grain were fat and good. ⁶Then he saw seven more heads of grain grow on that same plant. But these heads of grain were thin and ruined by the hot wind. ⁷Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven fat and good heads of grain. Pharaoh woke up again. And he realized it was only a dream. ⁸The next morning Pharaoh was worried about these dreams. So he sent for all the men of Egypt who do magic. And he sent for all the wise men. Pharaoh told them the dreams. But none of the men could explain or interpret the dreams.

The Servant Tells Pharaoh About Joseph

⁹Then the wine servant remembered Joseph. The servant said to Pharaoh, "I remember something that happened to me. ¹⁰You were angry with me and the baker. And you put us in prison. ¹¹In prison we both had a dream on the same night. Each dream had a different meaning. ¹²A young Hebrew man was in the prison with us. He was a servant of the commander of the guards. We told him our dreams, and he explained the dreams to us. He gave us the meaning of each dream. ¹³And the meanings he told were true. He said I would be free and have my old job back. And that was true. And he said the baker would die, and that was true."

Joseph Is Called to Interpret the Dreams

¹⁴So Pharaoh called Joseph from the prison. The guards brought Joseph quickly out of the prison. Joseph shaved and put on clean clothes. Then he went and stood before Pharaoh. ¹⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream. But there is no one who can explain the dream to me. I heard that you can interpret and explain dreams when someone tells you about them."

¹⁶Joseph answered, "It is not my skill that is able to understand dreams. God is the One who has that power. And God will do this for Pharaoh."

¹⁷Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, I was standing beside the Nile River. ¹⁸I saw seven cows come up out of the river and eat the grass. These cows were fat and beautiful.

¹⁹"Then I saw seven more cows come out of the river. These cows were thin and ugly. They were the worst cows I have seen in all the land of Egypt. ²⁰And these ugly and thin cows ate the first seven beautiful cows. ²¹But after they ate seven cows, they were still thin and ugly. You could look at them and could not see that they had eaten seven other cows. They looked as thin and ugly as they did in the beginning. Then I woke up.

²²"Then, in my next dream, I saw seven heads of grain growing on one grain plant. Those heads of grain were full and good and beautiful. ²³Then seven more heads of grain grew after them. But those heads of grain were thin and ugly and ruined by the hot wind. ²⁴Then the thin heads of grain ate the seven good heads. I told these dreams to my men who do magic and to my wise men. But no one can explain the dreams to me. What do they mean?"

Joseph Tells the Dreams' Meaning

²⁵Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "Both of these dreams mean the same thing. God is telling you what will soon happen. ²⁶The seven good cows are seven years. And the seven good heads of grain are seven years. Both dreams are the same thing. ²⁷The seven thin and ugly cows and the seven bad heads of grain mean seven years of hunger in the land. These seven years will come after seven good years.

²⁸"God has shown you what will soon happen. This will happen like I told you. ²⁹You will have seven years of good crops and plenty to eat in all the land of Egypt. ³⁰But after those seven years, there will come seven years of hunger in all the land. All the food that grew in Egypt will be forgotten. This famine* will destroy the land. ³¹People will forget what it is like to have plenty of food.

³²"Pharaoh, you had two dreams about the same thing. This happened to show that God really will make this happen. And it shows that God will make it happen soon.

³³"So Pharaoh, you should choose a man that is very smart and wise. You should make that man ruler over the land of Egypt. ³⁴Then you should choose other men to collect food from the people. Every person should give one-fifth of all the food he grows during the seven good years. ³⁵Order these men to collect all the food during the good years that are coming. Tell the men they have the authority to

store the grain in the cities. Then they should guard the grain until it is needed. ³⁶That grain will help during the seven years of hunger that will come to the land of Egypt. Then the people in Egypt will not die during the seven years with no food."

³⁷This seemed like a very good idea to Pharaoh. All his servants agreed. ³⁸Pharaoh asked his servants, "Can any of you find a better man than Joseph to take this job? God's spirit makes this man truly wise!"

³⁹So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "God has shown all these things to you. So you must be the most wise. ⁴⁰So I will make you governor over the land. The people will obey all your commands. I will be the only ruler in the land greater than you."

⁴¹Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I now make you governor over all the land of Egypt." ⁴²Then Pharaoh gave Joseph his ring with the royal seal on it. And he gave Joseph a fine linen robe to wear. Pharaoh put a gold chain around Joseph's neck. ⁴³Pharaoh told Joseph to ride in the second royal chariot. Special guards walked ahead of his chariot. They told the people, "People, bow down to Joseph." So Joseph was made governor of all of Egypt. ⁴⁴Pharaoh said to him, "I am Pharaoh, the king, so I will do what I want to do. But no other person in Egypt can lift a hand or move a foot unless you say he can."

⁴⁵Pharaoh gave Joseph another name Zaphenath Paneah.* Pharaoh also gave Joseph a wife named Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, a priest in the city of On. So Joseph became governor over all the land of Egypt.

⁴⁶Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving the king of Egypt. Joseph traveled through all the land of Egypt. ⁴⁷During the seven good years, the crops in the land grew very well. ⁴⁸And Joseph saved food during the seven years in Egypt. Joseph stored the food in the cities. In every city Joseph stored grain that grew in the fields around the city. ⁴⁹Joseph stored much grain. It was like the sands of the

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die because there is not enough food or water.

Zaphenath Paneah This Egyptian name probably means "sustainer of life," but it is like Hebrew words meaning "a person who explains secret things."

sea. He stored so much grain that it could not be measured.

²Joseph's wife was Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of On. Before the first year of hunger came, Joseph and Asenath had two sons. ³The first son was named Manasseh.* Joseph named him this because Joseph said, "God made me forget all of the troubles I have had, and everything about my home." ⁴Joseph named the second son Ephraim.* Joseph gave him this name because Joseph said, "I had great troubles, but God has made me successful in everything."

The Time of Hunger Begins

⁵For seven years, people had all the food they needed to eat. And everything grew that was needed. ⁶But after seven years, the time of hunger began. This happened just like Joseph said. In all the lands everywhere, no food grew. People had nothing to eat. But in Egypt, people had enough to eat because of the grain Joseph had stored. ⁷The time of hunger began, and the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh said to the Egyptian people, "Ask Joseph. Do what he says to do."

⁸So after the hunger was everywhere in the land, Joseph gave the people grain from the storehouses. Joseph sold the stored grain to the people of Egypt. The famine* was very bad in Egypt. ⁹All the people in the lands around Egypt came to Egypt to buy grain. They came to Joseph, because there was hunger everywhere in that part of the world.

The Dreams Come True

42 In Jacob's land, there was hunger during this time. But Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt. So Jacob said to his sons, "Why are we sitting here doing nothing? ¹I have heard that there is grain in

Egypt to buy. So we should go there and buy grain for us to eat. Then we will live and not die."

²So ten of Joseph's brothers went to Egypt to buy grain. ³Jacob did not send Benjamin. (Benjamin was Joseph's only full brother.*) Jacob was afraid that something bad might happen to Benjamin.

⁴The time of hunger was very bad in Canaan. So many people from Canaan went to Egypt to buy grain. Among those people were the sons of Israel.

⁵At this time, Joseph was the governor over Egypt. Joseph was the one who permitted the sale of grain to people who came to Egypt. Joseph's brothers came to him and bowed before him. ⁶Joseph saw his brothers, and he knew who they were. But Joseph talked to them like he did not know them. He spoke mean to them. He said, "Where do you come from?"

The brothers answered, "We come from the land of Canaan. We come to buy food."

⁷Joseph knew that these men were his brothers. But they did not know who he was. ⁸And Joseph remembered the dreams that he had dreamed about his brothers.

Joseph Calls His Brothers Spies

Joseph said to his brothers, "You have not come to buy food! You are spies. You came to learn where we are weak."

²But the brothers said to him, "No, sir! We come as your servants. We have come only to buy food. ³We are all brothers—we all have the same father. We are honest men. We have come only to buy food."

⁴Then Joseph said them, "No! You have come to learn where we are weak."

⁵And the brothers said, "No! We are all brothers. There are twelve brothers in our family. We all have the same father. Our youngest brother is still at home with our father. And the other brother died a long time ago. We are like servants before you. We are from the land of Canaan."

Manasseh This name is like the word meaning "to forget."

Ephraim This name is like the Hebrew word "twice fruitful."

famine A time when there is no rain and no crops can grow. People and animals often die because there is not enough food or water.

full brother Literally, "brother." Joseph and Benjamin had the same mother.

¹⁴But Joseph said to them, "No! I can see I was right. You are spies. ¹⁵But I will let you prove that you are telling the truth. You will not leave this place until your youngest brother comes here. ¹⁶So one of you should go back and bring your youngest brother here. During that time, the others will stay here in prison. We will see if you are telling the truth. But I believe you are spies." ¹⁷Then Joseph put them all in prison for three days.

Simeon Kept as a Hostage

¹⁸After three days, Joseph said to them, "I am a good man. I worship God, the same as you do—I will let you prove you are telling the truth. Do this thing, and I will let you live: ¹⁹If you are honest men, then let one of your brothers stay here in prison. And the others can go and carry grain to your people. ²⁰Then bring your youngest brother back here to me. In this way, I will know if you are telling the truth."

The brothers agreed to this. ²¹They said to each other, "We are being punished for the bad thing we did to our younger brother Joseph. We saw the trouble he was in. He begged us to save him. But we refused to listen. So now we are in trouble."

²²Then Reuben said to them, "I told you not to do anything bad to the boy. But you refused to listen to me. So now we are being punished for his death."

²³Joseph was using an interpreter to talk to his brothers. So the brothers did not know that Joseph understood their language. But Joseph heard and understood everything they said. ²⁴Their words made Joseph very sad. So Joseph left them and cried. After a short time, Joseph went back to them. He took Simeon, one of the brothers, and tied him while the other brothers watched. ²⁵Joseph told some servants to fill their bags with grain. The brothers paid Joseph money for this grain. But Joseph didn't keep the money. He put the money in their bags of grain. Then Joseph gave them things they would need for their trip back home.

²⁶So the brothers put the grain on their donkeys and left. ²⁷The brothers stopped for the

night. And one of the brothers opened his sack to get some grain. And he saw his money in the sack. ²⁸He said to the other brothers, "Look! Here is the money I paid for the grain. Someone put the money back in my sack!" The brothers were very scared. They said to one another, "What is God doing to us?"

The Brothers Report to Jacob

²⁹The brothers went to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They told Jacob all the things that happened. ³⁰They said, "The governor of that land spoke rudely to us. He thought that we were spies. ³¹But we told him that we were honest men. We were not spies. ³²We told him that we were twelve brothers. We told him about our father, and we told him our youngest brother was still at home in the land of Canaan."

³³Then the governor of the land said this to us, 'Here is a way to prove that you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me. Take your grain back to your families. ³⁴Then bring your youngest brother to me. Then I will know if you are honest men, or if you were sent from an army to destroy us. If you are telling the truth, I will give your brother back to you. I will give him to you, and you will be free to buy grain in our land.'

³⁵Then the brothers went to take the grain out of their sacks. And every brother found his bag of money in his sack of grain. The brothers and their father saw the money, and they became very scared.

³⁶Jacob said to them, "Do you want me to lose all of my children? Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. And now you want to take Benjamin away too."

³⁷Then Reuben said to his father, "Father, you may kill my two sons if I don't bring Benjamin back to you. Trust me. I will bring Benjamin back to you."

³⁸But Jacob said, "I will not let Benjamin go with you. His brother is dead, and he is the only son left from my wife Rachel. It would kill me if anything happened to him during the trip to Egypt. You would send me to the grave a very sad, old man."

Jacob Agrees for Benjamin to go to Egypt

43 The time of hunger was very bad in the land. ¹The people ate all the grain they had brought from Egypt. When the grain was gone, Jacob said to his sons, "Go to Egypt again. Buy some more grain for us to eat."

²But Judah said to Jacob, "The governor of that country warned us. He said, 'If you don't bring your brother back to me, then I will refuse to talk to you.' 'If you will send Benjamin with us, then we will go down and buy grain. 'But if you refuse to send Benjamin, then we will not go. The man warned us to not come back without him."

³Israel (Jacob) said, "Why did you tell the man you had another brother? Why did you do such a bad thing to me."

⁴The brothers answered, "The man questioned us carefully. He wanted to know about us and about our family. He asked us, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother at home?' We only answered his questions. We didn't know he would ask us to bring our other brother to him!"

⁵Then Judah said to his father Israel, "Send Benjamin with me. I will care for him. We must go to Egypt and get food. If we don't go, then we will all die, even our children. ⁶I will make sure that he is safe. I will be responsible for him. If I don't bring him back to you, then you can blame me forever. ⁷If you had let us go before, we could already have made two trips for food."

⁸Then their father Israel said, "If this is really true, then take Benjamin with you. But take some gifts to the governor. Take some of the things we have been able to gather in our land. Take him some honey, pistachio nuts, almonds, gum, and myrrh.* ⁹Take twice as much money with you this time. Take the money that was given back to you after you paid last time. Maybe the governor made a mistake. ¹⁰Take Benjamin, and go back to the man. ¹¹I pray that God All-Powerful will help you when you stand before the governor. I pray

that he will let Benjamin, and also Simeon, come back safely. If not, I will again be sad from losing my son."

¹²So the brothers took the gifts to give to the governor. And the brothers took twice as much money with them as they took the first time. Benjamin went with the brothers to Egypt.

The Brothers Are Invited to Joseph's House

¹³In Egypt, Joseph saw Benjamin with them. Joseph said to his servant, "Bring those men into my house. Kill an animal and cook it. Those men will eat with me today at noon." ¹⁴The servant did as he was told. He brought the men into Joseph's house.

¹⁵The brothers were scared when they were brought into Joseph's house. They said, "We have been brought here because of the money that was put back in our sacks the last time. They will use that to judge us guilty. Then they will steal our donkeys and make us slaves."

¹⁶So the brothers went to the servant in charge of Joseph's house. ¹⁷They said, "Sir, I promise this is the truth: The last time we came, we came to buy food. ¹⁸On the way home, we opened our sacks and found our money in every sack. We don't know how that money got there. But we brought that money with us to give it back to you. And we have brought more money to pay for the food that we want to buy this time."

¹⁹But the servant answered, "Don't be afraid; believe me. Your God, the God of your father, must have put the money in your sack as a gift. I remember that you paid me for the grain last time."

Then the servant brought Simeon out of the prison. ²⁰The servant led the men into Joseph's house. He gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he gave their donkeys food to eat.

²¹The brothers heard that they were going to eat with Joseph. So they worked until noon preparing their gifts for him.

²²Joseph came home, and the brothers gave him the gifts that they had brought with them. Then they bowed down on the ground.

gum and myrrh The sap from certain plants. This was used to make expensive perfumes and incense.

¹⁰Joseph asked them how they were doing. Joseph said, "Your father, the old man you told me about, is he well? Is he still alive?"

¹¹The brothers answered, "Sir, our father is well. He is still alive." And they again bowed before Joseph.

Joseph Sees His Brother Benjamin

¹²Then Joseph saw his brother, Benjamin. (Benjamin had the same mother as Joseph.) Joseph said, "Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?" Then Joseph said to Benjamin, "God be good to you, son!"

¹³Then Joseph ran from the room. Joseph wanted very much to show his brother Benjamin that he loved him. He felt like crying, but he didn't want his brothers to see him crying. So Joseph ran to his room and cried there. ¹⁴Then Joseph washed his face and came out. He controlled himself and said, "Now it is time to eat."

¹⁵Joseph ate alone at one table. His brothers ate together at another table. The Egyptian men ate together at another table. They believed that it was wrong for them to eat with Hebrews.

¹⁶Joseph's brothers sat at a table in front of him. The brothers were sitting in order, from the oldest brother to the youngest brother. All the brothers kept looking at each other, wondering what was happening. ¹⁷Servants were taking them food from Joseph's table. But the servants gave Benjamin five times more than the others. The brothers continued to eat and drink there with Joseph until they were almost drunk.

Joseph Sets a Trap

44 Then Joseph gave a command to his servant. Joseph said, "Fill the men's sacks with as much grain as they can carry. And put each man's money into the sack with the grain. ²Put the money in the youngest brother's sack. But also put my special silver cup in his sack." The servant obeyed Joseph.

³Early the next morning, the brothers and their donkeys were sent back to their country. ⁴After they had left the city, Joseph said to his servant, "Go and follow the men. Stop them

and say to them, 'We were good to you! So why have you done bad to us? Why did you steal my master's silver cup?' ⁵This is the cup that my master drinks from. This is the cup he uses to ask God questions. You have done wrong to steal his cup."

⁶So the servant obeyed. He rode out to the brothers and stopped them. The servant said the things to them that Joseph told him to say.

⁷But the brothers said to the servant, "Why does the governor say these things? We would not do anything like that! ⁸We brought back the money that we found in our sacks before. So surely we would not steal silver or gold from your master's house. ⁹If you find that silver cup in any of our sacks, then let that man die. You can kill him, and we will be your slaves."

¹⁰The servant said, "We will do like you say. ¹¹But I will not kill the man. ¹²If I find the silver cup, then that man will be my slave. The others will be free."

The Trap Is Sprung; Benjamin Is Caught

¹³Then every brother quickly opened his sack on the ground. ¹⁴The servant looked in the sacks. He started with the oldest brother and ended with the youngest. He found the cup in Benjamin's sack. ¹⁵The brothers were very sad. They tore their clothes with sadness. They put their sacks back on the donkeys and went back to the city.

¹⁶Judah and his brothers went back to Joseph's house. Joseph was still there. The brothers fell on the ground and bowed down. ¹⁷Joseph said to them, "Why have you done this? Didn't you know that I have a special way of learning secrets. No person can do this better than me!"

¹⁸Judah said, "Sir, there is nothing we can say. There is no way to explain. There is no way to show that we are not guilty. God has judged us guilty for something else we did. So all of us, even Benjamin, will be your slaves."

¹⁹But Joseph said, "I will not make you all slaves! Only the man who stole the cup will be my slave. You others can go in peace to your father."

Judah Pleads for Benjamin

"Then Judah went to Joseph and said, "Sir, please let me speak plainly with you. Please don't be angry with me. I know that you are like Pharaoh himself. "When we were here before, you asked us, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' "And we answered you, 'We have a father—he is an old man. And we have a young brother. Our father loves that son because he was born while our father was old. And that young son's brother is dead. So this is the only son that is left born from that mother. Our father loves him very much.' "Then you said to us, 'Then bring that brother to me. I want to see him.' "And we said to you, 'That young boy can't come. He can't leave his father. If his father loses him, then his father would be so sad that he would die.' "But you said to us, 'You must bring your youngest brother or I will not sell you grain again.' "So we went back to our father and told him what you said.

"Later, our father said, 'Go again and buy us some more food.' "And we said to our father, 'We can't go without our youngest brother. The governor said he will not sell us grain again until he sees our youngest brother.' "Then my father said to us, 'You know that my wife Rachel gave me two sons. "I let one son go away, and he was killed by a wild animal. And I haven't seen him since. "If you take my other son away from me, and something happens to him, then I will be sad enough to die.' "So now if we go home without our youngest brother, then our father will see this. This young boy is the most important thing in our father's life. "When he sees that the young boy is not with us, he will die. And it will be our fault. We will cause our father to die with great sorrow.

"I took responsibility for the young boy. I told my father, 'If I don't bring him back to you, then you can blame me all my life.' "So now I ask you, I beg you, please let the boy go back with his brothers. And I will stay and be your slave. "I can't go back to my father if the boy is not with me. I am very afraid of what would happen to my father."

Joseph Tells Who He Is

45 Joseph could not control himself any longer. He cried before all the people that were there. Joseph said, "Tell everyone to leave here." So all the people left. Only the brothers were left with Joseph. Then Joseph told them who he was. "Joseph continued to cry, and all the Egyptian people in Pharaoh's house heard it. "Joseph said to his brothers, "I am your brother Joseph. Is my father doing well?" But the brothers did not answer him. They were scared and confused.

"So Joseph said to his brothers again, "Come here to me. I beg you to come close." So the brothers went close to Joseph. And Joseph said to them, "I am your brother Joseph. I am the one you sold as a slave to Egypt. "Now, don't be worried. Don't be angry with yourselves for what you did. It was God's plan for me to come here. I have come here to save your life. "This terrible time of hunger has continued for two years now. And there will be five more years without planting or harvest. "So God sent me here ahead of you so that I can save your people in this land. "It was not your fault that I was sent here. It was God's plan. God made me like a father to Pharaoh. I am the governor over all his house and over all of Egypt."

Israel Invited to Egypt

"Joseph said, "So leave quickly and go to my father. Tell my father that his son Joseph sends this message":

God has made me governor over all of Egypt. Come here to me. Don't wait. Come now. "You will live near me, in the land of Goshen. You, your children, your grandchildren, and all your animals and herds are welcome here. "I will care for you during the next five years of hunger. So you and your family will not lose everything you own.

"Joseph continued talking to his brothers. He said, "Now you see that it is really me. And your brother Benjamin knows it is me. I am

your brother who is talking to you. ¹³So tell my father about my great wealth here in Egypt. Tell my father about everything you have seen here. Now hurry and bring my father back to me." ¹⁴Then Joseph hugged his brother Benjamin and cried. And Benjamin cried also. ¹⁵Then Joseph kissed all his brothers and cried on them. After this, the brothers began talking with him.

¹⁶Pharaoh learned that Joseph's brothers had come to him. This news spread all through Pharaoh's house. Pharaoh and his servants were very happy about this. ¹⁷So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers to take all the food they need and go back to the land of Canaan. ¹⁸Tell your brothers to bring your father and their families back here to me. I will give you the best land in Egypt to live on. And your family will eat the best food we have here." ¹⁹Then the Pharaoh said, "Also give your brothers some of our best wagons. Tell them to go to Canaan and bring your father and all the women and children back in the wagons. ²⁰Don't worry about bringing any of their things. We will give them the best things we have in Egypt."

²¹So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them good wagons like the Pharaoh had promised. And Joseph gave them enough food for their trip. ²²Joseph gave each brother a suit of beautiful clothes. But Joseph gave Benjamin five suits of beautiful clothes. And Joseph also gave Benjamin 300 pieces of silver. ²³Joseph also sent gifts to his father. He sent ten donkeys with bags full of many good things from Egypt. And he sent ten female donkeys full of grain, bread, and other food for his father on his trip back. ²⁴Then Joseph told his brothers to go. Joseph said to them while they were leaving, "Go straight home. And don't fight on the way."

²⁵So the brothers left Egypt and went to their father in the land of Canaan. ²⁶The brothers told him, "Father, Joseph is still alive. And he is the governor over the whole country of Egypt."

Their father was amazed. He did not believe them. ²⁷But the brothers told their father everything Joseph had said. Then Jacob saw the

wagons that Joseph had sent for him to bring him back to Egypt. Then Jacob became excited and very happy. ²⁸Israel said, "Now I believe you. My son Joseph is still alive! I am going to see him before I die!"

God Assures Israel

46 So Israel began his trip to Egypt. First Israel went to Beersheba. There, Israel worshiped God, the God of his father Isaac. He offered sacrifices.* ²During the night, God spoke to Israel in a dream. God said, "Jacob, Jacob."

And Israel answered, "Here I am."

³Then God said, "I am God, the God of your father. Don't be afraid to go to Egypt. In Egypt I will make you a great nation. ⁴I will go to Egypt with you. And I will bring you out of Egypt again. You will die in Egypt, but Joseph will be with you. His own hands will close your eyes when you die."

Israel Goes to Egypt

⁵Then Jacob left Beersheba and traveled to Egypt. His sons, the sons of Israel, brought their father, their wives, and all their children to Egypt. They traveled in the wagons the Pharaoh had sent. ⁶They also had their cattle and all the things that they owned in the land of Canaan. So Israel went to Egypt with all his children and his family. ⁷With him were his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters. All of his family went with him into Egypt.

Jacob's Family

⁸Here are the names of Israel's* sons and family that went into Egypt with him:

Reuben was Jacob's first son. ⁹Reuben's sons were:
Hanoah, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Israel Another name for Jacob. This name means "he fights for God" or "he fights with God."

¹⁰ Simeon's sons:
Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, and Zohar.
There was also Shaul. (Shaul was
born from a Canaanite woman.)

¹¹ Levi's sons:
Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹² Judah's sons:
Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. (Er
and Onan died while still in
Canaan.)

Perez's sons:
Hezron and Hamul.

¹³ Issachar's sons:
Tola, Puah, Job, and Shimron.

¹⁴ Zebulun's sons:
Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

¹⁵ Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar,
and Zebulun were Jacob's sons from his wife
Leah. Leah gave birth to those sons in Paddan
Aram. There was also her daughter Dinah.
There were 33 people in this family.

¹⁶ Gad's sons:
Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri,
Arodi, and Areli.

¹⁷ Asher's sons:
Imnah, Ishvah, Isvi, Beriah, and their
sister, Serah.

Also Beriah's sons:
Heber and Malkiel.

¹⁸ All those were Jacob's sons from his
wife's servant, Zilpah. There were 16 people in
this family.

¹⁹ Benjamin was also with Jacob. Benjamin
was Jacob and Rachel's son. (Joseph was also
Rachel's son, but Joseph was already in
Egypt.)

²⁰ In Egypt, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh
and Ephraim. (Joseph's wife was Asenath, the
daughter of Potiphera, the priest in the city of
On.)

²¹ Benjamin's sons:
Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman,
Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

²² Those were the sons of Jacob from his
wife Rachel. There were 14 people in this
family.

²³ Dan's son:
Hushim.

²⁴ Naphtali's sons:
Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

²⁵ Those were the sons of Jacob and Bilhah.
(Bilhah was Rachel's maid.) There were seven
people in this family.

²⁶ The total number of Jacob's direct
descendants* that went with him to Egypt was
66 people. (The wives of Jacob's sons were not
counted in this number.) ²⁷ Also, there were the
two sons of Joseph. They had been born in
Egypt. So there was a total of 70 people in
Jacob's family in Egypt.

Israel Arrives in Egypt

²⁸ Jacob sent Judah first to Joseph. Judah
went to Joseph in the land of Goshen. Then
Jacob and his people followed into that land.

²⁹ Joseph learned that his father was coming
near. So Joseph prepared his chariot and went
out to meet Israel, his father, in Goshen. When
Joseph saw his father, he hugged his neck and
cried for a long time.

³⁰ Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now I can die
in peace. I have seen your face and I know that
you are still alive."

³¹ Joseph said to his brothers and to his
father's family, "I will go and tell Pharaoh that
you are here. I will say to Pharaoh, 'My
brothers and my father's family have left the
land of Canaan and have come here to me.'

³² This family is the family of shepherds. They
have always kept cattle and flocks. They have
brought all their animals and everything they
own with them.' ³³ When Pharaoh calls you, he
will ask, 'What work do you do?' ³⁴ You tell
him, 'We are shepherds. All our lives we have
lived by keeping our animals. This is the way
our fathers lived before us.' Then Pharaoh will
allow you to live in the land of Goshen.
Egyptian people do not like shepherds, so it is
better that you stay in Goshen."

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future
families.

Israel Settles in Goshen

47 Joseph went in to Pharaoh and said, "My father and my brothers and all their families are here. They have all their animals and everything they own from the land of Canaan with them. They are now in the land of Goshen." ²Joseph chose five of his brothers to be with him before the Pharaoh.

³Pharaoh said to the brothers, "What work do you do?"

The brothers said to Pharaoh, "Sir, we are shepherds. Our fathers were shepherds before us." ⁴They said to Pharaoh, "The time of hunger is very bad in Canaan. There are no fields left with grass for our animals. So we have come to live in this land. We ask you to please let us live in the land of Goshen."

⁵Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. ⁶You can choose any place in Egypt for them to live. Give your father and your brothers the best land. Let them live in the land of Goshen. And if they are skilled shepherds, then they can also care for my cattle."

⁷Then Joseph called his father Jacob to come in before Pharaoh. Jacob blessed Pharaoh.

⁸Then Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old are you?"

⁹Jacob said to Pharaoh, "I have had a short life with many troubles. I have lived only 130 years. My father and his fathers lived to be much older than I am."

¹⁰Jacob blessed Pharaoh. Then Jacob left from his meeting with Pharaoh.

¹¹Joseph obeyed Pharaoh. He gave his father and brothers land in Egypt. It was the best land in Egypt, near the city of Rameses. ¹²And Joseph gave his father, his brothers, and all their people the food that they needed.

Joseph Buys Land for Pharaoh

¹³The time of hunger became worse. There was no food anywhere in the land. Egypt and Canaan became very poor because of this bad time. ¹⁴People in the land bought more and more grain. Joseph saved the money and

brought it to Pharaoh's house. ¹⁵After some time, the people in Egypt and Canaan had no money left. They had spent all their money to buy grain. So the people of Egypt went to Joseph and said, "Please give us food. Our money is gone. If we don't eat, we will die while you are watching."

¹⁶But Joseph answered, "Give me your cattle, and I will give you food." ¹⁷So the people used their cattle and horses and all their other animals to buy food. And that year, Joseph gave them food and took their animals.

¹⁸But the next year, people had no animals and nothing to buy food with. So the people went to Joseph and said, "You know that we have no money left. And all our animals belong to you. So we have nothing left—only what you see—our bodies and our land. ¹⁹Surely we will die while you are watching. But if you give us food, then we will give Pharaoh our land, and we will be his slaves. Give us seed so that we can plant. Then we will live and not die. And the land will grow food for us again."

²⁰So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. All the people in Egypt sold Joseph their fields. They did this because they were very hungry. ²¹And all the people became slaves of Pharaoh. Everywhere in Egypt, people were Pharaoh's slaves. ²²The only land Joseph didn't buy was the land that the priests owned. The priests didn't need to sell their land because Pharaoh paid them for their work. So they used this money to buy food to eat.

²³Joseph said to the people, "Now I have bought you and your land for Pharaoh. So I will give you seed, and you can plant your fields. ²⁴At harvest time, you must give one-fifth of your crops to Pharaoh. You can keep four-fifths for yourselves. You can use the seed you keep for food and planting the next year. Now you can feed your families and your children."

²⁵The people said, "You have saved our lives. We are happy to be slaves to Pharaoh."

²⁶So Joseph made a law at that time in the land. And that law still continues today. The law says that one-fifth of everything from the land belongs to the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh owns all the land. The only land he doesn't own is

the land of the priests.

"Don't Bury Me in Egypt"

¹⁷Israel (*Jacob*) stayed in Egypt. He lived in the land of Goshen. His family grew and became very large. They got that land in Egypt and did very well.

¹⁸Jacob lived in Egypt 17 years. So Jacob was 147 years old. ¹⁹The time came when Israel (*Jacob*) knew he would soon die, so he called his son Joseph to him. He said, "If you love me, then put your hand under my leg and make a promise.* Promise that you will do what I say and that you will be truthful with me. When I die, don't bury me in Egypt. ²⁰Bury me in the place where my fathers are buried. Carry me out of Egypt and bury me in our family grave."

Joseph answered, "I promise that I will do what you say."

²¹Then Jacob said, "Make a vow to me." And Joseph vowed to him that he would do this. Then Israel (*Jacob*) laid his head back down on the bed.*

Blessings for Manasseh and Ephraim

48 Some time later, Joseph learned that his father was very sick. So Joseph took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim and went to his father. ²When Joseph arrived, someone told Israel, "Your son Joseph has come to see you." Israel was very weak, but he tried hard and sat up in his bed.

³Then Israel said to Joseph, "God All-Powerful showed himself to me at Luz in the land of Canaan. God blessed me there. 'God said to me, 'I will make you a great family. I will give you many children and you will be a great people. Your family will own this land forever.' ⁴And now you have two sons. These two sons were born here in the land

of Egypt before I came. Your two sons Ephraim and Manasseh will be like my own sons. They will be the same as Reuben and Simeon to me. ⁵So these two boys will be my sons. They will share in everything I own. But if you have other sons, they will be your sons. But they will also be like sons to Ephraim and Manasseh—that is, in the future, they will share in everything that Ephraim and Manasseh own. ⁶On the trip from Paddan Aram, Rachel died. This made me very sad. She died in the land of Canaan. We were still traveling toward Ephrath. I buried her there on the road to Ephrath. (Ephrath is Bethlehem.)"

⁷Then Israel saw Joseph's sons. Israel said, "Who are these boys?"

⁸Joseph said to his father, "These are my sons. These are the boys God gave me."

Israel said, "Bring your sons to me. I will bless them."

⁹Israel was old and his eyes were not good. So Joseph brought the boys close to his father. Israel kissed and hugged the boys. ¹⁰Then Israel said to Joseph, "I never thought I would see your face again. But look! God has let me see you and your children."

¹¹Then Joseph took the boys off of Israel's lap and they bowed down in front of his father. ¹²Joseph put Ephraim on his right side and Manasseh on his left side. (So Ephraim was on Israel's left side, and Manasseh was on Israel's right side.) ¹³But Israel crossed his hands and put his right hand on the head of the younger boy Ephraim. Then Israel put his left hand on the head of the older boy Manasseh. He had his left hand on Manasseh, even though Manasseh was firstborn. ¹⁴And Israel blessed Joseph and said,

"My fathers, Abraham and Isaac, worshiped our God.

And that God has led me all of my life.

¹⁵ He was the Angel who saved me from all troubles.

And I pray that he will bless these boys. Now these boys will have my name.

They will have the name of our fathers, Abraham and Isaac.

put your hand ... make a promise This showed that this was a very important promise and that Jacob trusted Joseph to keep his promise.

Then Israel ... on the bed Or, "Then Israel worshiped on the head of this staff." The Hebrew word for "staff" is like the word for "bed." And the word for "worship" means to "bow down" or "lie down."

I pray that they will grow to become great families and nations on earth."

¹⁷Joseph saw that his father put his right hand on the Ephraim's head. This didn't make Joseph happy. Joseph took his father's hand. He wanted to move it from Ephraim's head and put it on Manasseh's head. ¹⁸Joseph said to his father, "You have your right hand on the wrong boy. Manasseh is the firstborn."

¹⁹But his father argued and said, "I know, son. I know. Manasseh is the firstborn. And he will be great. He will also be the father of many people. But the younger brother will be greater than the older brother. And the younger brother's family will be much larger."

²⁰So Israel blessed them that day. He said,

"The people of Israel will use your name in blessing.
They will say, "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh."

In this way, Israel made Ephraim greater than Manasseh.

²¹Then Israel said to Joseph, "Look, my time to die is almost here. But God will still be with you. He will lead you back to the land of your fathers. ²²I have given you something that I did not give your brothers. I give you the mountain that I won from the Amorite people. I fought the people for that mountain with my sword and with my bow and won."

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 Then Jacob called all his sons to him. He said, "All my sons, come here to me. I will tell you what will happen in the future.

¹ "Come together and listen, sons of Jacob. Listen to Israel, your father."

Reuben

¹ "Reuben, you are my first son.
You are my first child.
You are the proudest and the strongest of all my sons.

⁴ But you are wild like waves of a flood.
You will not be the most important of my sons.
You slept with a woman that belonged to your father.
You did not show honor to your father's bed."

Simeon and Levi

⁵ "Simeon and Levi are brothers.
They love to fight with their swords.
⁶ They planned evil things in secret.
My soul wants no part in their plans.
I will not accept their secret meetings.
They killed men when they were angry.
And they hurt animals only for fun.
⁷ Their anger is a curse.
It is too strong.
They are too cruel when they are mad.
They will not get their own land in the land of Jacob.
They will be spread all over Israel."

Judah

⁸ "Judah, your brothers will praise you.
You will defeat your enemies.
Your brothers will bow down to you.
⁹ Judah is like a lion that has killed an animal.
Son, you are like a lion standing over its kill.
Judah is like a lion.
He lies down to rest,
and no one is brave enough to bother him.
¹⁰ Men from Judah's family will be kings.
The sign that his family rules will not leave his family,
before the real king comes.*
Then many people will obey and serve him.
¹¹ He ties his donkey to a grapevine.

before ... comes Or, "until Shiloh comes" or "until the man it belongs to comes."

He ties his young donkey to the best grapevines.

He uses the best wine to wash his clothes.

- ¹² His eyes are red from drinking wine.
His teeth are white from drinking milk.*"

Zebulun

- ¹³ "Zebulun will live near the sea.
His seacoast will be a safe place for ships.
His land will continue as far as the city of Sidon."

Issachar

- ¹⁴ "Issachar is like a donkey who has worked too hard.
He lies down from carrying a heavy load.
¹⁵ He will see his resting place is good.
He will see his land is pleasant.
Then he will agree to carry heavy loads.
He will agree to work as a slave."

Dan

- ¹⁶ "Dan* will judge his own people, like the other families of Israel.
¹⁷ Let Dan be like a snake at the side of the road.
Let him be like a dangerous snake lying near the path.
That snake bites a horse's foot.
And the man riding on the horse falls off the horse.
¹⁸ "Lord, I am waiting for your salvation."

Gad

- ¹⁹ "A group of robbers will attack* Gad.

He ties his donkey ... milk Or, "His donkey will be tied to the grapevine, his young donkey to the best grapevines. He will wash his clothes in wine, his best clothes in the blood of the grapes. "His eyes will be more red than wine, his teeth more white than milk."

Dan This is like the Hebrew word meaning "judge."

A group of robbers will attack The Hebrew words for "group of robbers" and "attack" sound like the name Gad.

But Gad will chase them away."

Asher

- ²⁰ "Asher's land will grow much good food.
He will have food that is good enough for a king."

Naphtali

- ²¹ "Naphtali is like a deer that runs free.
And his words are like their beautiful babies."

Joseph

- ²² "Joseph is very successful.
Joseph is like a vine that makes much fruit,
like a vine growing by a spring,
like a vine growing along a fence.

- ²³ Many people turned against him and fought him.
People with arrows did not like him.

- ²⁴ But he won the fight
with his mighty bow
and his skillful arms.

He gets power
from the Mighty One of Jacob,
from the Shepherd,
the Rock of Israel,

- ²⁵ from the God of your father.
God blesses you.

May God All-Powerful bless you.
May he give you blessings from the sky above,
and blessings from the deep below.
May he give you blessings
from breast and womb.

- ²⁶ My parents had many, many good things happen to them.
And I, your father, was blessed even more.

Your brothers tried to give you away.
But now all my blessings will be piled on you,
high like a mountain."

Benjamin

⁷ "Benjamin is like a hungry wolf.
In the morning he kills and eats.
In the evening he shares what is left."

⁸ Those are the twelve families of Israel. And those are the things their father said to them. He gave each son a blessing that was right for him. ⁹ Then Israel gave them a command. He said, "When I die, I want to be with my people. I want to be buried with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite. ¹⁰ That cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre. It is in the land of Canaan. Abraham bought that field from Ephron so that he could have a burying place. ¹¹ Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried in that cave. Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried in that cave. I buried my wife Leah in that cave. ¹² That cave is in the field that was bought from the Hittite people." ¹³ After Jacob finished talking to his sons, he lay down, put his feet back on the bed and died.

Jacob's Funeral

50 When Israel died, Joseph was very sad. He hugged his father and cried on him and kissed him. ² Joseph commanded his servants to prepare his father's body. (These servants were doctors.) The doctors prepared Jacob's body to be buried. They prepared the body in the special way of the Egyptians. ³ When the Egyptians prepared the body in this special way, they waited 40 days before they buried the body. Then the Egyptians had a special time of sadness for Jacob. This time was 70 days.

⁴ After 70 days, the time of sadness was finished. So Joseph spoke to the Pharaoh's officers. Joseph said, "Please tell this to Pharaoh: 'When my father was near death, I made a promise to him. I promised that I would bury him in a cave in the land of Canaan. This is the cave that he prepared for himself. So please let me go and bury my father. Then I will come back here to you.'"

⁵ Pharaoh answered, "Keep your promise. Go and bury your father."

⁷ So Joseph went to bury his father. All of Pharaoh's officials went with Joseph. Pharaoh's elders (*leaders*) and all the elders of Egypt went with Joseph. ⁸ All the people in the family of Joseph and his brothers went with him. And all of his father's family went with Joseph. (Only the children and the animals were left in the land of Goshen.) ⁹ Men rode in chariots and on horses to go with Joseph. It was a very large group.

¹⁰ They went to Goren Atad,* east of the Jordan River. At this place they had a long funeral service for Israel. This funeral service continued for seven days. ¹¹ The people that lived in Canaan saw the funeral service at Goren Atad. They said, "Those Egyptians are having a very sad service!" So now that place is named Abel Mizraim.*

¹² So Jacob's sons did what their father commanded. ¹³ They carried his body to Canaan and buried it in the cave at Machpelah. This was the cave near Mamre in the field that Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite. Abraham bought that cave to use as a burial place. ¹⁴ After Joseph buried his father, he and everyone in the group with him went back to Egypt.

The Brothers Fear Joseph

¹ After Jacob died, Joseph's brothers became worried. They were afraid that Joseph would still be mad at them for what they did long ago. They said, "Does Joseph still hate us for what we did?" ² So the brothers sent this message to Joseph:

Your father gave us a command before he died. ³ He said, 'Tell Joseph that I beg him to please forgive the wrong that they did to him.' So now Joseph, we beg you to please forgive the wrong thing that we did. We are the servants of God, the God of your father.

The things Joseph's brothers said made Joseph very sad and he cried. ⁴ Joseph's

Goren Atad Or, "Atad's threshing floor."

Abel Mizraim This means "Egyptian time of sadness."

brothers went to him and bowed down in front of him. They said, "We will be your servants."

"Then Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. I am not God! I have no right to punish you." "You had planned to do something bad to me. But God was really planning good things. God's plan was to use me to save the lives of many people. And that is still his plan today. "So don't be afraid. I will care for you and your children." Joseph spoke kindly to his brothers. This made his brothers feel good.

"Joseph continued to live in Egypt with his father's family. Joseph died when he was 110 years old. "During Joseph's life, Ephraim had children and grandchildren. And his son Manasseh had a son named Makir. Joseph lived to see Makir's children.

The Death of Joseph

"When Joseph was near death, he said to his brothers, "My time to die is almost here. But I know that God will care for you. He will lead you out of this land. God will lead you to the land he promised to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

"Then Joseph asked his people to make a promise. Joseph said, "Promise me that you will carry my bones with you when God leads you to that new land."

"Joseph died in Egypt when he was 110 years old. Doctors prepared his body for burial and put the body in a coffin in Egypt.

Exodus

Jacob's Family in Egypt

1 Jacob (*Israel*) traveled to Egypt with his sons. And each son had his own family with him. These are the sons of Israel: ²Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, ³Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, ⁴Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher. ⁵There was a total of 70 people who were direct descendants* of Jacob. (Joseph, one of the twelve sons, was already in Egypt.)

⁶Later, Joseph, his brothers, and all the people of that generation died. ⁷But the people of Israel had many children, and their number grew and grew. The people of Israel became strong, and the country of Egypt was filled with the Israelites.

Trouble for the People of Israel

⁸Then a new king began to rule Egypt. This king did not know Joseph. ⁹This king said to his people, "Look at the people of Israel. There are too many of them! And they are stronger than we are!" ¹⁰We must make plans to stop the Israelites from growing stronger. If there is a war, the people of Israel might join our enemies. Then they might defeat us and escape from us."

¹¹The Egyptian people decided to make life hard for the people of Israel. So the Egyptians put slave masters over the people. The masters forced the Israelites to build the cities of Pithom and Rameses for the king. The king used these cities to store grain and other things.

¹²The Egyptians forced the Israelites to work harder and harder. But the more the people of Israel were forced to work, the more they grew and spread. And the Egyptian people became more and more afraid of the people of Israel. ¹³So the Egyptian people forced the people of Israel to work even harder.

¹⁴The Egyptians made life hard for the Israelites. They forced the Israelites to work very hard making bricks and mortar. They also forced them to work hard in the fields. They forced them to work very hard in everything they did.

The Nurses Who Followed God

¹⁵There were two nurses that helped the Israelite women give birth to children. These nurses were named Shiphrah and Puah. The king of Egypt talked to the nurses. ¹⁶The king said, "You will continue to help the Hebrew* women give birth to their children. If a girl baby is born, then let the baby live. But if the baby is a boy, then you must kill him!"

¹⁷But the nurses trusted* God. So they did not obey the king's command. They let all the boy babies live.

¹⁸The king of Egypt called the nurses and said, "Why did you do this? Why did you let the boy babies live?"

¹⁹The nurses said to the king, "The Hebrew* women are much stronger than the Egyptian women. They give birth to their babies before

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

Hebrew Or, "Israelite."

trusted Literally, "feared" or "respected."

we can go to help them.”^{20,21} God was happy with the nurses. So God was good to them and allowed them to have their own families. And the Hebrew* people continued to have more children, and they became very strong.)

²²So Pharaoh* gave this command to all of his people: “Every time a baby boy is born, you must throw him into the Nile River. But let all the girl babies live.”

Baby Moses

2 There was a man from the family of Levi. He married a woman that was also from the family of Levi. ²The woman became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy. The mother saw how beautiful the baby was, and she hid him for three months. ³The mother was afraid that the baby would be found and killed because he was a boy. After three months, she made a basket and covered it with tar* so that it would float. She put the baby in the basket. Then she put the basket in the river in the tall grass. ⁴The baby’s sister stayed and watched. She wanted to see what would happen to the baby.

⁵At that same time, Pharaoh’s daughter went to the river to wash herself. Her servants were walking beside the river. She saw the basket in the tall grass. She told one of her slaves to go get it. ⁶The king’s daughter opened the basket and saw a baby boy. The baby was crying and she felt sorry for it. She said, “This is one of the Hebrew* babies.”

⁷The baby’s sister was still hiding. Then the baby’s sister stood, and asked the king’s daughter, “Do you want me to go find a Hebrew* woman to help you care for the baby?”

“The king’s daughter said, “Yes, please.”

Hebrew The people of Israel. This name might also include other people as well. This name might mean people that were descendants of Eber (Genesis 10:25-31) or maybe other people who came from east of the Euphrates River.

Pharaoh A title people used for the king of Egypt. This word means “the Great House.”

tar Or, “pitch,” a very thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

So the girl went and brought the baby’s own mother.

⁸The king’s daughter said to the mother, “Take this baby and feed him for me. Care for the baby, and I will pay you.”

So the woman took her baby and cared for him. ⁹The baby grew, and after some time, the woman brought the baby to the king’s daughter. The king’s daughter accepted the baby as her own son. The king’s daughter named him Moses* because she had pulled him from the water.

Moses Helps His People

¹⁰Moses grew and became a man. He saw that his people, the Hebrew* people, were forced to work very hard. One day Moses saw an Egyptian man beating a Hebrew* man. ¹¹Moses looked around and saw that no one was watching. Then Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand.

¹²The next day Moses saw two Hebrew men fighting each other. Moses saw that one man was wrong. Moses said to that man, “Why are you hurting your neighbor?”

¹³The man answered, “Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No! Tell me, will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?”*

Then Moses was afraid. Moses thought to himself, “Now everyone knows what I did.”

¹⁴Pharaoh heard about what Moses did, so he decided to kill Moses. But Moses ran away from Pharaoh. Moses went to the land of Midian. Moses stopped near a well in that land.

Moses in Midian

¹⁵There was a priest in Midian that had seven daughters. Those girls came to that well to get water for their father’s sheep. They were trying to fill the water trough with water. ¹⁶But some shepherds there chased the girls away and would not let them get the water. So Moses:

Moses This name is like a Hebrew word meaning “to pull out.”

yesterday This word is in the ancient Greek translation, but not in the Hebrew text.

helped the girls and gave water to their animals.

¹⁴Then they went back to their father, Reuel.* Their father said to them, "You have come home early today. Why?"

¹⁵The girls answered, "The shepherds tried to chase us away. But an Egyptian man helped us. He got water for us and gave it to our animals."

¹⁶So Reuel said to his daughters, "Where is this man? Why did you leave him? Call him here and let him eat with us."

¹⁷Moses was happy to stay with that man. And that man gave his daughter, Zipporah, to Moses to be his wife. ¹⁸Zipporah gave birth to a son. Moses named his son Gershom.* (Moses gave his son this name because Moses was a stranger in a land that was not his own.)

God Decides to Help Israel

²⁴A long time passed and the king of Egypt died. The people of Israel were still forced to work very hard. They cried for help, and God heard them. ²⁵God heard their prayers, and he remembered the agreement he made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁶God saw the troubles of the people of Israel, and he knew that he would soon help them.

The Burning Bush

3 Moses' father-in-law was named Jethro.* (Jethro was a priest of Midian). Moses was a shepherd over Jethro's sheep. One day, Moses led the sheep to the west side of the desert. Moses went to a mountain called Horeb (Sinai), the mountain of God. ²On that mountain, Moses saw the Angel of the Lord in a burning bush. (This is how it happened.) Moses saw a bush that was burning without being destroyed. ³So Moses said, "I will go closer to the bush and see how a bush can continue burning without being destroyed."

⁴The Lord saw Moses was coming to look at the bush. So God called to Moses from the bush. God said, "Moses, Moses!"

Reuel He is also called Jethro.

Gershom This name is like the Hebrew words meaning "a stranger there."

Jethro He is also called Reuel.

And Moses said, "Yes, Lord."

⁵Then the Lord said, "Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals. You are standing on holy ground. ⁶I am the God of your ancestors.* I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Moses covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Then the Lord said, "I have seen the troubles my people have suffered in Egypt. And I have heard their cries when the Egyptians hurt them. I know about their pain. ⁸Now I will go down and save my people from the Egyptians. I will take them from that land. And I will lead them to a good land where they can be free from troubles.* It is a land filled with many good things.* Many different people live in that land: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹I have heard the cries of the people of Israel. I have seen the way the Egyptians have made life hard for them. ¹⁰So now I am sending you to Pharaoh. Go! Lead my people, the people of Israel, out of Egypt!"

¹¹But Moses said to God, "I am not a great man! How can I be the person to go to Pharaoh and lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

¹²God said, "You can do it because I will be with you! This will be the proof that I am sending you: After you lead the people out of Egypt, you will come and worship me on this mountain!"

¹³Then Moses said to God, "But if I go to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors* sent me to you,' then the people will ask, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?"

¹⁴Then God said to Moses, "Tell them, 'I AM WHO I AM.'* When you go to the people of Israel, tell them, 'I AM sent me to you.'"

¹⁵God also said to Moses, "This is what you

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

land ... troubles Literally, "a spacious land."

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

I AM WHO I AM The Hebrew words are like the name YAHWEH ("Lord").

should tell the people: 'YAHWEH* is the God of your ancestors,* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. My name will always be YAHWEH.* That is how the people will know me for generations and generations to come.' Tell the people, 'YAHWEH has sent me to you!'"

¹⁶"The Lord also said, "Go and gather together the elders (*leaders*) of the people and tell them, 'YAHWEH,* the God of your ancestors,* has appeared to me. The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob spoke to me. The Lord says: I have thought about you and the things that have happened to you in Egypt. ¹⁷And I have decided that I will take you from the troubles you are suffering in Egypt. I will lead you to the land that now belongs to many different people: the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. I will lead you to a land filled with many good things.*

¹⁸"The elders (*leaders*) will listen to you. And then you and the elders (*leaders*) will go to the king of Egypt. You will tell him, 'YAHWEH,* the God of the Hebrew* people, came to us. He told us to travel three days into the desert. There we must offer sacrifices* to YAHWEH our God.'

¹⁹"But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go. Only a great power will force him to let you go. ²⁰So I will use my great power against Egypt. I will cause amazing things to happen in that land. After I do this, he will let you go. ²¹And I will cause the Egyptian people to show kindness to the people of Israel. So the Egyptians will give gifts to your people at the time the Israelites leave Egypt.

²²"Each Hebrew* woman will ask her Egyptian neighbors and any Egyptian woman living in her house, and those people will give her gifts. Your people will get gifts of silver,

gold, and fine clothing. You will put those gifts on your children at the time you leave Egypt. In this way you will take the wealth of the Egyptians."

Proof for Moses

4 Then Moses said to God, "But the people of Israel will not believe me when I tell them that you sent me. They will say, 'The Lord* did not talk to you.'"

²But God said to Moses, "What is that you have in your hand?"

Moses answered, "It is my walking stick."

³Then God said, "Throw your walking stick on the ground."

So Moses threw his walking stick on the ground. And the stick became a snake. Moses was afraid and ran from it. 'But the Lord said to Moses, "Reach out and grab the snake by its tail."

So Moses reached out and caught the snake's tail. When Moses did this, the snake became a walking stick again. ⁵Then God said, "Use your stick in this way and the people will believe that you saw the Lord, the God of your ancestors,* the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

⁶Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will give you another proof. Put your hand under your robe."

So Moses opened his robe and put his hand inside. Then Moses brought his hand out of the robe and it was changed. His hand was covered with spots that were white like snow.

⁷Then God said, "Now put your hand into your robe again." So Moses put his hand into his robe again. Then Moses brought his hand out, and his hand was changed. Now his hand was good again, like it was before.

⁸Then God said, "If the people don't believe you when you use your walking stick, then they will believe you when you show them this sign. ⁹If they still refuse to believe after you show them both of these things, then take some water from the Nile River. Pour the water on the ground, and as soon as it touches the ground, it will become blood."

Lord Or, "YAHWEH."

YAHWEH Or, "Lord." This name is like the Hebrew word meaning, "He is" or "He makes things exist."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

Hebrew Or, "Israelite."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

¹⁰But Moses said to the Lord, "But Lord, I am telling you the truth, I am not a skilled speaker. I have never been able to talk to people well. And now, even after talking to you, I am not a good speaker. You know that I talk slowly and don't use the best words."^{*}

¹¹Then the Lord said to him, "Who made man's mouth? And who can make a man deaf or not able to speak? Who can make a man blind? Who can make a man able to see? I am the One who can do all these things—I am YAHWEH.^{*} ¹²So go. I will be with you when you speak. I will give you the words to say."

¹³But Moses said, "My Lord, I beg you to send another person—not me."

¹⁴The Lord became angry with Moses. The Lord said, "Then I will give you more help. I will use your brother Aaron, from the family of Levi. He is a skilled speaker. Aaron is already coming to you. And he will be happy when he sees you. ¹⁵He will go with you to Pharaoh. I will tell you what to say. Then you will tell Aaron. Aaron will choose the right words to speak to Pharaoh. ¹⁶And Aaron will speak for you to the people. You will be like a great king to him. And he will be your official speaker.^{*} ¹⁷So go. And carry your walking stick with you. Use your stick and the other miracles to show the people I am with you."

Moses Returns to Egypt

¹⁸Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law. Moses said to Jethro, "I ask you to let me go back to my people in Egypt. I want to see if they are still alive."

Jethro said to Moses, "You may go in peace."

¹⁹Then, while Moses was still in Midian, God said to him, "It is safe for you to go back to Egypt now. The men who wanted to kill you are now dead."

²⁰So Moses took his wife and his sons and put them on donkeys. Then Moses traveled

back to the land of Egypt. Moses carried his walking stick with him—the walking stick with the power of God.

²¹While Moses was traveling back to Egypt, God spoke to him. God said, "When you talk to Pharaoh remember to show him all the miracles that I have given you the power to do. But I will cause Pharaoh to be very stubborn. He will not let the people go. ²²Then you should say to Pharaoh: ²³The Lord says, 'Israel is my firstborn^{*} son. And I am telling you to let my son go and worship me! If you refuse to let Israel go, then I will kill your firstborn son.'"

Moses' Son Circumcised

²⁴Moses continued his journey to Egypt. He stopped to sleep in a place for travelers. The Lord met Moses at this place and tried to kill him.^{*} ²⁵But Zipporah took a flint knife^{*} and circumcised^{*} her son. She took the skin and touched his feet. Then she said to Moses, "You are a bridegroom of blood to me."^{*} ²⁶Zipporah said this because she had to circumcise her son. So God forgave Moses and did not kill him.^{*}

Moses and Aaron before God

²⁷The Lord had spoken to Aaron. The Lord had told him, "Go out into the desert and meet Moses." So Aaron went and met Moses at the mountain of God.^{*} When Aaron saw Moses, he kissed him. ²⁸Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had said. Moses told Aaron why the Lord sent him. And Moses explained to Aaron about all the miracles and proofs that he must do.

²⁹So Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders (*leaders*) of the people of

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

tried to kill him Or possibly, "wanted to circumcise him."

flint knife A sharp knife made from flint rock.

circumcise(d) Cutting off the foreskin. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

Verse 26 Or, "And he was healed. She said, 'You are a bridegroom of blood' because of the circumcision."

mountain of God That is, Mount Horeb (Sinai).

I talk ... words Or, "I stutter and do not speak clearly."

I am YAHWEH Or, "I am the Lord."

You will be ... speaker Literally, "He will be your mouth, and you will be his God."

Israel. ³⁰Then Aaron spoke to the people. He told them all the things that the Lord had told Moses. Then Moses did the proofs for all the people to see. ³¹The people believed that God had sent Moses. They bowed and worshiped God because they knew that God had come to help the people of Israel. And they worshiped God because they knew that God had seen their troubles.

Moses And Aaron Before Pharaoh

5 After Moses and Aaron talked to the people, they went to Pharaoh. They said, "The Lord* God of Israel says, 'Let my people go into the desert so they can have a feast to honor me.'"

¹But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord? Why should I obey him? Why should I let Israel go? I don't know this one you call the Lord. So I refuse to let Israel go."

²Then Aaron and Moses said, "The God of the Hebrew* people has talked with us. So we beg you to let us travel three days into the desert. There we will offer a sacrifice* to the Lord our God. If we don't do this, he might become angry and destroy us. He might make us die from sickness or war."

³But Pharaoh said to them, "Moses and Aaron, you are causing trouble! You are taking the people away from their work! Tell those slaves to go back to work! ⁴There are very many workers, and you are keeping them from doing their jobs."

Pharaoh Punishes the People

⁵That same day, Pharaoh gave a command to make work harder for the people of Israel. Pharaoh said to the slave masters, ⁶"You have always given the people straw and they use it to make bricks. But now tell them they must go find their own straw to make bricks. ⁷But they must still make the same number of bricks as they did before. They have become lazy. That

is why they are asking me to let them go. They don't have enough work to do, so they ask me to let them make sacrifices* to their God. ⁸So make these people work harder. Keep them busy. Then they will not have enough time to listen to the lies of Moses."

⁹So the Egyptian slave masters and the Hebrew* foremen went to the people of Israel and said, "Pharaoh has decided that he will not give you straw for your bricks. ¹⁰You must go and get the straw for yourselves. So go and find straw. But you must make as many bricks as you made before."

¹¹So the people went everywhere in Egypt looking for straw. ¹²The slave masters continued forcing the people to work harder. They forced the people to make as many bricks as they made before. ¹³The Egyptian slave masters had chosen the Hebrew* foremen and had made them responsible for the work the people did. The Egyptian slave masters beat these men and said to them, "Why aren't you making as many bricks as you made in the past? If you could do it in the past, you can do it now!"

¹⁴Then the Hebrew* foremen went to Pharaoh. They complained and said, "Why are you treating us, your servants, this way? ¹⁵You give us no straw. But we are commanded to continue making as many brick as we made before. And now our masters beat us. Your people are wrong for doing this."

¹⁶Pharaoh answered, "You are lazy. You don't want to work. That is why you ask me to let you go. And that is why you want to leave here and make sacrifices* to the Lord. ¹⁷Now, go back to work! We will not give you any straw. But you must make as many bricks as you made in the past."

¹⁸The Hebrew* foremen knew they were in trouble. The foremen knew they could not make as many bricks as they made in the past.

¹⁹When they were leaving the meeting with Pharaoh, they passed Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron were waiting for them. ²⁰So they said to Moses and Aaron, "You did a bad thing when you told Pharaoh to let us go. May the Lord punish you because you caused Pharaoh

Lord Or, "YAHWEH."

Hebrew Or, "Israelite."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

and his rulers to hate us. You have given them an excuse to kill us."

Moses Complains to God

²²Then Moses prayed to the Lord and said, "Lord, why have you done this bad thing to your people? Why did you send me here? ²³I went to Pharaoh and said the things you told me to say. But since that time he has been mean to the people. And you have done nothing to help them!"

6 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh. I will use my great power against him, and he will let my people go. He will be so ready for them to leave that he will force them to go."

¹Then God said to Moses, ²"I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They called me El Shaddai (*God All-Powerful*). They did not know my name, YAHWEH (*Lord*). ³I made an agreement with them. I promised to give them the land of Canaan. They lived in that land, but it was not their own land. ⁴Now, I know about the troubles of the people of Israel. I know that they are the slaves of Egypt. And I remember my agreement. ⁵So tell the people of Israel that I say to them, 'I am the Lord. I will save you. I will make you free. You will not be slaves of the Egyptians. I will use my great power and bring terrible punishment to the Egyptians. Then I will save you. ⁶You will be my people and I will be your God. I am the Lord your God, and you will know that I made you free from Egypt. ⁷I made a great promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give them a special land. So I will lead you to that land. I will give you that land. It will be yours. I am the Lord.'"

⁸So Moses told this to the people of Israel. But the people were working so hard that they were not patient with Moses. They would not listen to him.

¹⁰Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹¹"Go tell Pharaoh that he must let the people of Israel leave his land."

¹²But Moses answered, "The people of Israel refuse to listen to me! So surely Pharaoh will

also refuse to listen. I am a very bad speaker!"

¹³But the Lord talked with Moses and Aaron. God commanded them to go and talk to the people of Israel. He also commanded them to go and talk to Pharaoh. God commanded them to lead the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

Some of the Families of Israel

¹⁴Here are the names of the leaders of the families of Israel: Israel's first son, Reuben, had four sons. They were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. ¹⁵Simeon's sons were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar, and Shaul. (Shaul was the son from a Canaanite woman).

¹⁶Levi lived 137 years. Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁷Gershon had two sons, Libni and Shimei. ¹⁸Kohath lived 133 years. Kohath's sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ¹⁹Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi. All these families were from Israel's son Levi.

²⁰Amram lived 137 years. Amram married his father's sister, Jochebed. Amram and Jochebed gave birth to Aaron and Moses. ²¹Izhar's sons were Korah, Nepheg, and Zicri. ²²Uzziel's sons were Mishael, Elzaphan, and Sithri.

²³Aaron married Elisheba. (Elisheba was the daughter of Amminadab, and the sister of Nahshon). Aaron and Elisheba gave birth to Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²⁴The sons of Korah, (the ancestors of, the Korahites, were Assir, Elkana, and Abiasaph. ²⁵Aaron's son, Eleazar, married a daughter of Putiel. And she gave birth to Phinehas. All these people were from Israel's son, Levi.

²⁶Aaron and Moses were from this family group. And they are the men that God spoke to and said, "Lead my people out of Israel in groups."²⁷ Aaron and Moses are the men that talked to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They told Pharaoh to let the people of Israel leave Egypt.

I am a very bad speaker Or, "I sound like a foreigner." Literally, "I have uncircumcised lips."

groups Or, "divisions." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

God Repeats His Call to Moses

²In the land of Egypt God spoke to Moses.
³He said, "I am the Lord. Tell the king of Egypt everything that I tell you."

⁴But Moses answered, "I am a very bad speaker. The king will not listen to me."

7 The Lord said to Moses, "I will be with you. You will be like a great king* to Pharaoh. And Aaron will be your official speaker.* ²Tell Aaron everything that I command you. Then he will tell the king the things I say. And Pharaoh will let the people of Israel leave this country. ³But I will make Pharaoh stubborn. He will not obey the things you tell him. Then I will do many amazing proofs in Egypt. But he will still refuse to listen. ⁴So then I will punish Egypt in a very bad way. And I will lead my people out of that land. ⁵Then the people of Egypt will know that I am the Lord. I will be against them, and they will know that I am the Lord. Then I will lead my people out of their country."

⁶Moses and Aaron obeyed these things the Lord told them. ⁷At this time, Moses was 80 years old and Aaron was 83.

⁸The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Pharaoh will ask you to prove your power. He will ask you to do a miracle. Tell Aaron to throw his walking stick on the ground. While Pharaoh is watching, the stick will become a snake."

Moses' Walking Stick Becomes a Snake

¹So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and obeyed the Lord. Aaron threw his walking stick down. While Pharaoh and his officers watched, the stick became a snake.

²So the king called his wise men and his magicians. And these men used their tricks and they were able to do the same thing as Aaron. ³They threw their walking sticks on the ground, and their sticks became snakes. But then Aaron's walking stick ate theirs. ⁴Pharaoh still refused to let the people go. This happened

like the Lord said it would. The king refused to listen to Moses and Aaron.

The Water Becomes Blood

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Pharaoh is being stubborn. Pharaoh refuses to let the people go. ²In the morning Pharaoh will go out to the river. Go to him by the edge of the Nile River. Take with you the walking stick that became a snake. ³Tell him this: 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrew* people, sent me to you. The Lord told me to tell you to let his people go worship him in the desert. Until now you have not listened to the Lord. ⁴So the Lord says that this is how you will know that he is the Lord: I will hit the water of the Nile River with this walking stick in my hand, and the river will change into blood. ⁵Then the fish in the river will die, and the river will begin to stink. And the Egyptians will not be able to drink the water from the river.'"

⁶The Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron to stretch the walking stick in his hand over the rivers, canals, lakes and every place where they store water. When he does this, all the water will change into blood. All of the water, even the water stored in wood and stone jars, will change into blood."

⁷So Moses and Aaron did what the Lord commanded. Aaron raised the walking stick and hit the water in the Nile River. He did this in front of Pharaoh and his officials. So all the water in the river changed into blood. ⁸The fish in the river died, and the river began to stink. So the Egyptians could not drink water from the river. The blood was everywhere in Egypt.

⁹The magicians used their tricks and did the same thing. So Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses and Aaron. This happened just like the Lord had said. ¹⁰Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Pharaoh ignored what Moses and Aaron had done.

¹¹The Egyptians could not drink the water from the river. So they dug wells around the river for water to drink.

a great king Or, "God."
 official speaker Or, "prophet."

Hebrew Or, "Israelite."

The Frogs

²⁵Seven days passed after the Lord changed the Nile River.

8 Then the Lord told Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and tell him that the Lord says, 'Let my people go to worship me! ²¹If you refuse to let my people go, then I will fill Egypt with frogs. ²²The Nile River will be filled with frogs. They will come from the river and enter your houses. They will be in your bedrooms, and they will be in your beds. The frogs will be in the houses of your officials and in your ovens and in your jars of water. 'The frogs will be all over you, your people, and your officials.' "

²³Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to raise the walking stick in his hand over the canals, rivers, and lakes. Then the frogs will come out onto the land of Egypt."

²⁴So Aaron raised his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs began coming out of the water and covered the land of Egypt.

²⁵The magicians used their tricks to do the same thing—so even more frogs came out onto the land of Egypt.

²⁶Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh said, "Ask the Lord to remove the frogs from me and my people. I will let the people go to offer sacrifices* to the Lord."

²⁷Moses said to Pharaoh, "Tell me when you want the frogs to go away. I will pray for you, your people, and your officials. Then the frogs will leave you and your houses. The frogs will remain only in the river. When do you want the frogs to leave?"

²⁸Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow."

Moses said, "It will happen as you say. In this way you will know that there is no god like the Lord our God. ²⁹The frogs will leave you, your house, your officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the river."

³⁰Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh. Moses prayed to the Lord about the frogs he had sent against Pharaoh. ³¹And the Lord did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the yards, and in the fields. ³²They began to rot,

and the whole country began to stink. ³³Pharaoh saw that they were free of the frogs, and he again became stubborn. Pharaoh did not do what Moses and Aaron had asked him to do. This happened just like the Lord had said.

The Gnats

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to raise his stick and hit the dust on the ground, and everywhere in Egypt the dust will become gnats."

²They did this. Aaron raised the stick in his hand and hit the dust on the ground, and everywhere in Egypt the dust became gnats. The gnats were on the animals and the people.

³The magicians used their tricks and tried to do the same thing. But the magicians could not make gnats come from the dust. The gnats remained on the animals and the people. ⁴So the magicians told Pharaoh that the power of God did this. But Pharaoh refused to listen to them. This happened just like the Lord had said.

The Flies

¹The Lord said to Moses, "Get up in the morning and go to Pharaoh. Pharaoh will go out to the river. Tell him that the Lord says, 'Let my people go and worship me! ²If you don't let my people go, then flies will come into your houses. The flies will be on you and your officials. The houses of Egypt will be full of flies. The flies will be all over the ground too! ³But I will not treat the people of Israel the same as the Egyptian people. There will not be any flies in Goshen, where my people live. In this way you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land. ⁴So tomorrow I will treat my people differently from your people. That will be my proof.' "

⁵So the Lord did as he said. Many, many flies came into Egypt. The flies were in Pharaoh's house, and they were in all his officials' houses. The flies were all over Egypt. The flies were ruining the country. ⁶So Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh told them, "Offer sacrifices* to your God here

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

in this country.”

²But Moses said, “It would not be right to do that. The Egyptians think that it is a terrible thing to offer sacrifices* to the Lord our God. If we do this so that the Egyptians can see us, then the Egyptians will throw stones at us and kill us. ³Let us go three days into the desert and offer sacrifices* to the Lord our God. This is what the Lord told us to do.”

⁴So Pharaoh said, “I will let you go and offer sacrifices* to the Lord your God in the desert. But, you must not go any farther than a three day trip. Now, go and pray for me.”

⁵Moses said, “Look, I will leave and ask the Lord to remove the flies from you, your people, and your officials tomorrow. But you must not stop the people from offering sacrifices* to the Lord.”

⁶So Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. ⁷And the Lord did what Moses asked. The Lord removed the flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. None of the flies remained. ⁸But Pharaoh again became stubborn and did not let the people go.

The Disease of the Farm Animals

9 Then the Lord told Moses to go to Pharaoh and tell him: “The Lord, the God of the Hebrew* people, says, ‘Let my people go to worship me!’ ²If you continue to hold them and refuse to let them go, ³then the Lord will use his power against your animals in the fields. The Lord will cause all of your horses, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep to become sick with a terrible disease. ⁴The Lord will treat Israel’s animals differently from the animals of Egypt. None of the animals that belong to the people of Israel will die. ⁵The Lord has set the time for this to happen. Tomorrow the Lord will cause this to happen in this country.’”

⁶The next morning, all the farm animals in Egypt died. But none of the animals that belonged to the people of Israel died. ⁷Pharaoh sent people to see if any of the animals of Israel

died. And not one of the animals of Israel died. Pharaoh remained stubborn. He did not let the people go.

The Boils

¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Fill your hands with the ashes from an oven. Moses, throw the ashes into the air in front of Pharaoh. ²This will become dust that will go throughout the land of Egypt. Whenever the dust touches a person or an animal in Egypt, boils (*sores*) will break out on the skin.”

³So Moses and Aaron took ashes from a furnace. Then they went and stood before Pharaoh. They threw the ashes into the air, and boils began breaking out on people and animals. ⁴The magicians could not stop Moses from doing this, because even the magicians had the boils. This happened everywhere in Egypt. ⁵But the Lord made Pharaoh stubborn. So Pharaoh refused to listen to Moses and Aaron. This happened just like the Lord had said.

The Hail

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up in the morning and go to Pharaoh. Tell him that the Lord, the God of the Hebrew* people says, ‘Let my people go to worship me!’ ²If you don’t do this, then I will use my full power against you, your officials, and your people. Then you will know that there is no god in the world like me. ³I could use my power and cause a disease that would wipe you and your people off the earth. ⁴But I have put you here for a reason. I have put you here so that I could show you my power. Then people all over the world will learn about me! ⁵You are still against my people. You are not letting them go free. ⁶So, at this time tomorrow, I will cause a very bad hailstorm. There has never been a hailstorm like this in Egypt, not since Egypt became a nation. ⁷Now, you must put your animals in a safe place. Everything you own that is now in the fields must be put in a safe place. Why? Because any person or animal that remains in the fields will be killed. The hail

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Hebrew Or, “Israelite.”

will fall on everything that is not gathered into your houses.”

²⁰Some of Pharaoh's officials paid attention to the Lord's message. Those men quickly put all of their animals and slaves into houses.

²¹But other people ignored the Lord's message. Those people lost all their slaves and animals that were in the fields.

²²The Lord told Moses, “Raise your arms into the air and the hail will start falling all over Egypt. The hail will fall on all the people, animals, and plants in all the fields of Egypt.”

²³So Moses raised his walking stick into the air, and the Lord caused thunder, lightning, and hail to fall to earth. The hail fell all over Egypt.

²⁴There was hail, and there was lightning flashing in the hail. This was the worst hailstorm that had ever hit Egypt since the time that Egypt had become a nation. ²⁵The storm destroyed everything that was in the fields in Egypt. The hail destroyed people, animals, and plants. The hail also broke all the trees in the fields. ²⁶The only place that did not get hail was the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel lived.

²⁷Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh told them, “This time I have sinned. The Lord is right, and I and my people are wrong. ²⁸The hail and thunder from God are too much! Ask God to stop the storm and I will let you go. You don't have to stay here.”

²⁹Moses told Pharaoh, “When I leave the city, I will spread my arms before the Lord in prayer. And the thunder and hail will stop. Then you will know that the Lord is in this land. ³⁰But I know that you and your officials don't yet fear the Lord.”

³¹The flax had already developed its seeds. And the barley was already blooming. So these plants were destroyed. ³²But the wheat and spelt ripen later than the other grains. So these plants were not destroyed.

³³Moses left Pharaoh and went outside the city. He spread his arms before the Lord, and the thunder and hail stopped. The rain also stopped falling to the ground.

³⁴When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had stopped, he again did wrong. He

and his officials became stubborn again. ³⁵Pharaoh refused to let the people of Israel go free. This happened just like the Lord had said through Moses.

The Locusts

10 The Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh. I have made him and his officials stubborn. I did this so I could show them my powerful miracles. ²I also did this so you could tell your children and your grandchildren about the miracles and other wonderful things that I have done in Egypt. Then all of you will know that I am the Lord.”

³So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh. They told him, “The Lord, the God of the Hebrew* people, says, ‘How long will you refuse to obey me? Let my people go to worship me! If you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. ⁴The locusts will cover the land. There will be so many locusts that you won't be able to see the ground. Anything that was left from the hailstorm will be eaten by the locusts. The locusts will eat all the leaves from the trees in the field. ⁵The locusts will fill all your houses, and all your officials' houses, and all the houses in Egypt. There will be more locusts than your fathers or your grandfathers ever saw. There will be more locusts than there have ever been since people began living in Egypt.’” Then Moses turned and left Pharaoh.

⁶Pharaoh's officials asked him, “How long will we be trapped by these people. Let the men go to worship the Lord their God. If you don't let them go, then Egypt will be destroyed before you know it.”

⁷So Pharaoh told his officials to bring Moses and Aaron back to him. Pharaoh said to them, “Go and worship the Lord your God. But tell me, exactly who is going?”

⁸Moses answered, “Our young people and our old people will go. We will also take our sons and daughters and our sheep and cows with us. We will all go because this is the Lord's feast for us.”

¹⁰Pharaoh said to them, "The Lord really will have to be with you before I let you and all of your children leave Egypt. Look, you are planning something bad. "The men can go worship the Lord. That is what you asked for. But all of your people can't go." Then Pharaoh sent Moses and Aaron away.

¹¹The Lord told Moses, "Raise your arm over the land of Egypt and the locusts will come! The locusts will spread all over the land of Egypt. The locusts will eat all the plants that the hail did not destroy."

¹²So Moses raised his walking stick over the land of Egypt, and the Lord caused a strong wind to blow from the east. The wind blew all that day and night. When morning came, the wind had brought the locusts to the land of Egypt. "The locusts flew into the country of Egypt and landed on the ground. There were more locusts than there had ever been in Egypt. And there will never again be that many locusts there. "The locusts covered the ground, and the whole country became dark. The locusts ate every plant on the ground and every fruit in the trees that the hail had not destroyed. There were not any leaves left on any of the trees or plants anywhere in Egypt.

¹³Pharaoh quickly called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh said, "I have sinned against the Lord your God and against you. "Now, forgive my sins this time. Ask the Lord to remove this 'death' (locusts) from me."

¹⁴Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. "So the Lord changed the wind. The Lord made a very strong wind blow from the west, and it blew the locusts away to the Red Sea. Not one locust was left in Egypt. "But the Lord caused Pharaoh to be stubborn again. And Pharaoh did not let the people of Israel go.

The Darkness

¹Then the Lord told Moses, "Raise your arm into the air and darkness will cover Egypt. It will be so dark you can feel it!"

²So Moses raised his arm into the air and a cloud of darkness covered Egypt. The darkness remained in Egypt for three days. "No one could see anyone else. And no one got up and

went any place for three days. But there was light in all the places where the people of Israel lived.

³Again Pharaoh called for Moses. Pharaoh said, "Go and worship the Lord! You can take your children with you. But you must leave your sheep and cattle here."

⁴Moses said, "Not only will we take our sheep and cattle with us, but when we leave, even you will give us offerings and sacrifices. "And we will use these sacrifices to worship the Lord our God! "We will take our animals with us to worship the Lord. Not one hoof* will be left behind. We don't know yet exactly what we will need to worship the Lord. We will learn that only when we get to the place we are going to. So we must take all of these things with us."

⁵The Lord made Pharaoh stubborn again. So Pharaoh refused to let them go. "Then Pharaoh told Moses, "Get out of here! I don't want you to come here again! The next time you come to see me, you will die!"

⁶Then Moses told Pharaoh, "You are right about one thing. I will not come to see you again!"

The Death of the Firstborn

11 Then the Lord told Moses, "I have one more disaster to bring against Pharaoh and Egypt. After this, he will send you people away from Egypt. In fact, he will force you to leave this country. "You must tell this message to the people of Israel: 'You men and women should ask your neighbors to give you things made of silver and gold. "The Lord will cause the Egyptians to be kind to you. The Egyptian people, even Pharaoh's officials, already consider Moses to be a great man. "'

¹Moses said to the people, "The Lord says, 'At midnight tonight, I will go through Egypt, and every firstborn* son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh (the ruler of

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

hoof The hard part of the foot of certain animals.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

Egypt) to the firstborn son of the slave girl grinding grain. Also the firstborn animals will die. 'The crying in Egypt will be worse than any time in the past. And it will be worse than any time in the future.' But none of the people of Israel will be hurt—not even a dog will bark at them. None of the people or animals of Israel will be hurt. In this way you will know that I have treated Israel differently from Egypt. 'Then all of these slaves of yours (*the Egyptians*) will bow down and worship me. They will say, "Leave and take all your people with you." Then, in anger I will leave Pharaoh.'"

'Then the Lord told Moses, "Pharaoh did not listen to you. Why? So that I could show my great power in Egypt." "That is why Moses and Aaron did all these great miracles in front of Pharaoh. And that is why the Lord made Pharaoh so stubborn that he would not let the people of Israel leave his country.

Passover

12 While Moses and Aaron were still in Egypt, the Lord spoke to them. The Lord said, "This month* will be the first month of the year for you. 'This command is for the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month each person must get one lamb for the people in his house. 'If there are not enough people in his house to eat a whole lamb, then he should invite some of his neighbors to share the meal. There must be enough lamb for everyone to eat. 'The lamb must be a one-year-old male, and it must be completely healthy. This animal can be either a young sheep or a young goat. 'You should watch over the animal until the 14th day of the month. On that day, all the people of the community of Israel must kill these animals at twilight.* 'You must collect the blood from these animals. Put the blood on the top and sides of the door frames of the houses where the people eat this meal.

"On this night, you must roast the lamb and eat all of the meat. You must also eat bitter herbs and bread made without yeast. 'You must not boil the lamb in water. You must roast the whole lamb over a fire. The lamb must still have its head, legs, and inner parts. 'You must eat all of the meat that night. If any of the meat is left until morning, then you must burn that meat in the fire.

"When you eat the meal, you must be fully dressed like you are going on a journey. You must have your shoes on, and you should have your walking stick in hand. You must eat in a hurry. Why? Because this is the Lord's Passover*—the time when the Lord protected his people and led them quickly out of Egypt.

"Tonight I will go through Egypt and kill every firstborn* in Egypt. I will kill all the firstborn animals and people. I will judge all the gods of Egypt. I will show that I, am the Lord. 'But the blood on your houses will be a special sign. When I see the blood, I will pass over* your house. I will cause bad things to happen to the people of Egypt. But none of those bad diseases will hurt you.

"So you will always remember tonight—it will be a special holiday for you. Your descendants* will honor the Lord with this holiday forever. 'On this holiday, you will eat bread made without yeast for seven days. On the first day of this holiday, you will remove all the yeast from your houses. No one should eat any yeast for the full seven days of this holiday. If anyone eats yeast, then you must separate that person from the rest of Israel. 'There will be holy assemblies on the first and last days of the holiday. You must not do any work on these days. The only work you can do on these days is prepare the food for your meals. 'You must remember the Festival of Unleavened Bread.* Why? Because on this very day I took

Passover The Hebrew word means "to skip, pass over" or "to protect."

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

pass over Or, "protect."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Unleavened Bread Bread made without yeast.

month That is, the month of Abib (Nisan). This was about the middle of March to the middle of April.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

all of your groups of people out of Egypt. So, all of your descendants* must remember this day. This is a law that will last forever. ¹⁸So, on the evening of the 14th day of the first month (*Nisan*) you will begin eating bread without yeast. You will eat this bread until the evening of the 21st day of the same month. ¹⁹For seven days there must not be any yeast in your houses. Any person, either a citizen of Israel or a foreigner, who eats yeast at this time must be separated from the rest of Israel. ²⁰On this holiday, you must not eat yeast. You must eat bread without yeast wherever you live."

²¹So Moses called all the elders (*leaders*) together. Moses told them, "Get the lambs for your families. Kill the lambs for the Passover. ²²Take bunches of hyssop* and dip them in the bowl filled with blood. Paint the blood on the sides and tops of the door frames. No one must leave their house until morning. ²³At the time the Lord goes through Egypt to kill the firstborn, the Lord will see the blood on the sides and tops of the door frames. Then the Lord will protect* that house. The Lord will not let the Destroyer come into your houses and hurt you. ²⁴You must remember this command. This law is for you and your descendants* forever. ²⁵You must remember to do this even when you go to the land the Lord will give to you. ²⁶When your children ask you, 'Why are we doing this ceremony?' ²⁷you will say, 'This Passover is to honor the Lord. Why? Because when we were in Egypt, the Lord passed over* the houses of Israel. The Lord killed the Egyptians, but he saved the people in our houses. So now the people bow down and worship the Lord.'"

²⁸The Lord had given this command to Moses and Aaron. So the people of Israel did what the Lord commanded.

²⁹At midnight, the Lord killed all the firstborn sons in Egypt, from the firstborn of

Pharaoh (who ruled Egypt) to the firstborn of the prisoner sitting in jail. Also all the firstborn animals died. ³⁰That night someone died in every house in Egypt. Pharaoh, his officials, and all the people of Egypt began crying very loudly.

Israel Leaves Egypt

³¹So that night, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh said to them, "Get up and leave my people. You and your people can do as you said. Go and worship the Lord. ³²And you can take all of your sheep and cattle with you, like you said you would. Go! And bless me too!" ³³The people of Egypt also asked them to hurry and leave. Why? Because they said, "If you don't leave, we will all die!"

³⁴The people of Israel did not have time to put the yeast in their bread. They just wrapped the bowls of dough with cloth and carried them on their shoulders. ³⁵Then the people of Israel did what Moses asked them to do. They went to their Egyptian neighbors and asked for clothing and for things made from silver and gold. ³⁶The Lord caused the Egyptians to be kind to the people of Israel. So the Egyptians gave their riches to the people of Israel.

³⁷The people of Israel traveled from Rameses to Succoth. There were about 600,000* men. (This does not include the children.) ³⁸There were many, many sheep, cattle and other things. There were also many different kinds of people traveling with them. These people were not Israelites, but they left Egypt with the people of Israel. ³⁹The people did not have time to put yeast in their bread. And they did not make any special food for their journey. So they had to bake loaves of bread without yeast.

⁴⁰The people of Israel had lived in Egypt* for 430 years. ⁴¹After 430 years, to the very

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

hyssop A plant with stems about 3 feet long. The leaves and branches are like hair, so they could be used like a brush.

protect Or, "pass over."

passed over Or, "protected."

600,000 Or, "600 family groups." The Hebrew word "thousand" is like the Hebrew word meaning "family group."

Egypt The ancient Greek and Samaritan translations say, "Egypt and Canaan." This would mean they counted the years from about Abraham's time, not from Joseph's. See Gen. 15:12-16 and Gal. 3:17.

day, all the armies of the Lord* left Egypt. "So that is a very special night when the people remember what the Lord did. All the people of Israel will remember that night forever.

"The Lord told Moses and Aaron, "Here are the rules for Passover: No foreigner is to eat the Passover. "But if a person buys a slave, and if he circumcises* him, then the slave can eat the Passover. "But if a person just lives in your country, or if a person is only hired to work for you, then that person must not eat the Passover. Passover is for the people of Israel.,

"Each family must eat the meal in one house. None of the food is to be taken outside the house. Don't break any of the lamb's bones. "The whole community of Israel must do this ceremony. "If a non-Israelite lives with you, and if he wants to share in the Lord's Passover, then he must be circumcised.* Then he will be like a citizen of Israel, so he can share in the meal. But if a man is not circumcised, then he cannot eat the Passover meal. "The same rules are for everyone. It does not matter if a person is a citizen or a non-Israelite living in your country—the same rules are for everyone."

"So all the people of Israel obeyed the commands that the Lord gave to Moses and Aaron. "So on that same day, the Lord led all the people of Israel out of the country of Egypt. The people left in groups.*

13 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Every firstborn* Israelite boy will belong to me. Every woman's first baby will be mine. You must also give to me every firstborn male animal."

"Moses said to the people, "Remember this day. You were slaves in Egypt. But on this day the Lord used his great power and made you free. You must not eat bread with yeast.

"Today, in the month of Abib,* you are leaving Egypt. "The Lord made a special promise to your ancestors.* The Lord promised to give you the land of the Canaanite people, the Hittite people, the Amorite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people. After the Lord leads you to the land filled with many good things,* then you must remember this day. You must have a special day of worship on this day during the first month of every year.

"For seven days you must eat only bread that has no yeast. On the seventh day there will be a great feast. This feast will show honor to the Lord. "So for seven days you must not eat any bread made with yeast. There must be no bread with yeast any place in your land. "On this day, you should tell your children, "We are having this feast because the Lord took me out of Egypt."

"This holiday will help you remember—it will be like a string tied on your hand. It will be like a sign before your eyes.* This holiday will help you remember the Lord's teachings. It will help you remember that the Lord used his great power to take you out of Egypt. "So remember this holiday every year at the right time.

"The Lord will lead you into the land he promised to give you. The Canaanite people now live there. But God promised your ancestors* that he would give you this land. After God gives you this land, "you must remember to give him every firstborn boy. And every male animal that is the firstborn must be given to the Lord. "Every firstborn donkey can be bought back from the Lord. You can offer a lamb and keep the donkey. If you don't want to buy the donkey from the Lord, then kill it. It

Abib Or, "spring." This is Nisan, the first month of the ancient Jewish year.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

string ... eyes Literally, "a mark on your hands and a reminder between your eyes." This might refer to the special things a Jewish man ties to his arm and forehead to help him remember God's laws for him.

armies of the Lord The people of Israel.

circumcise(d) To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

groups Or, "divisions." This is a military term, and it shows the people were organized as the "army of the Lord."

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

will be a sacrifice*—you must break its neck. Every firstborn baby boy* must be bought back from the Lord.

"In the future, your children will ask why you do this. They will say, 'What does all this mean?' And you will answer, 'The Lord used his great power to save us from Egypt. We were slaves in that place. But the Lord led us out and brought us here.' "In Egypt, Pharaoh was stubborn. He refused to let us leave. But the Lord killed every firstborn* in all the land. (The Lord killed the firstborn animals and the firstborn sons.*) So that is why I give every firstborn male animal to the Lord. And that is why I buy back each of my firstborn sons* from the Lord.' "This is like a string tied on your hand. And it is like a sign in front of your eyes.* It helps you remember that the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his great power."

The Trip out of Egypt

"Pharaoh made the people leave Egypt. The Lord did not let the people take the road through the land of the Philistines. That road, by the sea, is the shortest way, but the Lord said, 'If the people go that way, they will have to fight. Then they might change their minds and go back to Egypt.' "So the Lord led them another way. He led them through the desert by the Red Sea.* The people of Israel were dressed for war when they left Egypt.

Joseph Goes Home

"Moses carried the bones of Joseph with him. (Before Joseph died, he made the sons of Israel promise to do this for him. Joseph said, 'When God saves you, remember to carry my bones with you out of Egypt.'")

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

baby boy Or, "baby."

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

sons Or, "children."

string ... eyes Literally, "a mark on your hands, a symbol on your forehead." This might refer to the special things a Jewish man tied to his arm and forehead to help him remember God's laws.

Red Sea Or, "Reed Sea." See 1 Kings 9:26.

The Lord Leads His People

"The people of Israel left Succoth and camped at Etham. Etham was near the desert. "The Lord led the way. During the day, the Lord used a tall cloud to lead the people. And during the night, the Lord used a tall column of fire to lead the way. This fire gave them light so they could also travel at night. "The tall cloud was always with them during the day, and the column of fire was always with them at night.

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people to travel back to Pi Hahiroth. Tell them to stay the night between Migdol and the Red Sea. This is near Baal Zephon. "Pharaoh will think that the people of Israel are lost in the desert. And he will think that the people will have no place to go. 'I will make Pharaoh brave, and he will chase you. But I will defeat Pharaoh and his army. This will bring honor to me. Then the people of Egypt will know that I am the Lord.' The people of Israel obeyed God—they did what he told them.

Pharaoh Chases the Israelites

"Pharaoh received a report that the people of Israel had escaped. When he heard this, he and his officials changed their minds about what they had done. Pharaoh said, "Why did we let the people of Israel leave? Why did we let them run away? Now we have lost our slaves!"

"So Pharaoh prepared his chariot* and took his men with him. "Pharaoh took 600 of his best men and all of his chariots. There was an officer in each chariot. "The people of Israel were leaving with their arms raised in victory. But the Lord caused Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to become brave. And Pharaoh chased the people of Israel.

"The Egyptian army had many horse soldiers and chariots. They chased the people of Israel and came near them while they were camped near the Red Sea* at Pi Hahiroth and Baal Zephon.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

¹⁰The people of Israel saw Pharaoh and his army coming toward them. The people were very scared. They cried to the Lord for help. ¹¹They said to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Why did you bring us out here in the desert to die? We could have died peacefully in Egypt—there were plenty of graves in Egypt. ¹²We told you this would happen! In Egypt we said, 'Please don't bother us. Let us stay and serve the Egyptians.' It would have been better for us to stay and be slaves than to come out here and die in the desert."

¹³But Moses answered, "Don't be afraid! Don't run away! Stay and watch the Lord save you today. After today you will never see these Egyptians again! ¹⁴You will not have to do anything but remain calm. The Lord will be fighting for you."

¹⁵Then the Lord said to Moses, "You don't need to cry to me! Command the people of Israel to start moving. ¹⁶Raise the walking stick in your hand over the Red Sea,* and the sea will split. Then the people can cross the sea on dry land. ¹⁷I have made the Egyptians brave, so they will chase you. But I will show you that I am more powerful than Pharaoh and all of his horse soldiers and chariots. ¹⁸Then Egypt will know that I am the Lord. They will honor me when I defeat Pharaoh and his horse soldiers and chariots."

¹⁹At that time, the angel of the Lord moved to the back of the people. (The angel of the Lord was usually at the front of the people, leading them.) So the tall cloud moved from in front of the people and went to the back of the people. ²⁰In this way the cloud stood between the Egyptians and the people of Israel. There was light for the people of Israel. But there was darkness for the Egyptians. So the Egyptians did not come any closer to the people of Israel that night.

²¹Moses raised his arm over the Red Sea,* and the Lord caused a very strong wind to blow from the east. The wind blew all night long. The sea split, and the wind made the ground

dry. ²²The people of Israel went through the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left. ²³Then all of Pharaoh's chariots and horse soldiers followed them into the sea. ²⁴Early that morning, the Lord looked down from the tall cloud and the column of fire at the Egyptian army. Then the Lord attacked and defeated them.

²⁵The wheels of the chariots became stuck. It was very hard to control the chariots. The Egyptians shouted, "Let's get out of here! The Lord is fighting against us. The Lord is fighting for the people of Israel."

²⁶Then the Lord told Moses, "Raise your hand over the sea, and the water will fall and cover the Egyptian chariots and horse soldiers."

²⁷So, just before daylight, Moses raised his hand over the sea. And the water returned to its proper level. The Egyptians were trying to run away. But the Lord swept away the Egyptians in the sea. ²⁸The water returned to its proper level and covered the chariots and horse soldiers. All of Pharaoh's army that had chased the people of Israel was destroyed. None of them survived.

²⁹But the people of Israel crossed the sea on dry land. The water was like a wall on their right and on their left. ³⁰So that day, the Lord saved the people of Israel from the Egyptians. And the people of Israel saw the dead bodies of the Egyptians on the shore of the Red Sea.* ³¹The people of Israel saw the great power of the Lord when he defeated the Egyptians. So the people respected the Lord. And they trusted the Lord and his servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

15 Then Moses and the people of Israel began singing this song to the Lord:

"I will sing to the Lord,
because he has done great things.
He threw horse and rider into the sea.

¹ The Lord is my strength.

He saves me.

And I sing songs of praise about him.*

The Lord ... him Literally, "Yah is my strength and praise. And he becomes my salvation."

- The Lord is my God,
and I praise him.
The Lord is the God of my ancestors,*
and I honor him.
- ³ The Lord is a great soldier.
The Lord is his name.
- ⁴ The Lord threw Pharaoh's chariots and
soldiers into the sea.
Pharaoh's best officers drowned in the
Red Sea.*
- ⁵ The deep water covered them.
They sank like rocks into the deep
water.
- ⁶ "Your right arm is amazingly strong.
Lord, your right arm shattered the enemy.
- ⁷ In your great majesty you destroyed those
who stood against you.
Your anger destroyed them,
like fire burning straw.
- ⁸ The great wind you blew caused the
water to pile high.
The fast flowing water became a solid
wall.
The sea became solid even to its deepest
parts.
- ⁹ "The enemy said,
'I'll chase them and catch them.
I'll take all their riches.
I'll use my sword
and take everything from them.
I'll use my hands
and take everything for myself.'
- ¹⁰ But you blew on them
and covered them with the sea.
They sank like lead into the deep sea.
- ¹¹ "Are there any gods like the Lord?
No! There are no gods like you—
You are wonderfully holy!
You are amazingly powerful!
You do great miracles!
- ¹² You could raise your right hand
and destroy the world!

- ¹³ With your kindness you lead the people
you have saved.
With your strength you lead these people
to your holy and pleasant land.
- ¹⁴ "The other nations will hear this story,
and they will be frightened.
The people of Philistia will shake with
fear.
- ¹⁵ Then the families of Edom will shake
with fear.
The powerful men of Moab will shake
with fear.
The people of Canaan will lose their
courage.
- ¹⁶ Those people will be filled with fear
when they see your strength.
They will be as quiet as a rock
until the Lord's people pass by,
until the people you have made pass by.
- ¹⁷ You will lead your people to your
mountain,
to the place that you prepared
for your throne.
Lord, build your temple with your hands!
- ¹⁸ May the Lord rule forever and ever!"

"Pharaoh's horses, riders, and chariots,
went into the sea. And the Lord covered them
with water from the sea. But the people of
Israel walked through the sea on dry land.

¹⁹ Then Aaron's sister, the woman prophet
Miriam, took a tambourine. Miriam and the
women began singing and dancing. Miriam
repeated the words,

- ²¹ "Sing to the Lord
because he has done great things.
He threw the horse and rider
into the sea"

²² Moses continued to lead the people of
Israel away from the Red Sea.* The people
went into the Shur desert. They traveled for
three days in the desert. The people could not
find any water. ²³After three days, the people
traveled to Marah. There was water at Marah,
but the people could not drink it. The water was
too bitter to drink. (That is why the place was
named Marah.)*

Marah This name means "bitter."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Red Sea Or, "Reed Sea." See 1 Kings 9:26.

²¹The people began complaining to Moses. The people said, "Now what will we drink?"

²²Moses called to the Lord. So the Lord showed him a tree. Moses put the tree in the water. When he did this, the water became good to drink.

In that place, the Lord judged the people and gave them a law. The Lord also tested the faith of the people. ²³The Lord said, "You must obey the Lord, your God. You must do the things he says are right. If you obey all the Lord's commands and laws, then you will not be sick like the Egyptians. I, the Lord, will not give you any of the sicknesses I gave the Egyptians. I am the Lord. I am the one who makes you well."

²⁴Then the people traveled to Elim. At Elim there were twelve springs of water. And there were 70 palm trees. So the people made their camp there near the water.

16 Then the people traveled from Elim and came to the Sinai desert. This place was between Elim and Sinai. They came to this place on the 15th day of the second month* after leaving Egypt. ¹Then the people of Israel began complaining again. They complained to Moses and Aaron in the desert. ²The people said, "It would be better for us if the Lord had killed us in the land of Egypt. In Egypt we had plenty to eat. We had all the food we needed. But now you have brought us into this desert. All of us will die of hunger here."

³Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will cause food to fall from the sky. This food will be for you to eat. Every day the people should go out and gather the food they need to eat that day. I will do this to see if the people will do what I tell them. ⁴Every day the people should gather enough food for one day. But on Friday, when the people prepare their food, they will see that they have enough food for two days.*

⁵So Moses and Aaron said to the people of Israel, "Tonight you will see the power of the Lord. You will know that he is the one who

saved you from the land of Egypt. ⁶Tomorrow morning you will see the Glory of the Lord. You complained to the Lord. He heard you, and he will help you. You have been complaining and complaining to us. Maybe now we can have a little rest."

⁷And Moses said, "You have been complaining, and the Lord has heard your complaints. So at night the Lord will give you meat. And every morning you will have all the bread you need. You have been complaining to Aaron and me. But now we will have a little rest. Remember, you are not complaining against Aaron and me. You are complaining against the Lord."

⁸Then Moses said to Aaron, "Speak to the people of Israel. Say to them, 'Come together before the Lord, because he has heard your complaints.'"

⁹Aaron spoke to all the people of Israel. They were all gathered together in one place. While Aaron was talking, all the people turned and looked into the desert. And they saw the Glory of the Lord appear in a cloud.

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, ¹¹"I have heard the complaints of the people of Israel. So tell them, 'At night you will eat meat. And every morning you will eat all the bread you want. Then you will know you can trust the Lord, your God.'"

¹²That night, quails (*birds*) came all around the camp. The people caught these birds for meat. And every morning dew lay on the ground near the camp. ¹³After the sun came up, the dew melted. But after the dew was gone, something like thin flakes of frost was on the ground. ¹⁴The people of Israel saw it and asked each other, "What is that?" ¹⁵They asked this question because they did not know what it was. So Moses told them, "This is the food the Lord is giving you to eat. ¹⁶The Lord says, 'Each person should gather what he needs. Each of you should gather about 8 cups* for every person in your family.'"

15th ... month That is, the 15th of Iyyar. The people of Israel had been traveling for a month.

Friday ... days This happened so that the people would not have to work on the Sabbath (Saturday), the day of rest.

What is that? In Hebrew this question sounds like the word "manna."

8 cups Literally, "1 omer."

¹⁷So the people of Israel did this. Each person gathered this food. Some people gathered more than others. ¹⁸The people gave the food to everyone in their family. After the food was measured, there was always enough for every person, but there was never too much. Each person gathered just enough for himself and his family to eat.

¹⁹Moses told them, "Don't save that food to eat the next day." ²⁰But the people did not obey Moses. Some people saved their food so that they could eat it the next day. And the food that was saved became full of worms and began to stink. Moses was angry with the people who did this.

²¹Every morning the people gathered the food. Each person gathered as much as he could eat. But when the sun became hot, the food melted and it was gone.

²²On Friday, the people gathered twice as much food. They gathered 16 cups* for every person. So all the leaders of the people came and told this to Moses.

²³Moses told them, "This is what the Lord said would happen. It happened because tomorrow is the Sabbath, the special day of rest to honor the Lord. You can cook all the food you need to cook for today. But save the rest of this food for tomorrow morning."

²⁴So the people saved the rest of the food for the next day. And none of the food spoiled. And worms did not get into any of it.

²⁵On Saturday, Moses told the people, "Today is the Sabbath, the special day of rest to honor the Lord. So none of you should be out in the fields. Eat the food you gathered yesterday. ²⁶You should gather the food for six days. But the seventh day, of the week, is a day of rest—so there will not be any of the special food on the ground."

²⁷On Saturday, some of the people went out to gather some of the food, but they could not find any. ²⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will you people refuse to obey my commands and teachings? ²⁹Look, the Lord has made the Sabbath a day of rest for you. So, on

Friday the Lord will give you enough food for two days. Then, on the Sabbath, each of you should sit down and relax. Stay where you are."

³⁰So the people rested on the Sabbath.

³¹The people began calling the special food "manna.*" The manna was like small white coriander seeds, and it tasted like thin cakes made with honey. ³²Moses said, "The Lord said: 'Save 8 cups* of this food for your descendants.* Then they can see the food that I gave to you in the desert when I took you out of Egypt.'"

³³So Moses told Aaron, "Take a jar and fill it with 8 cups* of manna. Save this manna to put before the Lord. Save it for our descendants.*" ³⁴(Aaron later did what the Lord had commanded Moses. Aaron put the jar of manna in front of the Agreement.*) ³⁵The people ate the manna for 40 years. They ate the manna until they came to the land of rest. They ate it until they came to the edge of the land of Canaan. ³⁶(The measure they used for the manna was an omer. An omer was about 8 cups.*)

17 All the people of Israel traveled together from the desert of Sin. They traveled from place to place as the Lord commanded. The people traveled to Rephidim and camped there. There was no water there for the people to drink. ²So the people turned against Moses and started arguing with him. The people said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses said to them, "Why have you turned against me? Why are you testing the Lord? Do you think the Lord is not with us?,"

³But the people were very thirsty for water. So they continued complaining to Moses. The people said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Did you bring us out here so that we, our children, and our cattle will all die without water?"

manna This word is like the Hebrew words meaning "What is that?"

8 cups Literally, "1 omer."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

about 8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an Ephah."

¹“So Moses cried to the Lord, “What can I do with these people? They are ready to kill me.”

²The Lord said to Moses, “Go before the people of Israel. Take some of the elders (*leaders*) of the people with you. Carry your walking stick with you. This is the stick that you used when you hit the Nile River. ³I will stand before you on a rock at Horeb (*Mount Sinai*). Hit that rock with the walking stick and water will come out of it. Then the people can drink.”

Moses did these things and the elders (*leaders*) of Israel saw it. ⁴Moses named that place Meribah* and Massah,* because this was the place that the people of Israel turned against him and tested the Lord. The people wanted to know if the Lord was with them or not.

⁵At Rephidim the Amalekite people came and fought against the people of Israel. ⁶So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose some men and go and fight the Amalekites tomorrow. I will stand on the top of the hill and watch you. I will be holding the walking stick God gave me.”

⁷Joshua obeyed Moses and went to fight the Amalekite people the next day. At the same time, Moses, Aaron, and Hur went to the top of the hill. ⁸Any time Moses held his hands in the air, the men of Israel would win the fight. But when Moses put his hands down, the men of Israel began to lose the fight.

⁹After some time, Moses' arms became tired. The men with Moses wanted to find a way to keep Moses' hands in the air. So they put a large rock under Moses for him to sit on. Then Aaron and Hur held Moses' hands in the air. Aaron was on one side of Moses and Hur was on the other side. They held his hands up like this until the sun went down. ¹⁰So Joshua and his men, defeated the Amalekites in this battle.

¹¹Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write about this battle. Write these things in a book so people will remember what happened here. And be sure to tell Joshua that I will completely destroy the Amalekite people from the earth.”

¹²Then Moses built an altar.* Moses named the altar, “The Lord is my flag.” ¹³Moses said, “I lifted my hands toward the Lord's throne. So the Lord fought against the Amalekites, like he always has.”

18 Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was a priest in Midian. Jethro heard about the many ways that God helped Moses and the people of Israel. Jethro heard about the Lord leading the people of Israel out of Egypt. ²So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped near the mountain of God.* Jethro brought Moses' wife, Zipporah, with him. (Zipporah was not with Moses, because Moses had sent her home.) ³Jethro also brought Moses' two sons with him. The first son was named Gershom,* because when he was born, Moses said, “I am a stranger in a foreign country.” ⁴The other son was named Eliezer,* because when he was born, Moses said, “The God of my father helped me and saved me from the king of Egypt.” ⁵So Jethro went to Moses while Moses was camped in the desert near the mountain of God (*Mount Sinai*). Moses' wife and his two sons were with Jethro.

⁶Jethro sent a message to Moses. Jethro said, “I am Jethro, your father-in-law. I am bringing your wife and her two sons to you.”

⁷So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law. Moses bowed down before him and kissed him. The two men asked about each other's health. Then they went into Moses' tent to talk more. ⁸Moses told Jethro everything the Lord had done for the people of Israel. Moses told about the things the Lord did to Pharaoh and the people of Egypt. Moses told about all the problems they had along the way. And Moses told his father-in-law how the Lord saved the people of Israel every time there was trouble.

⁹Jethro was very happy when he heard all the good things the Lord had done for Israel.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

mountain of God That is, “Mount Horeb,” also called “Mount Sinai.”

Gershom This name is like the Hebrew words meaning “a stranger there.”

Eliezer This name means “My God helps.”

Meribah This name means “rebellion.”

Massah This name means “trial,” “temptation,” or “test.”

Jethro was happy because the Lord had freed the people of Israel from the Egyptians. ¹⁰Jethro said,

"Praise the Lord!

He made you free from the
people of Egypt.

The Lord has saved you from Pharaoh.

¹¹ Now I know the Lord is greater
than all gods
because of the things he did to
those other people—
the people that thought they were
better than Israel."

¹²Jethro gave sacrifices* and offerings to God. Then Aaron and all the elders (*leaders*) of Israel came to eat with Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. They did this as a special way to worship God.

¹³The next day, Moses had the special job of judging the people. There were very many people, so the people had to stand before Moses all day.

¹⁴Jethro saw Moses judging the people. He asked, "Why are you doing this? Why are you the only judge? And why do people come to you all day?"

¹⁵Then Moses said to his father-in-law, "The people come to me and ask me to ask for God's decision to their problem. ¹⁶If people have an argument, they come to me. I decide which person is right. In this way, I teach the people God's laws and teachings."

¹⁷But Moses' father-in-law said to him, "This thing you are doing is not good. ¹⁸This is too much work for you to do alone. It makes you tired. And it also makes the people tired. You can't do this job by yourself. ¹⁹I will give you some advice. I will tell you what to do, and I pray God will be with you. (This is what you should do.) You should continue to listen to the cases of the people. And you should continue to speak to God about these things. ²⁰You should teach the people God's laws and teachings. Warn the people not to break the laws. Tell the

people the right way to live. Tell them what they should do. ²¹But you should also choose good men from among the people. You should choose men you can trust—men who respect God. Choose men who will not change their decisions for money. Make these men rulers over the people. There should be rulers over 1,000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and even over ten people. ²²Let these rulers judge the people. If there is a very important case, then they can come to you to decide. But they can decide the other cases themselves. In this way, it will be easier for you. Also, these men will share your work with you. ²³If you do these things, Lord willing, then you will be able to continue doing your job. And at the same time, all the people can go home with their problems solved."

²⁴So Moses did what Jethro told him.

²⁵Moses chose good men from among the people of Israel. Moses made them leaders over the people. There were rulers over 1,000 people, 100 people, 50 people, and ten people. ²⁶These rulers were judges for the people. The people could always bring their arguments to these rulers. And Moses had to decide only the most important cases.

²⁷After a short time, Moses said good-bye to his father-in-law Jethro. And Jethro went back to his own home.

19 In the third month of their trip from Egypt, the people of Israel reached the Sinai desert. ²The people had left Rephidim and had come to the Sinai desert. The people of Israel camped in the desert near the mountain.* ³Then Moses went up on the mountain to God. While Moses was on the mountain, God said to him, "Tell these things to the people of Israel, the great family of Jacob: ⁴'You people have seen the things I do to my enemies. You saw what I did to the people of Egypt. You saw that I carried you out of Egypt like an eagle* and brought you here to me. ⁵So now I tell you to obey my words. Keep my Agreement. If you do this, then you will be my own special people.

the mountain Mount Horeb (Sinai).

eagle These large birds will often carry their young to a place of safety.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

The whole world belongs to me. But I will choose you from all of them. And you will be my own special people. 'You will be a special nation—a kingdom of priests.' Moses, you must tell the people of Israel these things I have said."

⁷So Moses came down from the mountain and called the elders (*rulers*) of the people together. Moses told the elders all the things the Lord commanded him to tell them. ⁸And all the people spoke together. They said, "We will obey everything the Lord says."

Then Moses went back to God on the mountain. Moses told God that the people would obey him. ⁹And the Lord said to Moses, "I will come to you in the thick cloud. I will speak to you. All of the people will hear me talking to you. I will do this so that the people will always believe the things you tell them."

Then Moses told God all the things the people had said.

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, "Today and tomorrow you must prepare the people for a special meeting. The people must wash their clothes ¹¹and be ready for me on the third day. On the third day the Lord will come down to Mount Sinai. And all the people will see me. ¹²¹³But you must tell the people to stay away from the mountain. Make a line and don't allow the people to cross the line. If any person or animal touches the mountain, then he must be killed. He must be killed with rocks or shot with arrows. But no one is allowed to touch him. The people must wait until the trumpet blows. At that time they will be allowed to go up the mountain."

¹⁴So Moses went down from the mountain. He went to the people and prepared them for the special meeting. The people washed their clothes.

¹⁵Then Moses said to the people, "Be ready for the meeting with God in three days. Until that time, the men must not touch the women."

¹⁶Three mornings later, there was thunder and lightning on the mountain. A thick cloud came down on the mountain, and there was a very loud sound from a trumpet. All the people in the camp were frightened. ¹⁷Then Moses led

the people out of the camp to a place near the mountain to meet God. ¹⁸Mount Sinai was covered with smoke. Smoke rose off the mountain like smoke from a furnace. This happened because the Lord came down to the mountain in fire. Also, the whole mountain began to shake. ¹⁹The noise from the trumpet became louder and louder. Every time Moses spoke to God, God answered him with a voice like thunder.

²⁰So the Lord came down to Mount Sinai. The Lord came from heaven to the top of the mountain. Then the Lord called Moses to come up to the top of the mountain with him. So Moses went up the mountain.

²¹The Lord said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to come near me and look at me. If they do this, then many people will die. ²²Also tell the priests who will come near me that they must prepare themselves for this special meeting. If they don't do this, then I will punish them."

²³Moses told the Lord, "But the people cannot come up the mountain. You yourself told us to make a line and not allow the people to cross the line to holy ground."

²⁴The Lord said to him, "Go down to the people and get Aaron. Bring him back with you. But don't allow the priests or the people to come. If they come near me, then I will punish them."

²⁵So Moses went down to the people and told them these things.

The Ten Commandments

20 Then God said, ¹"I am the Lord* your God. I led you out of the land of Egypt where you were slaves. So you must obey these commands:

²"You must not worship any other gods except me.

³"You must not make any idols.* Don't make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth

Lord Or, "YAHWEH."

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

or of anything down in the water. "Don't worship or serve idols of any kind. Why? Because I, the Lord, am your God. I hate my people worshipping other gods.* People that sin against me become my enemies. And I will punish those people. And I will punish their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren. "But I will be very kind to people that love me and obey my commands. I will be kind to their families for thousands of generations!*

"You must not use the name of the Lord your God in a wrong way. If a person uses the Lord's name in a wrong way, then that person is guilty. And the Lord will not make him innocent.

"You must remember to keep the Sabbath* a special day. "Work at your job six days a week. "But the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the Lord your God. So on that day no person should work—not you, your sons and daughters, or your men and women slaves. Even your animals and the foreigners living in your cities must not work! "Why? Because the Lord worked six days and made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. And on the seventh day, God rested. In this way, the Lord blessed the Sabbath—the day of rest. The Lord made that a very special day.

"You must honor (*respect*) your father and your mother. Do this so you will have a full life in the land that the Lord your God gives you.

"You must not murder anyone.

"You must not do the sin of adultery.*

"You must not steal anything.

"You must not tell lies about other people.*

"You must not want to take your neighbor's house. You must not want his wife. And you must not want his men and women servants, or his cows, or his donkeys. You must not want to take anything that belongs to another person!"

The People Are Afraid of God

"During all this time, the people in the valley heard the thundering and saw the lightning on the mountain. They saw smoke rising from the mountain. The people were afraid, and they shook with fear. They stood away from the mountain and watched. "Then the people said to Moses, "If you want to speak to us, then we will listen. But please don't let God speak to us. If this happens, we will die."

"Then Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid! The Lord has come to prove that he loves you. He wants you to respect him so that you will not sin."

"The people stood away from the mountain while Moses went to the dark cloud where God was. "Then the Lord told Moses to say these things to the people of Israel: "You people have seen that I talked with you from heaven. "So you must not make idols using gold or silver to compete with me. You must not make these false gods.

"Make a special altar* for me. Use dirt to make this altar. Offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on this altar as a sacrifice* to me. Use your sheep and your cattle to do this. Do this in every place where I tell you to remember me. Then I will come and bless you. "If you use rocks to make an altar, then don't use rocks that you have made smooth with tools. If you use any tools on the rocks, then I

I hate ... gods Or, "I am El Kanah—the Jealous God."

But I will be ... generations Or, "But I will show mercy to thousands of people that love me and obey my commands."

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by doing sexual sin.

You ... people Or, "You must not be a false witness against your neighbor."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

sacrifice A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

will not accept the altar. ²⁰And you must not make steps leading up to the altar. If there are steps, then when people look up to the altar, they will be able to see under your clothes."

21 Then God said to Moses, "These are the other laws that you will give to the people:

¹"If you buy a Hebrew* slave, then that slave will serve for only six years. After six years he will become free. He will have to pay nothing. ²If the person is not married when he becomes your slave, then when he becomes free, he will leave without a wife. But if the man is married when he becomes your slave, then he will keep his wife at the time he is made free. ³If the slave is not married, the master can give him a wife. If that wife gives birth to sons or daughters, then she and her children will belong to the master. After the slave is finished with his years of service, then he will be made free.

⁴"But maybe the slave will decide that he wants to stay with the master. Then he must say, 'I love my master. I love my wife and my children. I will not become free—I will stay.' ⁵If this happens, then the master will bring the slave before God. The master will take the slave to a door or the wooden frame around the door. And the master will make a hole through the slave's ear using a sharp tool. Then the slave will serve that master for all his life.

⁶"A man might decide to sell his daughter as a slave. If this happens, the rules for making her free are not the same as the rules for making the men slaves free. ⁷If the master is not pleased with the woman, then he can sell the woman back to her father. If the master promised to marry the woman, then he loses the right to sell the woman to other people. ⁸If the master promised to let the slave woman marry his son, then she must not be treated like a slave. She must be treated like a daughter.

⁹"If the master marries another woman, then he must not give less food or clothing to the first wife. And he must continue to give her the things she has a right to have in marriage.

¹⁰The man must do these three things for her. If he does not, then the woman is made free, and it will cost her nothing. She owes no money to the man.

¹¹"If a person hits someone and kills him, then that person must be killed too. ¹²But if an accident happens, and a person kills someone without planning it, then God allowed that thing to happen. I will choose some special places where people can run for safety. So that person can run to one of those places. ¹³But if a person planned to kill another person because he is angry or hates him, then that killer must be punished. Take him away from my altar* and kill him.

¹⁴"Any person who hits his father or his mother must be killed.

¹⁵"If a person steals someone to sell him as a slave or to keep him for his own slave, then that person must be killed.

¹⁶"Any person who curses* his father or his mother must be killed.

¹⁷"Two men might argue and one might hit the other with a rock or with his fist. How should you punish that man? If the man who was hurt is not killed, then the man who hurt him should not be killed. ¹⁸If the man was hurt and must stay in bed for some time, then the man who hurt him must support him. The man who hurt him must pay for the loss of his time. The man must support him until he is completely healed.

¹⁹"Sometimes people beat their men or women slaves. If the slave dies after he is beaten, then the killer must be punished. ²⁰But if the slave does not die and after a few days the slave becomes well, then that person will not be punished.* Why? Because the master paid his money for the slave, and the slave belongs to him.

²¹"Two men might be fighting and they might hurt a pregnant woman. This might make

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices. It was one of the special places an innocent person could run for safety.

curse To curse someone is to ask for bad things to happen to them.

punished Or, "punished for murder."

the woman give birth to her baby (before its time). If the woman was not hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must pay a fine. The woman's husband will decide how much the man must pay. The judges will help the man decide how much the fine will be.²³ But if the woman was hurt badly, then the man who hurt her must be punished. (If a person is killed, then the person who caused it must be killed.) You must trade one life for another life.²⁴ You must trade an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot,²⁵ a burn for a burn, a bruise for a bruise, a cut for a cut.

²⁶"If a man hits a slave in the eye, and the slave is blinded in that eye, then the slave will be allowed to go free. His eye is the payment for his freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.²⁷ If a master hits his slave in the mouth, and the slave loses a tooth, then the slave will be allowed to go free. The slave's tooth is payment for the slave's freedom. This is the same for a man or a woman slave.

²⁸"If a man's bull kills a man or woman, then you should use rocks and kill that bull. You should not eat the bull. But the owner of the bull is not guilty.²⁹ But if the bull had hurt people in the past, and if the owner was warned, then the owner is guilty. Why? Because he did not keep the bull tied or locked in its place. So if the bull is allowed to be free and kills someone, then that owner is guilty. You should kill the bull with rocks and also kill the owner.³⁰ But the family of the dead man may accept money. If they accept money, then the man who owned the bull should not be killed. But he must pay as much money as the judge decides.

³¹"This same law must be followed if the bull kills a person's son or daughter.³² But if the bull kills a slave, then the owner of the animal must pay the master 30 pieces of silver.* And the bull must also be killed with rocks. This law will be the same for men and women slaves.

³³"A man might take a cover off a well or he might dig a hole and not cover it. If another

man's animal comes and falls into that hole, then the man who owns the hole is guilty.³⁴ The man who owns the hole must pay for the animal. But after he pays for the animal, then he will be allowed to keep the body of that animal.

³⁵"If one man's bull kills another man's bull, then they should sell the bull that is alive. Both men will get half of the money that comes from selling the bull, and both men will also get half of the bull that was killed.³⁶ But if a man's bull has hurt other animals in the past, then that owner is responsible for his bull. If his bull kills another bull, then he is guilty because he allowed the bull to be free. That man must pay bull for bull. He must trade his bull for the bull that was killed.

22 "How should you punish a man who steals a bull or a sheep? If the man kills the animal or sells it, then he can't give it back. So he must pay five bulls for the one he stole. Or, he must pay four sheep for the one he stole. He must pay for stealing.² If he owns nothing, then he will be sold as a slave. But if the man still has the animal and you find it, then that man must give the owner two animals for every animal he stole. It doesn't matter if the animal was a bull or a donkey or a sheep.

"If a thief is killed while trying to break into a house at night, then no one will be guilty for killing him. But if this happens during the day, then the person who killed him will be guilty of murder.

³"A man might start a fire in his field or vineyard. If he lets the fire spread and it burns his neighbor's field or vineyard, then he must use his best crops to pay his neighbor for his loss.*

⁴"A man might start a fire to burn thorn bushes on his field. But if the fire grows and burns his neighbor's crops or the grain growing on the neighbor's field, then the man that started the fire must pay for the things he burned.

A man ... loss Or, "A man might let his animal graze in his field or vineyard. If the animal wanders into another person's field or vineyard, then the owner must pay. The payment must come from the best of his crop."

⁷"A man might ask a neighbor to keep some money or other things for him in his neighbor's house. What should you do if that money or those things are stolen from the neighbor's house? You should try to find the thief. If you find the thief, then he must pay twice as much as the things are worth. ⁸But if you can't find the thief, then God will judge if the owner of the house is guilty. The owner of the house must go before God, and God will judge if he has stolen.

⁹"What should you do if two men disagree about a bull or a donkey or sheep or clothing or something that is lost. One man says, 'This is mine,' and the other says, 'No, it is mine.' Both men should go before God. God will decide who is guilty. The person who was wrong must pay the other man twice as much as the thing is worth.

¹⁰"A man might ask his neighbor to help him by caring for his animal for a short time. This animal might be a donkey or a bull or a sheep. But what should you do if that animal dies, or the animal is hurt, or someone takes the animal while no one is looking? ¹¹That neighbor must explain that he did not steal the animal. If this is true, then the neighbor will promise to the Lord that he did not steal it. The owner of the animal must accept this promise. The neighbor does not have to pay the owner for the animal. ¹²But if the neighbor stole the animal, then he must pay the owner for the animal. ¹³If wild animals killed the animal, then the neighbor should bring the body as proof. The neighbor will not have to pay the owner for the animal that was killed.

¹⁴"If a man borrows anything from his neighbor, he is responsible for that thing. If an animal is hurt, or if the animal dies, then the neighbor must pay the owner for the animal. The neighbor is responsible, because the owner was not there himself. ¹⁵But if the owner was there with the animal, then the neighbor does not have to pay. Or, if the neighbor was paying money to use the animal for work, then he will not have to pay if the animal dies or is hurt. The money he paid to use the animal will be enough payment.

¹⁶"If a man has sexual relations with a pure young woman who is not married,* then he must marry her. And he must pay her father the full dowry.* ¹⁷If the father refuses to allow his daughter to marry him, then the man must still pay the money. He must pay the full amount for her.

¹⁸"You must not allow any woman to do evil magic. If she does magic, then you must not let her live.

¹⁹"You must not allow any person to have sexual relations with an animal. If this happens, then that person must be killed.

²⁰"If any person makes a sacrifice* to a false god, then that person should be destroyed. The Lord God is the only one you should make sacrifices to.

²¹"Remember, in the past you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. So you should not cheat or hurt any person who is a foreigner in your land.

²²"You must never do anything bad to women whose husbands are dead or to children without parents. ²³If you do anything wrong to those widows or orphans, then I will know it. I will hear about their suffering. ²⁴And I will be very angry. I will kill you with a sword. Then your wives will become widows. And your children will become orphans.

²⁵"If one of my people is poor, and you lend him money, then you must not charge him for that money. And you must not force him to pay you quickly. ²⁶Someone might give you his coat as a promise that he will pay you the money he owes you. But you must give that coat back to him before the sun goes down. ²⁷If that person does not have his coat, then he will have nothing to cover his body. He will be cold when he sleeps. And if he cries to me, then I will hear him. I will listen, because I am kind.

married Or, "engaged." In ancient Israel, many of the rules concerning an engaged woman were the same as the rules for a married woman.

dowry The money a man gave the father of the bride so the man could marry the woman.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

³⁰"You must not curse* God or the leaders of your people.

³¹"At harvest time you should give me the first grain and the first juice from your fruit. Don't wait until late in the year.

"Give me your firstborn* sons. *Also, give me your firstborn cows and sheep. Let the firstborn stay with its mother for seven days. Then on the eighth day, give him to me.

³³"You are my special people. So don't eat the meat from something that was killed by wild animals. Let the dogs eat that dead animal.

23 "Don't tell lies against other people. If you are a witness in court, then don't agree to help a bad person tell lies.

³²"Don't do something just because everyone else is doing it. If a group of people are doing wrong, don't join them. You must not let those people persuade you to do wrong things—you must do what is right and fair.

³⁴"If a poor man is being judged, sometimes people will support him because they feel sorry for him. You must not do that. Support him only if he is right.

³⁵"If you see a lost bull or donkey, then you must return it to its owner. You must do this even if the owner is your enemy.

³⁶"If you see an animal that can't walk because it has too much to carry, you must stop and help that animal. You must help that animal even if it belongs to one of your enemies.

³⁷"You must not let people be unfair to a poor man. He must be judged the same as any other person.

³⁸"Be very careful if you say that a person is guilty of something. Don't make false charges against a person. Never allow an innocent person to be killed as punishment for something he did not do. Any person that kills an innocent man is evil, and I will not pardon (forgive) that person.

³⁹"If a person tries to pay you to agree with him when he is wrong, don't accept that

payment. A payment like that can blind judges so that they can't see the truth. And a payment like that can make good people tell lies.

⁴⁰"You must never do wrong things to a foreigner. Remember, at one time you were also foreigners when you lived in the land of Egypt.

⁴¹"Plant seeds, harvest your crops, and work the ground for six years. ⁴²But the seventh year, don't use your land. (The seventh year must be a special time of rest for the land.) Don't plant anything in your fields. If any crops grow there, then allow the poor people to have it. And allow the wild animals to eat the food that is left. You should do the same with your vineyards and with your fields of olive trees.

⁴³"Work for six days. Then on the seventh day, rest! This will allow your slaves and other workers a time for rest and relaxation. And your bulls and donkeys will also have a time of rest.

⁴⁴"Be sure that you obey all these laws. Don't worship false gods. You should not even speak their names!

⁴⁵"You will have three special holidays each year. On these holidays, you will come to my special place to worship me. ⁴⁶The first holiday will be the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This is like I commanded you. At this time you will eat bread that is made without yeast. This will continue for seven days. You will do this during the month of Abib,* because this is the time when you came out of Egypt. Every person must bring a sacrifice* to me during that time.

⁴⁷"The second holiday will be the Festival of Pentecost. This holiday will be during the early summer time, when you begin harvesting the crops you planted in your fields.

curse To say bad things about someone or to ask for bad things to happen to them.

firstborn The first child born in a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

month of Abib Or, "the spring month," that is, Nisan. This is about March-April.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

"The third holiday will be the Festival of Shelters.* This will be in the fall.* This will be at the time you gather all the crops from your fields.

"So three times each year all the men will come to the special place, to be with the Lord YAHWEH.*

"When you kill an animal and offer its blood as a sacrifice,* you must not offer bread that has yeast in it. And when you eat the meat from this sacrifice, you must eat all of the meat in one day. Don't save any of the meat for the next day.

"During harvest time when you gather your crops, you should bring the first of everything that you harvest to the house* of the Lord your God.

"You must not eat the meat from a young goat that is boiled in its mother's milk.

"God said, "I am sending an angel before you. This angel will lead you to the place that I have prepared for you. The angel will protect you. Obey the angel and follow him. Don't rebel against him. The angel will not forgive the wrong things you do to him. He has my power in him. You must obey everything he says. You must do everything that I tell you. If you do this, then I will be with you. I will be against all of your enemies. And I will be an enemy to every person that is against you."

"God said, "My angel will lead you through the land. He will lead you against many different people—the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I will defeat all of those people.

"Don't worship the gods of those people. Don't ever bow down to those gods. You must

never live the way those people live. You must destroy their idols.* And you must break the stones that help them remember their gods.*

"You must serve the Lord your God. If you do this, I will bless you with plenty of bread and water. I will take away all sickness from you.

"Your women will all be able to have babies. None of their babies will die at birth. And I will allow you to live long lives.

"When you fight against your enemies, I will send my great power before you.* I will help you defeat all your enemies. The people that are against you will become confused in battle and run away. I will send the hornet* in front of you. He will force your enemies to leave. The Hivite people, the Canaanite people, and the Hittite people will leave your country.

"But I will not force all those people out of your land quickly. I will not do this in only one year. The land will be empty if I force the people out too fast. Then all the wild animals would increase and control the land. And they would be much trouble for you. So I will force those people out of your land very slowly. You will continue to move across the land. And wherever you go I will force the other people to leave.

"I will give you all the land from the Red Sea to the Euphrates River. The western border will be the Philistine Sea (*Mediterranean Sea*), and the eastern border will be the Arabian Desert. I will let you defeat the people living there. And you will force all those people to leave.

"You must not make any agreements with any of those people or their gods. Don't let them stay in your country. If you let them stay, they will be like a trap to you—they will cause you to sin against me. You will begin worshipping their gods."

Festival of Shelters Also called "Succoth" and "Feast of Tabernacles." At this time, the people lived in tents or shelters for seven days to help them remember the time in the Sinai desert.

in the fall Literally, "at the end of the year." This means the end of the growing season.

YAHWEH This name for God is usually translated "Lord." **sacrifice(s)** A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

house The "Holy Tent" where the people would go to meet with God. See Ex. 25:8,9.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

stones ... gods Or, "memorials." Here, these were stone markers that people used in worshipping their gods.

When ... you Or, "News of my power will go before you, and your enemies will be frightened."

hornet A stinging insect like a wasp or bee. This might be a real hornet, or it might mean God's angel or his great power.

God and Israel Make Their Agreement

24 God told Moses, "You, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders (*leaders*) of Israel must come up the mountain and worship me from a distance. ²Then Moses will come close to the Lord by himself. The other men must not come close to the Lord, and the rest of the people must not even come up the mountain."

³Moses told the people all the rules and commands from the Lord. Then all the people said, "We will obey all the commands that the Lord has spoken."

⁴So Moses wrote all of the commands of the Lord on a scroll. The next morning, Moses got up and built an altar* near the bottom of the mountain. And he set up twelve stones—one for each of the twelve family groups of Israel. ⁵Then Moses sent young men of Israel to offer sacrifices.* These men offered bulls to the Lord as burnt offerings and peace offerings.

⁶Moses saved the blood from these animals. Moses put half of the blood in bowls. And he poured the other half of the blood on the altar.*

⁷Moses read the scroll with the special Agreement written on it. Moses read the Agreement so all the people could hear him. And the people said, "We have heard the laws that the Lord has given us. And we agree to obey them."

⁸Then Moses held the bowls full of the blood from the sacrifices.* Moses threw that blood on the people. He said, "This blood shows that the Lord has made a special Agreement with you. The laws God gave you explain the Agreement."

⁹Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders (*leaders*) of Israel went up the mountain. ¹⁰On the mountain, these men saw the God of Israel. God was standing on something that looked like blue sapphires, as clear as the sky! ¹¹All the leaders of Israel saw

God, but God did not destroy them.* They all ate and drank together."

Moses Goes to Get God's Law

¹²The Lord said to Moses, "Come to me on the mountain. I have written my teachings and laws on two flat stones. These teachings and laws are for the people. I will give these flat stones to you."

¹³So Moses and his helper, Joshua, went up the mountain of God. ¹⁴Moses said to the elders (*leaders*), "Wait here for us, we will come back to you. While I am gone, Aaron and Hur will rule over you. Go to those men if anyone has a problem."

Moses Meets with God

¹⁵Then Moses went up the mountain. And the cloud covered the mountain. ¹⁶The Glory of the Lord* came down on Mount Sinai. The cloud covered the mountain for six days. On the seventh day, the Lord spoke to Moses from the cloud. ¹⁷The people of Israel could see the Glory of the Lord. It was like a burning fire on top of the mountain.

¹⁸Then Moses went higher up the mountain into the cloud. Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights."

Gifts for the Holy Things

25 The Lord said to Moses, ²"Tell the people of Israel to bring me gifts. Each person must decide in his heart what he wants to give me. Accept these gifts for me. ³Here is the list of the things that you should accept from the people: gold, silver, and bronze*; ⁴blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen; goat hair, ⁵ram skins dyed red, and fine leather*;

saw God ... destroy them The Bible says that people cannot see God. But God wanted these leaders to know what he was like, so he let them see him in some special way.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This form was like a bright, shining light.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or sea cow.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Moses saved the blood ... altar The blood was used to seal the Agreement between God and the people. It was poured on the altar to show that God shared in the Agreement.

acacia wood; ⁶oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil* and spices for the sweet-smelling incense* ⁷Also accept onyx stones and other jewels to be put on the Ephod* and the Judgment Pouch.*"

The Holy Tent

⁸God also said, "The people will build a holy place for me. Then I can live among them. ⁹I will show you what the Holy Tent* and everything in it should look like. Build everything exactly the way I show you.

The Box of the Agreement

¹⁰"Use acacia wood and build a special box. This Holy Box must be 45 inches* long, 27 inches* wide, and 27 inches high. ¹¹Use pure gold to cover the Box inside and out. Put gold trim around the edges of the Box. ¹²Make four gold rings for carrying the Box. Put the gold rings on the four corners, two rings on each side. ¹³Then make poles for carrying the Box. These poles should be made from acacia wood and covered with gold. ¹⁴Put the poles through the rings on the corners of the Box. Use these poles to carry the Box. ¹⁵These poles should always stay in the rings of the Box. Don't take the poles out.

¹⁶God said, "I will give you the Agreement.* Put the Agreement into this Box. ¹⁷Then make a cover.* Make it from pure gold. Make it 45 inches* long and 27 inches* wide.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on people or things to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests. See Ex. 28:6-14.

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the priest's chest.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "Meeting Tent." The people went to this special tent to meet with God.

45 inches Literally, "2½ cubits."

27 inches Literally, "1½ cubits."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid, cover," or "the place where sins are forgiven."

¹⁸"Then make two Cherub angels* and put them on each end of the cover. Hammer gold to make these angels. ¹⁹Put one angel on one end of the cover, and put the other angel on the other end. Join the angels together with the cover to make one piece. ²⁰The wings of these angels should spread up toward the sky. The angels should cover the Box with their wings. The angels should face each other, looking toward the cover.

²¹"I will give you the Agreement.* Put that Agreement in the Box, and put the cover* on the Box. ²²When I meet with you, I will speak from between the Cherub angels* on the cover that is on the Box of the Agreement.* From that place I will give all my commands to the people of Israel.

The Table

²³"Make a table from acacia wood. The table must be 36 inches* long, 18 inches* wide, and 27 inches* high. ²⁴Cover the table with pure gold and put gold trim around it. ²⁵Then make a frame 3 inches* wide around the table. And put gold trim on the frame. ²⁶Then make four gold rings and put them on the four corners of the table, where the four legs are. ²⁷Put the rings close to the frame around the top of the table. These rings will hold the poles used to carry the table. ²⁸Use acacia wood to make the poles, and cover them with gold. The poles are for carrying the table. ²⁹Make the plates, the spoons, the pitchers, and the bowls from pure gold. The pitchers and bowls will be used for pouring the drink offerings. ³⁰Put the special bread* before me on the table. It must always be there in front of me.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

36 inches Literally, "2 cubits."

18 inches Literally, "1 cubit."

3 inches Literally, "1 tephah."

special bread Also called "bread of the Presence." Every day this bread was put before God on the special table in the Holy Place.

The Lampstand

¹¹"Then you must make a lampstand. Use pure gold and hammer it to make the base and the shaft. Make flowers, buds, and petals from pure gold. Join all these things together into one piece.

¹²"The lampstand must have six branches—three branches on one side, and three branches on the other. ¹³Each branch must have three flowers. Make these flowers like almond flowers with buds and petals. ¹⁴Make four more flowers for the lampstand. These flowers must be made like almond flowers with buds and petals. ¹⁵There will be six branches on the lampstand—three branches coming out from each side of the shaft. Make a flower with buds and petals below each of the three places where the branches join the shaft. ¹⁶The whole lampstand with the flowers and branches must be made from pure gold. All this gold must be hammered and joined together into one piece. ¹⁷Then make seven lamps* to go on the lampstand. These lamps will give light to the area in front of the lampstand. ¹⁸Use pure gold to make the wick trimmers* and the trays. ¹⁹Use 75 pounds* of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things to be used with it. ²⁰Be very careful to make everything exactly the way I showed you on the mountain."

The Holy Tent

26 The Lord said to Moses, "The Holy Tent* should be made from ten curtains. These curtains must be made from fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn. A skilled worker should sew pictures of Cherub angels* with wings into the curtains. ²Make each curtain the same size. Each curtain should

be 14 yards* long and 2 yards* wide. ³Join the curtains together into two groups. Join five curtains together to make one group, and join five curtains together to make the other group. ⁴Use blue cloth to make loops along the edge of the end curtain in one group. Do the same on the end curtain in the other group. ⁵There must be 50 loops on the end curtain of the first group. And there must be 50 loops on the end curtain of the other group. ⁶Then make 50 gold rings to join the curtains together. This will join the Holy Tent together into one piece.

⁷"Make another tent that will cover the Holy Tent.* Use eleven curtains to make this tent. Make these curtains from goat hair. ⁸All these curtains must be the same size. They must be 15 yards* long and 2 yards* wide. ⁹Join five of the curtains together into one group. Then join the other six curtains together into another group. Fold back half of the sixth curtain at the front of the Tent. ¹⁰Make 50 loops down the edge of the end curtain of one group. Do the same for the end curtain of the other group. ¹¹Then make 50 bronze* rings to join the curtains together. This will join the tent together into one piece. ¹²Half of the end curtain of this tent will hang down below the back edge of the Holy Tent. ¹³On the sides, the curtains of this tent will hang down 18 inches* below the bottom edges of the Holy Tent. So this tent will completely cover the Holy Tent. ¹⁴Make two coverings to go over the outer tent. One covering should be made from ram skins dyed red. The other covering should be made from fine leather.*

¹⁵"Use acacia wood to make frames to support the Holy Tent.* ¹⁶The frames should be 15 feet* high and 27 inches* wide. ¹⁷Two side poles should be joined together with cross

lamps These lamps were small bowls filled with oil. A wick was put in the bowl and lit to produce light.

wick trimmers Tools used to extinguish the lamps.

75 pounds Literally, "a kákar."

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "Meeting Tent." The place where God came to live among his people.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

14 yards Literally, "28 cubits long."

2 yards Literally, "4 cubits wide."

15 yards Literally, "30 cubits."

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

18 inches Literally, "one cubit."

fine leather Leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or a sea cow.

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

27 inches Literally, "1½ cubits."

pieces to make each frame. All the frames for the Holy Tent must be the same.¹⁸ Make 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent.¹⁹ And make 40 silver bases for the frames. Each frame should have two silver bases to go under it—one base for each side pole.²⁰ Make 20 more frames for the other side (*the north side*) of the Holy Tent.²¹ And make 40 silver bases for these frames—two bases under each frame.²² Make six more frames for the back (*the west side*) of the Holy Tent.²³ Make two frames for the corners at the back of the Holy Tent.²⁴ The frames at the corners should be joined together at the bottom. At the top, a ring will hold the frames together. Do the same for both corners.²⁵ There will be a total of eight frames for the west end of the Tent. And there will be 16 silver bases—two bases under each frame.

²⁶ Use acacia wood and make braces for the frames of the Holy Tent.* There should be five braces for the first side of the Holy Tent.²⁷ And there should be five braces for the frames on the other side of the Holy Tent. And there should be five braces for the frames at the back (*the west side*) of the Holy Tent.²⁸ The middle brace should pass through the frames from one end to the other.

²⁹ Cover the frames with gold. And make rings for the frames to hold the braces. Make these rings from gold. Also, cover the braces with gold.³⁰ Build the Holy Tent* the way I showed you on the mountain.

Inside the Holy Tent

¹ Use fine linen* and make a special curtain to divide the inside of the Holy Tent. Use blue, purple, and red yarn and sew pictures of Cherub angels into the curtain.² Make four posts from acacia wood, and cover the posts with gold. Put hooks made from gold on the four posts. Put four silver bases under the posts. Then hang the curtain on the gold hooks.³ Put the curtain under the gold rings.* Then put the

Box of the Agreement* behind the curtain. This curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place.⁴ Put the cover* on the Box of the Agreement in the Most Holy Place.

⁵ In the Holy Place, on the other side of the curtain put the special table you made. The table should be on the north side of the Holy Tent.* Then put the lampstand on the south side. This will be across from the table.

The Door of the Holy Tent

¹ Then make a curtain to cover the entrance to the Holy Tent.* Use blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen to make this curtain. And weave pictures into it.² Make gold hooks for this curtain. And make five posts using acacia wood covered with gold. And make five bronze* bases for the five posts.*

The Altar for Burning Offerings

27 The Lord said to Moses, “Use acacia wood and build an altar.* The altar should be square. It must be 7½ feet* long, 7½ feet* wide, and 4½ feet* high.² Make a horn for each of the four corners of the altar. Join each horn to its corner so that everything is one piece. Then cover the altar with bronze.*

³ Use bronze* to make all the tools and dishes that will be used on the altar.* Make pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and pans. These will be used for cleaning ashes from the altar.⁴ Make a screen for the altar. Make this screen like a net. And make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the screen.⁵ Put the screen under the ledge at the bottom of the altar. The screen will go halfway up into the altar from below.

Box of the Agreement Or, “ark of the Covenant.” The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

cover Also called “mercy seat.” The Hebrew word can mean “lid, cover” or “the place where sins are forgiven.”

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean “copper,” “bronze,” or “brass.”

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

7½ feet Literally, “5 cubits.”

4½ feet Literally, “3 cubits high.”

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” Also called the “Meeting Tent.” The place God came to live among his people.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

under ... rings The 50 gold rings that joined together the two parts of the Holy Tent. See Ex. 26:6.

⁶"Use acacia wood to make poles for the altar,* and cover them with bronze.* ⁷Put the poles through the rings on both sides of the altar. Use these poles for carrying the altar. ⁸Make the sides of the altar from boards. Make the altar the way I showed you on the mountain.

The Courtyard Around the Holy Tent

⁹"Make a courtyard for the Holy Tent.* The south side should have a wall of curtains 50 yards* long. These curtains must be made from fine linen.* ¹⁰Use 20 posts and 20 bronze* bases under the posts. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods* should be made from silver. ¹¹The north side must also have a wall of curtains 50 yards* long. It must have 20 posts, and 20 bronze bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods must be made from silver.

¹²"On the west side of the courtyard there must be a wall of curtains 25 yards* long. There must be ten posts and ten bases. ¹³The east side of the courtyard must also be 25 yards* long. ¹⁴This east side is the entrance to the courtyard. One side of the entrance must have curtains 7½ yards* long. There must be three posts and three bases on this side. ¹⁵The other side must also have curtains 7½ yards* long. There must be three posts and three bases on that side.

¹⁶Make a curtain 10 yards* long to cover the entrance to the courtyard. Make that curtain from fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn. Weave designs into that curtain. There must be four posts and four bases for that curtain. ¹⁷All the posts around the courtyard must be joined with silver curtain rods. The hooks on the

posts must be made from silver, and the bases for the posts must be bronze.* ¹⁸The courtyard should be 50 yards* long and 25 yards* wide. The wall of curtains around the courtyard should be 7½ feet* high. The curtains must be made from fine linen. The bases under the posts must be bronze. ¹⁹All the tools, tent pegs, and other things used in the Holy Tent* must be made from bronze. And all the pegs for the curtains around the courtyard, must be made from bronze.

Oil for the Lamp

²⁰"Command the people of Israel to bring the best olive oil. Use this oil for the lamp that must be lit each evening. ²¹Aaron and his sons will have the job of caring for the lamp. They will go into the first room of the Meeting Tent.* This is outside the room with the Agreement* that is behind the curtain that separates the two rooms. In this place they will make sure the lamp continues burning before the Lord from evening till morning. The people of Israel and their descendants* must obey this law forever."

Clothes for the Priests

28 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell your brother Aaron and his sons, Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, to come to you from the people of Israel. These men will serve me as priests.

²"Make special clothes for your brother Aaron. These clothes will give him honor and respect. ³There are skilled men among the people who can make these clothes. I have given these men special wisdom. Tell those men to make the clothes for Aaron. These clothes will show that he serves me in a special way. Then he can serve me as a priest. ⁴These

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.
bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "Meeting Tent." The place God came to live among his people.

50 yards Literally, "100 cubits."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

curtain rods These were either rods that joined the posts together or grommets (rings) sewn into the curtains.

25 yards Literally, "50 cubits."

7½ yards Literally, "15 cubits."

10 yards Literally, "20 cubits."

7½ feet Literally, "5 cubits."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

are the clothes the men should make: the Judgment Pouch,* the Ephod,* a robe, a woven shirt, a turban* and a sash (*belt*). The men must make these special clothes for your brother Aaron and his sons. Then Aaron and his sons can serve me as priests. ⁷Tell the men to use gold threads, fine linen,* and blue, purple and red yarn.

The Ephod and the Sash

⁸"Use gold threads, fine linen,* and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the Ephod.* This must be the work of a very skilled person. ⁹At each shoulder of the Ephod there should be a shoulder piece. These shoulder pieces should be tied to the two corners of the Ephod.

¹⁰"The men will very carefully weave a sash (*belt*) for the Ephod. This sash must be made the same way as the Ephod—use gold threads, fine linen,* and blue, purple, and red yarn.

¹¹"Take two onyx stones. Write the names of the twelve sons of Israel (*Jacob*) on these jewels. ¹²Write six names on one jewel and six names on the other jewel. Write the names in order, from the oldest son to the youngest. ¹³Cut the names of the sons of Israel on these stones. Do this the way a worker makes a seal.* Put the jewels in gold settings. ¹⁴Then put these two jewels on each shoulder piece of the Ephod. Aaron will wear this special coat when he stands before the Lord. And the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel will be on the Ephod. These jewels will cause God to remember the people of Israel. ¹⁵Use fine gold to hold the stones on the Ephod. ¹⁶Twist chains of pure gold together like a rope. Make two of these gold chains and fasten them to the gold settings.

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

seal Small stones with designs cut into them. Pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they made a special mark.

The Judgment Pouch

¹⁵"Make the Judgment Pouch* for the high priest. Skilled workers should make this pouch like they made the Ephod.* They must use gold threads, fine linen,* and blue, purple, and red yarn. ¹⁶The Judgment Pouch should be folded double to make a square pocket. It should be 9 inches* long and 9 inches* wide. ¹⁷Put four rows of beautiful jewels on the Judgment Pouch. The first row of jewels should have a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl. ¹⁸The second row should have a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald. ¹⁹The third row should have a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. ²⁰The fourth row should have a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. Set all these jewels in gold. ²¹There will be twelve jewels on the Judgment Pouch—one jewel for each of the sons of Israel (*Jacob*). Write the name of one of the sons of Israel on each of the stones. Cut these names into each stone like a worker makes a seal.*

²²"Make chains of pure gold for Judgment Pouch.* These chains must be braided like a rope. ²³Make two gold rings and put them on two corners of the Judgment Pouch. ²⁴Put the two golden chains through the two rings at the corners of the Judgment Pouch. ²⁵Fasten the other ends of the gold chains to the two settings. This will fasten them to the two shoulder pieces of the Ephod.* on the front. ²⁶Make two more gold rings and put them on the other two corners of the Judgment Pouch. This will be on the inside edge of the Judgment Pouch next to the Ephod. ²⁷Make two more gold rings and put them on the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the Ephod. Put the gold rings above the sash (*belt*) of the Ephod. ²⁸Use blue ribbon to tie the rings of the Judgment Pouch to the rings of the Ephod. In this way the Judgment Pouch will rest close to the sash and will be held tight against the Ephod.

²⁹"When Aaron enters the Holy Place,* he will have the names of the sons of Israel over

9 inches Literally, "1 span," the distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger.

Holy Place One of the two rooms in the Holy Tent.

his heart. These names are on the Judgment Pouch* that he will wear to judge. In this way the Lord will always remember the twelve sons of Israel. ³⁰Put the Urim and Thummim* inside the Judgment Pouch. They will be over Aaron's heart when he goes before the Lord. So Aaron will always carry with him a way of judging the people of Israel when he is before the Lord.

Other Clothes for the Priests

³¹"Make a robe for the Ephod.* Make the robe using only blue cloth. ³²Make a hole in the center for the head. And sew a piece of cloth around the edge of this hole. This cloth will keep the hole from tearing. ³³Use blue, purple, and red yarn to make cloth pomegranates.* Hang these pomegranates around the bottom edge of the robe. And hang gold bells between the pomegranates. ³⁴So around the bottom edge of the robe there should be bells and pomegranates. There should be a bell between each pomegranate. ³⁵Aaron will wear this robe when he serves as a priest. The bells will be ringing when Aaron enters the Holy Place to stand before the Lord. And the bells will be ringing when he leaves the Holy Place.* This way Aaron will not die.

³⁶"Make a strip of pure gold. Write words into the gold like on a seal.* Write these words: HOLY TO THE LORD." ³⁷Fasten the gold strip to a blue ribbon. Tie the blue ribbon around the turban.* The gold strip should be on the front of the turban. ³⁸Aaron will wear this on his head. In this way he will remove the guilt if anything is wrong with the gifts of the people

of Israel.* These are the gifts the people give to the Lord. Aaron will always wear this on his head so that the Lord will accept the gifts of the people.

³⁹"Use fine linen to make the woven shirt. And use fine linen to make the turban.* The sash (*belt*) should have designs sewn into it. ⁴⁰Also make coats, belts, and turbans for Aaron's sons. This will give them honor and respect. ⁴¹Put the clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons. Then pour the special oil on them to make them priests. This will make them holy, and they will serve me as priests.

⁴²"Use linen* to make underclothes for the priests. These underclothes will cover them from the waist to the thighs. ⁴³Aaron and his sons must wear these clothes anytime they enter the Meeting Tent.* They must wear these clothes when they come near to the altar to serve as priests in the Holy Place. If they don't wear these clothes, then they will be guilty of wrong, and they will have to die. All this should be a law that continues forever for Aaron and all his family after him."

The Ceremony for Appointing the Priests

29 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Now I will tell you what you must do to show that Aaron and his sons serve me in a special way as priests. Find one young bull and two young goats that have nothing wrong with them. ²Then use fine wheat flour without yeast to make bread. And use the same things to make cakes mixed with olive oil. And make small thin cakes spread with oil. ³Put this bread and the cakes in a basket. Then give the basket to Aaron and his sons. At the same time give them the bull and the two rams.

⁴"Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Wash them with water. ⁵Put the special clothes on Aaron. Put on him the woven shirt and the robe that is worn with the Ephod.* Put the Ephod and the

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest.

Urim and Thummim Used by the priest to learn God's answer to questions. They were probably like lots—stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

pomegranates A red fruit about the size of an orange.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

seal Small stones with designs cut into them. Pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they made a special mark.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

In this ... Israel Literally, "It will keep him holy when he bears the guilt from the gifts of the people of Israel."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Judgment Pouch* on him. Then tie the beautiful sash (*belt*) on him. *Put the turban* on his head. And put the special crown around the turban. *Take the anointing oil* and pour it on Aaron's head. This will show that Aaron is chosen for this work.

¹¹"Then bring Aaron's sons to that place. Put woven shirts on them. *Then tie sashes (*belts*) around their waists. Give them the special hats to wear. At that time they will begin to be priests. They will be priests because of the special law that will continue forever. This is the way you will make Aaron and his sons priests.

¹²"Then bring the bull to that place at the front of the Meeting Tent.* Aaron and his sons must put their hands on the bull's head. *Then kill that bull there at the entrance to the Meeting Tent. The Lord will see this. *Then take some of the bull's blood and go to the altar.* Use your finger to put some blood on the horns of the altar. Pour all the blood that is left at the bottom of the altar. *Then take all the fat from inside the bull. Take the fat from around the liver, and take both kidneys and the fat around them. Burn this fat on the altar. *Then take the bull's meat, his skin, and his other parts and go outside your camp. Burn these things there outside the camp. This is an offering to take away the sins of the priests.

¹³"Then tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on the head of one of the rams.* *Kill that ram and save the blood. Throw the blood against the altar* on all four sides. *Then cut the ram into several pieces. Wash all the parts from inside the ram and the legs. Put these things with the head and the other pieces of the ram. *Then burn everything on the altar. This

is a special offering that is burned. It is offered to the Lord. The Lord will smell this offering and it will please him. This is an offering that is made to the Lord using fire.

¹⁴"Tell Aaron and his sons to put their hands on the other ram.* *Kill that ram and save some of its blood. Put that blood on the right earlobes of Aaron and his sons. Also put some of the blood on the thumbs of their right hands. And put some of the blood on the big toes of their right feet. Then throw blood against all four sides of the altar. *Then take some of the blood from the altar. Mix it with the special oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his clothes. And sprinkle it on his sons and their clothes. This will show that Aaron and his sons serve me in a special way. And it will show that their clothes are used only at special times.

¹⁵"Then take the fat from the ram. (This is the ram that will be used in the ceremony to make Aaron the high priest.) Take the fat from around the tail and the fat that covers the organs inside the body. Take the fat that covers the liver. Take both kidneys and the right leg. *Then take the basket of bread that you made without yeast. This is the basket you put before the Lord. Take these things out of the basket: one loaf of bread, one cake made with oil, and one small thin cake. *Give these things to Aaron and his sons. Tell them to hold these things in their hands before the Lord. This will be a special offering to the Lord. *Then take these things from Aaron and his sons and put them on the altar* with the ram. The Lord will smell this burnt offering, and it will please him. This will be an offering made to the Lord using fire.

¹⁶"Then take the breast from the ram.* (This is the ram that will be used in the ceremony to make Aaron the high priest.) Hold the breast of the ram before the Lord as a special offering. This part of the animal will be yours. *Then take the breast and the leg of the ram that was used to make Aaron the high priest. And give them to Aaron and his sons. This will be a special part of the offering. *The people of Israel will always give Aaron and his sons these parts. These parts will always belong to

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

ram(s) A male sheep.

the priests when the people of Israel make an offering to the Lord. When they give these parts to the priest, it will be the same as giving them to the Lord.

²²"Save those special clothes that were made for Aaron. Those clothes will belong to all his people that live after him. They will wear those clothes when they are chosen to be priests.

²³Aaron's son will become the next high priest after him. That son will wear those clothes seven days when he comes to the Meeting Tent* to serve in the Holy Place.*

²⁴"Cook the meat from the ram* that was used to make Aaron the high priest. Cook that meat in a holy place. ²⁵Then Aaron and his sons must eat the meat at the front door of the Meeting Tent.* And they must also eat the bread that is in the basket. ²⁶These offerings were used to take away their sins when they were made priests. Now they should eat those offerings. ²⁷If any of the meat from that ram or any of the bread is left the next morning, then it must be burned. You must not eat that bread or the meat because it should be eaten only in a special way at a special time.

²⁸"Do all these things that I commanded you to do for Aaron and his sons. You will do these things during the time of seven days. ²⁹Each day for seven days, kill a bull. This will be an offering for the sins of Aaron and his sons. You will use these sacrifices* to make the altar* pure. And pour olive oil on the altar to make it holy. ³⁰You will make the altar pure and holy for seven days. At that time the altar will become most holy. Anything that touches the altar will also be holy.

³¹"Every day you must make an offering on the altar.* You must kill two lambs that are one year old. ³²Offer one lamb in the morning and the other in the evening. ³³"When you kill the

first lamb, also offer 8 cups* of fine wheat flour. Mix that flour with 1 quart* of wine as an offering. When you kill the second lamb in the evening, also offer the 8 cups* of fine flour. And offer 1 quart* of wine. This is the same as you did in the morning. This will be a food offering for the Lord. When you burn this offering, the Lord will smell it, and it will please him.

³⁴"You must burn these things as an offering to the Lord every day. Do this at the entrance of the Meeting Tent* before the Lord. Continue to do this for all time. When you make the offering, I the Lord will meet you there and speak to you. ³⁵I will meet with the people of Israel in that place. And that place will be made holy because of my greatness.

³⁶"So I will make the Meeting Tent* holy. And I will make the altar* holy. And I will make Aaron and his sons holy so that they can serve me as priests. ³⁷I will live with the people of Israel. I will be their God. ³⁸The people will know that I am the Lord, their God. They will know that I am the one who led them out of Egypt so I could live with them. I am the Lord, their God."

The Altar for Burning Incense

30 God said to Moses, "Make an altar* from acacia wood. You will use this altar for burning incense.* ²You must make the altar square—18 inches* long and 18 inches* wide. It must be 36 inches* high. There will be horns at the four corners. These horns must be made as one piece with the altar. ³Cover the top and all the sides of the altar with pure gold. And put gold trim all around the altar. ⁴Below this trim there should be two gold rings. There should be two gold rings on opposite sides of the altar. These gold rings will be used with poles to carry the altar. ⁵Make the poles from acacia wood also. Cover the poles with gold.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of a measure."

1 quart Literally, "1/4 hin."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

18 inches Literally, "1 cubit."

36 inches Literally, "2 cubits."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

ram(s) A male sheep.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

⁶Put the altar in front of the special curtain. The Box of the Agreement* is behind that curtain. The altar will be in front of the cover* that is above the Agreement.* This is the place where I will meet with you.

⁷"Aaron must burn sweet smelling incense* on the altar* every morning. He will do this when he comes to care for the lamps. ⁸He must burn incense again in the evening. This is the time when he checks the lamps in the evenings. So that incense will be burned before the Lord every day forever. ⁹Don't use this altar for offering any other kind of incense or burnt offering. Don't use this altar to offer any kind of grain offering or drink offering.

¹⁰"Once a year Aaron must make a special sacrifice* to the Lord. Aaron will use the blood of the sin offering to pay for the sins of the people. Aaron will do this at the horns of this altar.* This day will be called the Day of Atonement. This will be a very special day for the Lord."

The Temple Tax

¹¹The Lord said to Moses, ¹²"Count the people of Israel so that you will know how many people there are. Every time this is done, every person must make a payment for himself to the Lord. If each person does this, then no terrible thing will happen to the people. ¹³Every person who is counted must pay 1/2 shekel. (That is 1/2 shekel by the official measure.* This shekel weighs 20 gerahs.*) This half

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid, cover" or "the place where sins are forgiven."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the standard of measure used by the priests in the tabernacle or temple.

gerah(s) 1/20 of an ounce.

shekel is an offering to the Lord. ¹⁴Every person that is counted and is 20 years old or more will give the Lord this offering. ¹⁵Rich people must not give more than 1/2 shekel. And poor people must not give less than 1/2 shekel. All people will make the same offering to the Lord. This will be a payment for your life. ¹⁶Gather this money from the people of Israel. Use the money for the service in the Meeting Tent.* This payment will be a way for the Lord to remember his people. They will be paying for their own lives."

The Washing Bowl

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸"Make a bronze* bowl and put it on a bronze base. You will use this for washing. Put the bowl between the Meeting Tent* and the altar.* Fill the bowl with water. ¹⁹Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet with the water from this bowl. ²⁰Every time they enter the Meeting Tent or come near the altar they must wash with water. This way they will not die. ²¹And they must wash their hands and their feet so they won't die. This will be a law that continues forever for Aaron and his people. This law will continue for all Aaron's people that will live in the future."

The Anointing Oil

²²Then the Lord said to Moses, ²³"Find the finest spices. Get 12 pounds* of liquid myrrh, half that amount (that is, 6 pounds*) of sweet smelling cinnamon, and 12 pounds* of sweet smelling cane, ²⁴and 12 pounds* of cassia. Use the official measure* to measure all these things. Also get 1 gallon* of olive oil.

²⁵"Mix all these things to make a special sweet-smelling anointing oil.* ²⁶Pour this oil on

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

12 pounds Literally, "500 measures."

6 pounds Literally, "250 measures."

1 gallon Literally, "a hin."

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on things or people to show that they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

the Meeting Tent* and on the Box of the Agreement.* This will show that these things have a special purpose. "Pour the oil on the table and on all the dishes on the table. And pour this oil on the lamp and on all its tools. Pour the oil on the incense* altar. "Also, pour the oil on the altar for burning offerings to God. Pour this oil on everything on that altar. Pour this oil on the bowl and on the base under the bowl. "You will make all these things holy. They will be very special to the Lord. Anything that touches these things will also become holy.

"Pour the oil on Aaron and his sons. This will show that they serve me in a special way. Then they can serve me as priests. "Tell the people of Israel that the anointing oil* is holy—it must always be used only for me. "No one should use this oil like an ordinary perfume. Don't make perfume the same way you make this special oil. This oil is holy, and it should be very special to you. "If anyone makes a perfume like this holy oil, and if he gives it to a foreigner, then that person must be separated from his people."

The Incense

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Get these sweet-smelling spices: resin, onycha, galbanum, and pure frankincense. Be sure that you have equal amounts of these spices. "Mix the spices together to make a sweet-smelling incense.* Do this the same as perfume maker would do. Also mix salt with this incense. This will make it pure and special. "Grind some of the incense until it becomes a fine powder. Put

the powder in front of the Agreement* in the Meeting Tent.* This is the place where I meet with you. You must use this incense powder only for its very special purpose. "You must use this incense only in this special way for the Lord. You will make this incense in a special way. Don't make any other incense in this special way. "A person might want to make some of this incense for himself, so he can enjoy the smell. But if he does this, then he must be separated from his people."

Bezalel and Oholiab

31 Then the Lord said to Moses, "I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, from the family group of Judah. (Uri was the son of Hur.) "I have filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God—I have given him the skill and knowledge to do all kinds of things. "Bezalel is a very good designer. And he can make things from gold, silver, and bronze. "Bezalel can cut and set beautiful jewels. And he can work with wood. Bezalel can do all kinds of work. "I have also chosen Oholiab to work with him. Oholiab is the son of Ahisamach from the family group of Dan. And I have given skills to all the other workers so they can make all the things that I have commanded you:

- 1 the Meeting Tent,*
- 2 the Box of the Agreement,*
- 3 the cover* for the Box,
- 4 the table and everything on it,
- 5 the altar* for burning incense,*
- 6 the altar for burning offerings and the things used at the altar,
- 7 the bowl and the base under it,
- 8 all the special clothes for Aaron the priest,
- 9 and all the special clothes for Aaron's sons to wear when they serve as

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid, cover" or "the place where sins are forgiven."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

- priests,
 " the sweet-smelling anointing oil,*
 and the sweet-smelling incense for the
 Holy Place.*

These workers must make all these things the way that I have commanded you."

The Sabbath

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel this: 'You must follow the rules about my special days of rest. You must do this because they will be a sign between you and me for all generations. This will show you that I, the Lord, have made you my special people.

"'"Make the Sabbath* a special day. If a person treats the Sabbath like any other day, then that person must be killed. Any person who works on the Sabbath day must be separated from his people. "There are six other days in the week for working. But the seventh day is a very special day of rest. That is the special day to honor the Lord. Any person who works during the Sabbath must be killed. "The people of Israel must remember the Sabbath and make it a special day. They must continue to do this forever. It is an agreement between them and me that will continue forever. "The Sabbath will be a sign between me and the people of Israel forever. The Lord worked six days and made heaven and earth. And on the seventh day he rested and relaxed."

"So the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai. Then the Lord gave him the two flat stones with the Agreement* on them. God used his finger and wrote on the stones.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The two flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

The Golden Calf

32 The people saw that a long time had passed and Moses had not come down from the mountain. So the people gathered around Aaron. They said to him, "Look, Moses led us out of the land of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him. So make us some gods to go before us and lead us."

"Aaron said to the people, "Bring me the gold earrings that belong to your wives, sons, and daughters."

"So all the people gathered their gold earrings and brought them to Aaron. "Aaron took the gold from the people. Then he used it to make a statue of a calf. Aaron used a chisel to carve the statue, and then he covered it with gold. Then the people said, "Israel, these are the gods that led you out of Egypt."

Then the people said, "People of Israel, here are your gods! These are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

"Aaron saw all these things. So he built an altar* in front of the calf. Then Aaron made an announcement. He said, "Tomorrow will be a special feast to honor the Lord."

"The people woke up very early the next morning. They killed animals and offered them as burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. The people sat down to eat and drink. Then they got up and had a wild party.

"At the same time, the Lord said to Moses, "Go down from this mountain. Your people, the people you brought out of the land of Egypt, have done a terrible sin. "They have very quickly turned away from the things I commanded them to do. They made a calf from melted gold for themselves. They are worshiping that calf and making sacrifices* to it. The people have said, 'Israel, these are the gods that led you out of Egypt.'"

"The Lord said to Moses, "I have seen these people. I know that they are very stubborn people. They will always turn against me. "So now let me destroy them in anger. Then I will make a great nation from you."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

"But Moses begged the Lord his God. Moses said, "Lord, don't let your anger destroy your people. You brought these people out of Egypt with your great power and strength. "But if you destroy your people, then the people of Egypt can say, 'The Lord planned to do bad things to his people. That is why he led them out of Egypt. He wanted to kill them in the mountains. He wanted to destroy his people from the earth.' So don't be angry at your people. Give up your anger. Don't destroy your people. "Remember the men who served you—Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (*Jacob*). You used your name and made a promise to those men. You said: 'I will make your people as many as the stars in the sky. I will give your people all this land that I promised them. This land will be theirs forever.'"

"So the Lord felt sorry for the people. The Lord did not do the thing that he said he might do—he did not destroy the people.

"Then Moses went down the mountain. Moses had the two flat stones with the Agreement* on them. Those commandments were written on both sides of the stone, front and back. "God himself had made those stones. And God himself wrote the commandments on those stones.

"Moses and the other men were going down the mountain. Joshua heard the noise from the people's party. Joshua said to Moses, "It sounds like war down in the camp!"

"Moses answered, "It is not the noise of an army shouting for victory. It is not the noise of an army crying from defeat. The noise I hear is the sound of music.*"

"Moses came near the camp. He saw the golden calf, and he saw the people dancing. Moses became very angry, and he threw the flat stones on the ground. The stones broke into several pieces at the bottom of the mountain.

"Then Moses destroyed the calf that the people had made. He melted it in the fire. Then he ground the gold until it became dust. And he

threw the dust in the water. He forced the people of Israel to drink that water.

"Moses said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you? Why did you lead them to do such a bad sin?"

"Aaron answered, "Don't be angry, sir. You know that these people are always ready to do wrong. "The people said to me, 'Moses led us out of Egypt. But we don't know what has happened to him. So make us some gods to lead us.' "So I told the people, 'If you have any gold rings, then give them to me.' The people gave me their gold. I threw the gold into the fire, and out of the fire came this calf!"

"Moses saw that Aaron had let the people lose control. The people were being wild, and all their enemies could see them acting like fools. "So Moses stood at the entrance to the camp. Moses said, "Any person who wants to follow the Lord should come to me." And all the people from the family of Levi ran to Moses.

"Then Moses said to them, "I will tell you what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Every man must get his sword and go from one end of the camp to the other. You must punish these people, even if, each man must kill his brother, friends, and neighbors.'"

"The people from the family of Levi obeyed Moses. That day about 3,000 of the people of Israel died. "Then Moses said, "The Lord has chosen you today to be the people who will bless your sons and brothers."

"The next morning Moses told the people, "You have done a terrible sin! But now I will go up to the Lord, and maybe I can do something so he will forgive you for your sin."

"So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Please listen! These people did a very bad sin and made a god from gold. "Now, forgive them of this sin! If you will not forgive them, then erase my name from the book you have written.*"

"But the Lord said to Moses, "The only people that I erase from my book are the people

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.
music Or, "singing"

book you have written This probably refers to the "Book of Life," a book with all the names of God's people written in it.

who sin against me. "So now, go down and lead the people where I tell you. My angel will go before you and lead you. When the time comes to punish the people who sinned, then they will be punished." "So the Lord caused a terrible sickness to come to the people. He did this because they told Aaron to make the golden calf.

"I Will Not Go with You"

33 Then the Lord said to Moses, "You and the people you brought out of Egypt must leave this place. Go to the land that I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I made them a promise. I said, 'I will give that land to your people who live after you.' "I will send an angel to go before you. And I will defeat the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. I will force those people to leave your land. "So go up to a land filled with many good things.* But I will not go with you. You people are very stubborn, and you make me very angry. If I go with you, I might destroy you along the way."

"The people heard this bad news and they became very sad. After this, the people did not wear jewelry. "They did not wear jewelry because," the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel, 'You are a stubborn people. If I traveled with you even for a short time, I would destroy you. So take off all your jewelry. Then I will decide what to do with you.' "So the people of Israel stopped wearing their jewelry at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*).

The Meeting Tent

"Moses used to take a tent a short way outside the camp. Moses called it "the meeting tent." Any person who wanted to ask something from the Lord would go to the meeting tent outside the camp. "Any time Moses went out to the tent, all the people watched him. The people stood at the entrance

of their tents and watched Moses until he entered the meeting tent. "When Moses went into the tent, the tall cloud always came down. That cloud stayed at the entrance to the tent. In this way, the Lord spoke with Moses. "When the people saw the cloud at the entrance of the tent, they went to the entrance of their own tents and bowed down to worship God."

"The Lord spoke to Moses face to face. The Lord spoke to Moses like a man speaks with his friend. After speaking with the Lord, Moses always went back to the camp. Moses' helper was a young man named Joshua son of Nun. Joshua always stayed in the tent when Moses left it.

Moses Sees the Lord's Glory

"Moses said to the Lord, "You told me to lead these people. But you did not say who you would send with me. You said to me, 'I know you very well, and I am pleased with you.' "If I have truly pleased you, then teach me your ways. I want to know you. Then I can continue to please you. Remember that all these are your people."

"The Lord answered, "I myself will go with you. I will lead you."

"Then Moses said to the Lord, "If you don't go with us, then don't send us away from this place. "Also, how will we know if you are pleased with me and these people? If you go with us, then we will know for sure! If you don't go with us, then I and these people will be no different than any other people on the earth."

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "I will do what you ask. I will do this because I am pleased with you. I know you very well."

Moses Sees God's Goodness

"Then Moses said, "Now, please show me your Glory."

"Then the Lord answered, "I will cause all my Goodness to go before you. I am the Lord

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

lead you Or, "give you rest."

I know you very well Literally, "I know you by name."

and I will announce my name so that you can hear it. I will show kindness and love to the people I choose. ²²But you can't see my face. No person can see me and continue to live.

²³"There is a rock at a place near me. You can stand on that rock. ²⁴My Glory will pass by that place. I will put you in a large crack in that rock, and I will cover you with my hand while I pass. ²⁵Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back. But you will not see my face."

The New Stone Tablets

34 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make two more flat stones like the first two that were broken. I will write the same words on these stones that were written on the first two stones. ²Be ready tomorrow morning and come up on Mount Sinai. Stand before me there on the top of the mountain. ³No person will be allowed to come with you. No person should even be seen any place on the mountain. Even your herds of animals or flocks of sheep will not be allowed to eat grass at the bottom of the mountain."

⁴So Moses made two more flat stones like the first ones. Then early the next morning he went up Mount Sinai. Moses did everything like the Lord had commanded him. Moses carried the two flat stones with him. ⁵After Moses was on the mountain, the Lord came down to him in a cloud. The Lord stood there with Moses, and Moses called the Lord's name.*

⁶The Lord passed in front of Moses and said, "YAHWEH,* the Lord, is the kind and merciful God. The Lord is slow to become angry. The Lord is full of great love. The Lord can be trusted. ⁷The Lord shows his kindness to thousands of generations. The Lord forgives* people for the wrong things they do. But the

Lord does not forget to punish guilty people. The Lord will punish not only the guilty people, but their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren will suffer for the bad things those people do.*"

⁸Then Moses quickly bowed to the ground and worshiped (the Lord). Moses said, "Lord, if you are pleased with me, then please go with us. I know that these are stubborn people. But forgive us for the bad things we did! Accept us as your people."

⁹Then the Lord said, "I am making this agreement with all of your people. I will do amazing things that have never before been done for any other nation on earth. The people with you will see that I, the Lord, am very great. The people will see the wonderful things that I will do for you. ¹⁰Obey the things I command you today, and I will force your enemies to leave your land. I will force out the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ¹¹Be careful! Don't make any agreement with the people that live in the land where you are going. If you make an agreement with those people, then it will bring you trouble. ¹²But destroy their altars.* Break the stones they worship. Cut down their idols.* ¹³Don't worship any other god. I am Yahweh Kanah—the jealous Lord. That is my name. I am El Kanah—the jealous God.

¹⁴"Be careful not to make any agreements with the people who live in that land. If you do this, then you might join them when they worship their gods. Those people will invite you to join them, and you will eat their sacrifices.* ¹⁵You might choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons. Those daughters serve false gods. They might lead your sons to do the same thing.

The Lord ... people do Or, "The Lord credits the guilt of the fathers to their children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generation."

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

stones ... idols Literally, "memorials ... Asherah poles." These were stone markers and wood poles that the people set up to help them remember and honor false gods.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Moses ... name Literally, "He called on the name of the Lord." This might mean Moses worshiped the Lord, or it might mean the Lord spoke his name to Moses.

YAHWEH This Hebrew name for God is usually translated "Lord." This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "He is" or "He makes things exist."

forgives Or, "spares."

¹¹"Don't make idols.*

¹²"Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat that bread made without yeast like I commanded you before. Do this during the month I have chosen, the month of Abib.* Why? Because that is the month you came out of Egypt.

¹³"A woman's first baby always belongs to me. Even the first animals that are born from your cows or sheep belong to me. ¹⁴If you want to keep a donkey that is the first born, then you can buy it with a lamb. But if you don't buy that donkey with a lamb, then you must break the donkey's neck. You must buy back all of your firstborn* sons from me. No person should come before me without a gift.

¹⁵"You will work for six days. But on the seventh day you must rest. You must rest even during the times of planting and harvesting.

¹⁶"Celebrate the Festival of Weeks.* Use the first grain from the wheat harvest for this festival. And in the fall* celebrate the Festival of Harvest.*

¹⁷"Three times each year all your men must go to be with the Lord YAHWEH,* the God of Israel.

¹⁸"When you go into your land, I will force your enemies out of that land. I will expand your borders—you will get more and more land. You will go before the Lord your God three times each year. At that time, no one will try to take your land from you.

¹⁹"If you offer blood from a sacrifice* to me, don't offer yeast at the same time. And

none of the meat from the Passover* meal should be left until the next morning.

²⁰"Give the Lord the very first crops that you harvest. Bring those things to the house* of the Lord your God.

"Never cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

²¹Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write all the things that I have told you. Those things are the Agreement that I made with you and the people of Israel."

²²Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights. During that time he did not eat food or drink water. And Moses wrote the words of the Agreement – the Ten Commandments – on the two flat stones.

Moses' Shining Face

¹Then Moses came down from Mount Sinai. He carried the two flat stones with the Agreement* on them. Moses' face was shining because he had talked with the Lord. But Moses did not know this. ²Aaron and all the people of Israel saw that Moses' face was shining bright. So they were afraid to go near him. ³But Moses called to them. So Aaron and all the leaders of the people went to Moses. Moses talked with them. ⁴After that, all the people of Israel came near Moses. And Moses gave them the commands that the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

⁵When Moses finished speaking to the people, he put a covering over his face. ⁶Any time Moses went before the Lord to speak with him, Moses took off the covering. Then Moses would come out and tell the people of Israel the things the Lord commanded. ⁷The people would see that Moses' face was shining bright, so Moses would cover his face again. Moses kept his face covered until the next time he went in to speak with the Lord.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every spring to remember that God freed them from Egypt in the time of Moses.

house The Holy Tent (tabernacle) or temple, where God came to live among his people.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

Abib Or, "spring." This is Nisan, the first month of the ancient Jewish year.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

Festival of Weeks Also called "Pentecost" or "Shaboth."

fall Literally, "at the changing of the year."

Festival of Harvest Also called "Feast of Ingathering" or "Succoth."

YAHWAH This Hebrew name for God is usually translated "Lord."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Rules About the Sabbath

35 Moses gathered all the people of Israel together. Moses said to them, "I will tell you the things the Lord has commanded you to do:

¹"There are six days for working. But the seventh day will be a very special day of rest for you. You will honor the Lord by resting on that special day. Any person who works on the seventh day must be killed. ³On the Sabbath* you should not even light a fire in any of the places where you live."

Things for the Holy Tent

"Moses said to all the people of Israel, "This is what the Lord commanded: ⁴Gather special gifts for the Lord. Each of you should decide in your heart what you will give. And then you should bring that gift to the Lord. Bring gold, silver, and bronze*; ⁶blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen*; goat hair; ⁷ram skins dyed red and fine leather*; acacia wood; ⁸oil for the lamps; spices for the anointing oil* and spices for the sweet-smelling incense.* ⁹Also, bring onyx stones and other jewels to be put on the Ephod* and the Judgment Pouch.*

¹⁰All of you people who are skilled workers should make all of the things the Lord commanded: ¹¹the Holy Tent,* its outer tent, and its covering; the hooks, boards, braces,

posts, and bases; ¹²the Holy Box,* its poles, the cover,* and the curtain that covers the area where the Box stays; ¹³the table and its poles, all the things on the table, and the special bread on the table; ¹⁴the lampstand that is used for light and the things used with the lampstand, the lamps, and oil for the light; ¹⁵the altar* for burning incense* and its poles; the anointing oil* and the sweet-smelling incense; the curtain that covers the door at the entrance to the Holy Tent; ¹⁶the altar for burning offerings and its bronze* screen, the poles, and all the things used at the altar; the bronze bowl and its base; ¹⁷the curtains around the yard, their posts and bases, and the curtain that covers the entrance to the yard; ¹⁸the pegs used to support the Tent and the wall of curtains around, the courtyard, and the ropes that tie to the pegs; ¹⁹and the special woven clothes for the priest to wear in the Holy Place.* These are the special clothes for Aaron the priest and his sons to wear. They will wear these clothes when they serve as priests."

The Great Offering from the People

²⁰Then all the people of Israel went away from Moses. ²¹All the people who wanted to give came and brought a gift to the Lord. These gifts were used for making the Meeting Tent,* all the things in the Tent, and the special clothes. ²²All the men and women who wanted to give brought gold jewelry of all kinds. They brought pins,* earrings, rings, and other jewelry. They all gave their jewelry to the Lord. This was a special offering to the Lord.

²³Every person who had fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn brought it to the

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or sea cow.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest. See Ex. 28:15-30.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place where God came to live among his people.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid, cover" or "the place where sins are forgiven."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

pins Or, "hooks." These were like safety pins and were used like buttons to fasten their robes.

Lord. Any person who had goat hair or ram skins dyed red or fine leather* brought it to the Lord. ³⁴Every person who wanted to give silver or bronze* brought that as a gift to the Lord. Every person who had acacia wood came and gave it to the Lord. ³⁵Every skilled woman made fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. ³⁶And all the women who were skilled and wanted to help made cloth from the goat hair.

³⁷The leaders brought onyx stones and other jewels. These stones and jewels were put on the Ephod* and Judgment Pouch* of the priest. ³⁸The people also brought spices and olive oil. These things were used for the sweet-smelling incense,* the anointing oil,* and the oil for the lamps.

³⁹All the people of Israel that wanted to help brought gifts to the Lord. The people gave these gifts freely, because they wanted to. These gifts were used to make all the things the Lord had commanded Moses and the people to make.

Bezalel and Oholiab

¹Then Moses said to the people of Israel, "Look, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, from the family group of Judah. (Uri was the son of Hur.) ²The Lord filled Bezalel with the Spirit of God—he gave Bezalel special skill and knowledge to do all kinds of things. ³He can design and make things with gold, silver, and bronze*. ⁴He can cut and set stones and jewels. Bezalel can work with wood and make all kinds of things. ⁵The Lord has given Bezalel and Oholiab special skills to teach other people. (Oholiab was the son of Ahisamach from the family group of Dan.) ⁶The Lord has given

both of these men special skill to do all kinds of work. They are able to do the work of carpenters and metal workers. They can weave cloth with designs in it from the blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen.* And they are able to weave things with wool."

36 "So, Bezalel, Oholiab and all the other skilled men must do the work the Lord has commanded. The Lord has given these men the wisdom and understanding to do all the skilled work needed to build this holy place."

¹Then Moses called Bezalel and Oholiab and all the other skilled people that the Lord had given special skills to. And these people came because they wanted to help with the work. ²Moses gave these people all the things the people of Israel had brought as gifts. And they used these things to build God's holy place. The people continued to bring gifts each morning. ³Finally, all the skilled workers left the work they were doing on the holy place, and they went to speak to Moses. They said, ⁴"The people have brought too much! We have more than we need to finish the work on the Tent!"

⁵Then Moses sent this message throughout the camp: "No man or woman should make anything else as a gift for the holy place." So the people were forced to stop giving more. ⁶The people had brought more than enough things to finish the work of building God's holy place.

The Holy Tent

¹Then the skilled workers began making the Holy Tent.* They made the ten curtains from fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn. And they sewed pictures of Cherub angels* with wings into the curtains. ²Each curtain was the same size—14 yards* long and 2 yards* wide. ³The workers joined the curtains together into

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or sea cow.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest. See Ex. 28:15-30.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place where God came to live among his people.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

14 yards Literally, "28 cubits."

2 yards Literally, "4 cubits."

two groups of curtains. They joined five curtains together to make one group and five curtains together to make the other group. ¹¹Then they used blue cloth to make loops along the edge of the end curtain of one group. And they did the same on the end curtain in the other group. ¹²There were 50 loops on the end curtain in one group, and 50 loops on the end curtain in the other group. The loops were opposite each other. ¹³Then they made 50 gold rings to join the two curtains together. So the Holy Tent was joined together into one piece.

¹⁴Then the workers made another tent to cover the Holy Tent.* They used eleven curtains to make this tent. They made the curtains from goat hair. ¹⁵All these curtains were the same size—15 yards* long and 2 yards* wide. ¹⁶The workers joined five curtains together into one group. Then they joined the other six curtains together into another group. ¹⁷They put 50 loops along the edge of the end curtain in one group of curtains. And they did the same on the end curtain in the other group. ¹⁸The workers made 50 bronze* rings to join the two curtains together. This joined this tent together into one piece. ¹⁹Then they made two coverings for the Holy Tent. One covering was made from ram skins dyed red. The other covering was made from fine leather.*

²⁰Then the workers made frames from acacia wood to support the Holy Tent.* ²¹Each frame was 15 feet* long and 27 inches* wide. ²²There were two side poles joined together with cross pieces to make each frame. Every frame for the Holy Tent was made the same. ²³They made 20 frames for the south side of the Holy Tent. ²⁴Then they made 40 silver bases for the frames. There were two bases for each frame—one base for each side pole. ²⁵They also

made 20 frames for the other side (the north side) of the Holy Tent. ²⁶They made 40 silver bases for the frames—two bases for each frame. ²⁷They made six more frames for the back (the west side) of the Holy Tent. ²⁸They also made two frames for the corners at the back of the Holy Tent. ²⁹These frames were joined together at the bottom. And at the top a ring held the corner frames together. They did the same for both corners. ³⁰There was a total of eight frames for the west side of the Holy Tent. And there were 16 silver bases—two bases for each frame.

³¹Then the workers used Acacia wood to make the braces for the frames—five braces for the first side of the Holy Tent,* ³²five braces for the other side, and five braces for the back of the Holy Tent (that is, the west side). ³³They made the middle brace so that it passed through the frames from one end to the other. ³⁴They covered these frames with gold. Then they used gold to make the rings to hold the braces. And they covered the braces with gold.

³⁵They used fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the special curtain for the entrance to the Most Holy Place. And they sewed pictures of Cherub angels into the curtain. ³⁶They made four posts using acacia wood, and they covered the posts with gold. Then they made gold hooks for the posts. And they made four silver bases for the posts. ³⁷Then they made the curtain to cover the entrance to the Tent. They used blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen to make this curtain. And they wove pictures into it. ³⁸Then they made the five posts and the hooks for this curtain over the entrance. They covered the tops of the posts and the curtain rods* with gold. And they made the five bronze* bases for the posts.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

15 yards Literally, "30 cubits."

2 yards Literally, "4 cubits."

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or a sea cow.

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

27 inches Literally, "1½ cubits."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

curtain rods Or, "fasteners."

The Box of the Agreement

37 Bezalel made the Holy Box* from acacia wood. The Box was 45 inches* long, 27 inches* wide, and 27 inches* high. ²He covered the inside and outside of the Box with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the Box. ³He made four rings of gold and put them on the four corners. These rings were used for carrying the Box. There were two rings on each side. ⁴Then he made the poles for carrying the Box. He used acacia wood and covered the poles with pure gold. ⁵He put the poles through the rings on each side of the Box. ⁶Then he made the cover* from pure gold. It was 45 inches* long and 27 inches* wide. ⁷Then Bezalel hammered gold to make two Cherub angels. He put the Cherub angels on each end of the cover. ⁸He put one angel on one end of the cover, and he put the other angel on the other end. The angels were joined together with the cover to make one piece. ⁹The wings of the angels were spread up toward the sky. The angels covered the Box with their wings. The angels faced each other, looking toward the cover.

The Special Table

¹⁰Then he made the table from acacia wood. The table was 36 inches* long, 18 inches* wide, and 27 inches* high. ¹¹He covered the table with pure gold. He put gold trim around the table. ¹²Then he made a frame 3 inches* wide around the table. He put gold trim on the frame. ¹³Then he made four gold rings and put them at the four corners of the table, where the four legs were. ¹⁴He put the rings close to the

frame around the top of the table. The rings were to hold the poles used to carry the table. ¹⁵Then he used acacia wood to make the poles for carrying the table. He covered the poles with pure gold. ¹⁶Then he made all the things that were used on the table. He made the plates, the spoons, the bowls, and the pitchers from pure gold. The bowls and pitchers are used for pouring the drink offerings.

The Lampstand

¹⁷Then he made the lampstand. He used pure gold and hammered it to make the base and the shaft. Then he made flowers, buds, and petals. He joined all these things together into one piece. ¹⁸The lampstand had six branches—three branches on one side and three branches on the other side. ¹⁹Each branch had three flowers on it. These flowers were made like almond flowers with buds and petals. ²⁰The shaft of the lampstand had four more flowers. They were also made like almond flowers with buds and petals. ²¹There were six branches—three branches coming out from each side of the shaft. And there was a flower with buds and petals below each of the three places where the branches joined the shaft. ²²The whole lampstand, with the flowers and branches, was made from pure gold. All this gold was hammered and joined together into one piece. ²³He made seven lamps for this lampstand. Then he made wick trimmers and trays from pure gold. ²⁴He used 75 pounds* of pure gold to make the lampstand and the things used with it.

The Altar for Burning Incense

²⁵He made the altar* for burning incense.* He made this from acacia wood. The altar was square. It was 18 inches* long, 18 inches* wide, and 36 inches* high. There were four horns on the altar. There was one horn on each corner. These horns were joined together with the altar to make one piece. ²⁶He covered the

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement—the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

45 inches Literally, "2½ cubits."

27 inches Literally, "1½ cubits."

cover Also called, "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid, cover" or "the place where sins are forgiven."

36 inches Literally, "2 cubits."

18 inches Literally, "1 cubit."

3 inches Literally, "1 handbreadth," the width of a person's hand.

75 pounds Literally, "1 kikar."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold. Then he put gold trim around the altar.²³ He made two gold rings for the altar. He put the gold rings below the trim on each side of the altar. These gold rings held the poles for carrying the altar.²⁴ He made the poles from acacia wood and covered them with gold.

²⁵Then he made the holy anointing oil.* He also made the pure, sweet-smelling incense.* These things were made the same way that a perfume maker would make them.

The Altar for Burning Offerings

38 Then Bezalel used acacia wood to build the altar. This was the altar used for burning offerings. The altar was square. It was 7½ feet* long, 7½ feet* wide, and 4½ feet* high.¹ He made a horn for each of the four corners of the altar. He joined each horn to its corner so that everything was one piece. He covered the altar with bronze.*² Then he used bronze to make all the tools to be used on the altar. He made the pots, shovels, bowls, forks, and pans.³ Then he made a bronze screen for the altar. This screen was like a net. The screen was put under the ledge at the bottom of the altar. It went halfway up into the altar from below.⁴ Then he made bronze rings. These rings were used to hold the poles for carrying the altar. He put the rings at the four corners of the screen.⁵ Then he used acacia wood to make the poles and covered them with bronze.⁶ He put the poles through the rings on the sides of the altar. The poles were used for carrying the altar. He used boards to make the altar. It was hollow.

⁷He made the bowl and its base with bronze.* He used the bronze mirrors that the women gave. These were the women that

served at the entrance to the Meeting Tent.*

The Courtyard Around the Holy Tent

⁸Then he made the courtyard. On the south side he made a wall of curtains 50 yards* long. The curtains were made from fine linen.*⁹ The curtains on the south side were supported by 20 posts. The posts were on 20 bronze* bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods* were made from silver.¹⁰ The north side of the courtyard also had a wall of curtains 50 yards* long. There were 20 posts with 20 bronze bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods were made from silver.

¹¹On the west side of the courtyard the wall of curtains was 25 yards* long. There were 10 posts and 10 bases. The hooks for the posts and the curtain rods* were made from silver.

¹²The east side of the courtyard was 25 yards* wide. The entrance to the courtyard was on this side.¹³ On one side of the entrance the wall of curtains was 7½ yards* long. There were three posts and three bases on this side.¹⁴ On the other side of the entrance the wall of curtains was also 7½ yards* long. There were three posts and three bases on that side.¹⁵ All the curtains around the courtyard were made from fine linen.*¹⁶ The bases for the posts were made from bronze*. The hooks and the curtain rods* were made from silver. The tops of the posts were covered with silver also. All the posts in the courtyard had silver curtain rods.

¹⁷The curtain for the entrance of the courtyard was made from fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn. Designs were woven into that curtain. The curtain was 10 yards* long and 2½ yards* high. It was the same height as the curtains around the courtyard.¹⁸ The curtain was supported by four posts and four bronze*

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

7½ feet Literally, "5 cubits."

4½ feet Literally, "3 cubits."

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

50 yards Literally, "100 cubits."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

curtain rods Or, "fasteners."

25 yards Literally, "50 cubits."

7½ yards Literally, "15 cubits."

10 yards Literally, "20 cubits."

2½ yards Literally, "5 cubits."

bases. The hooks on the posts were made from silver. The tops on the posts were covered with silver, and the curtain rods* were also made from silver. ²²All the tent pegs for the Holy Tent* and for the curtains around the courtyard were made from bronze.

²³Moses commanded the Levite people to write down all the things that were used to make the Holy Tent,* the Tent of the Agreement.* Ithamar son of Aaron, was in charge of keeping the list.

²⁴Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, from the family group of Judah, made everything the Lord commanded Moses. ²⁵Also Oholiab son of Ahisamach, from the family group of Dan, helped him. Oholiab was a skilled worker and designer. He was skilled at weaving fine linen* and blue, purple, and red yarn.

²⁶More than 2 tons* of gold was given as an offering to the Lord for his holy place. (This was weighed using the official measure.*)

²⁷The total number of men that were counted gave more than 3³/₄ tons* of silver. (This was weighed using the official measure.)* ²⁸All the men 20 years old or older were counted. There were 603,550 men, and each man had to pay a tax of 1 beqa* of silver. (Using the official measure, a beqa is 1/2 shekel.)* ²⁹They used 3³/₄ tons* of that silver to make the 100 bases for the Lord's, holy place and for the curtain. They used 75 pounds* of silver for each base. ³⁰The other 50 pounds* of silver was used to make the hooks, the curtain rods,* and the silver covering for the posts.

curtain rods Or, "fasteners."

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The two flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

2 tons Literally, "29 kikars and 730 shekels."

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the official standard of measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

3³/₄ tons Literally, "100 kikars and 1,775 shekels."

1 beqa Or, "1/2 of an ounce."

shekel Or, "2/3 of an ounce."

75 pounds Literally, "1 kika."

50 pounds Literally, "1,775 shekels."

³¹More than 26¹/₂ tons* of bronze* was given to the Lord. ³²That bronze was used to make the bases at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* They also used the bronze to make the altar* and the bronze screen. And the bronze was used to make all the tools and dishes for the altar. ³³It was also used to make the bases for the curtains around the courtyard and the bases for the curtains at the entrance. And the bronze was used to make the tent pegs for the Holy Tent* and for the curtains around the courtyard.

The Priests' Special Clothes

39 The workers used the blue, purple, and red yarn to make special clothes for the priest to wear when they served in the Lord's, holy place. They also made the special clothes for Aaron like the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Ephod

¹They made the Ephod* from gold thread, fine linen,* and blue, purple, and red yarn. ²(They hammered the gold into thin strips. Then they cut the gold into long threads. And they wove the gold into the blue, purple, and red yarn and fine linen. This was the work of a very skilled person.) ³They made the shoulder pieces for the Ephod. They tied these shoulder pieces to the two corners of the Ephod. ⁴They wove the sash (belt) and fastened it to the Ephod. It was made the same way as the Ephod—they used gold thread, fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn, just like the Lord commanded Moses.

⁵The workers put the onyx stones for the Ephod, in gold settings. They wrote the names of the sons of Israel on these stones. ⁶Then they put these jewels on the shoulder pieces of the

26¹/₂ tons Literally, "70 kikars and 2,400 shekels."

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

Ephod.* These jewels were to cause God to remember the people of Israel. This was done like the Lord commanded Moses.

The Judgment Pouch

Then they made the Judgment Pouch. It was the work of a skilled person. The Judgment Pouch was made like the Ephod.* It was made from gold threads, fine linen,* and blue, purple, and red yarn. *The Judgment Pouch was folded double to make a square (pocket). It was 9 inches* long and 9 inches* wide. *Then the workers put four rows of beautiful jewels on the Judgment Pouch. The first row had a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl. *The second row had a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald. *The third row had a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst. *The fourth row had a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. All these jewels were set in gold. *There were twelve jewels on the Judgment Pouch—one jewel for each of the sons of Israel (Jacob). The name of one of the sons of Israel was written on each stone. The names were cut into each stone, like a worker makes a seal.*

They made chains from pure gold for the Judgment Pouch. They were braided like a rope. *The workers made two gold settings and two gold rings. They put the two gold rings on the two corners of the Judgment Pouch. *Then they put the two gold chains through the two rings at the corners of the Judgment Pouch. *They fastened the other ends of the gold chains to the two settings. This fastened them to the two shoulder pieces of the Ephod* in the front. *Then they made two more gold rings and put them on the other two corners of the Judgment Pouch. They put the rings on the inside edge of the Judgment Pouch next to the Ephod. *They also put two gold rings on the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of

the Ephod. These rings were near the fastener, just above the sash (belt). *Then they used a blue ribbon and tied the rings of the Judgment Pouch to the rings of the Ephod. In this way the Judgment Pouch would rest close to the sash and would be held tight against the Ephod. They did all these things like the Lord commanded.

Other Clothes for the Priests

Then they made the robe for the Ephod. They made it from blue cloth. It was woven by a skilled worker. *They made a hole in the center of the robe and sewed a piece of cloth around the edge of this hole. This cloth kept the hole from tearing.

Then they used fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn to make the cloth, pomegranates.* They hung these pomegranates around the bottom edge of the robe. *Then they made bells from pure gold. They hung these bells around the bottom edge of the robe between the pomegranates. *Around the bottom edge of the robe there were bells and pomegranates. There was a bell between each pomegranate. This robe was for the priest to wear when he served the Lord, just like the Lord commanded Moses.

Skilled workers wove shirts for Aaron and his sons. These shirts were made from fine linen. *And the workers made a turban* from fine linen. They also used fine linen to make head bands and underclothes. *Then they made the sash (belt) from fine linen and blue, purple, and red yarn. Designs were sewn into the cloth. These things were made like the Lord had commanded Moses.

*Then they made the strip of gold for the holy crown. They made it from pure gold. They wrote words into the gold. They wrote these words: HOLY TO THE LORD. *They fastened the gold strip to a blue ribbon. Then they tied the blue ribbon around the turban* like the Lord had commanded Moses.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest. See Ex. 28:15-30.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

9 inches Literally, "1 span."

seal(s) Small stones with designs cut into them. Pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they made a special mark.

pomegranates A red fruit about the size of an orange.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

Moses Inspects the Holy Tent

³²So all the work on Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent was finished. The people of Israel did everything exactly like the Lord had commanded Moses. ³³Then they showed the Holy Tent to Moses. They showed him the Tent and all the things in it. They showed him the rings, the frames, the braces, the posts, and the bases. ³⁴They showed him the covering of the Tent that was made from ram skins dyed red. And they showed him the covering that was made from fine leather.* And they showed him the curtain that covered the entrance to the Most Holy Place.

³⁵They showed Moses the Box of the Agreement.* They showed him the poles used for carrying the Box and they showed him the cover* for the Box. ³⁶They showed him the table with everything on it and the special bread.* ³⁷They showed him the pure gold lampstand and the lamps on it. And they showed him the oil and all the other things that were used with the lamps. ³⁸They showed Moses the gold altar,* the anointing oil,* the sweet-smelling incense,* and the curtain that covered the entrance to the Tent. ³⁹They showed him the bronze* altar and the bronze

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like a seal or sea cow.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "the place where sins are forgiven."

special bread Also called "Bread of the Presence." Every day this bread was put before God on the special table in the Holy Place.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

anointing oil Fine olive oil that was poured on things or people to show that they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

screen. They showed him the poles used for carrying the altar. And they showed him all the things that were used on the altar. They showed him the bowl and the base under the bowl.

⁴⁰They showed Moses the wall of curtains around the courtyard with the posts and bases. They showed him the curtain that covered the entrance to the courtyard. They showed him the ropes and the tent pegs. They showed him all the things in the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent.

⁴¹Then they showed Moses the clothes that were made for the priests serving in the holy area. They showed him the special clothes for Aaron the priest and his sons. These were clothes for them to wear when they served as priests.

⁴²The people of Israel did all this work exactly like the Lord had commanded Moses.

⁴³Moses looked closely at all the work. Moses saw that the work was done exactly like the Lord had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

Moses Sets Up the Holy Tent

40 Then the Lord said to Moses, ¹"On the first day of the first month, set up the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent. ²Put the Box of the Agreement* in the Holy Tent. Cover the Box with the curtain. ³Then bring in the table. Put the things on the table that should be there. Then put the lampstand in the Tent. Put the lamps on the lampstand in the right places. ⁴Put the gold altar* for offering incense* in the Tent. Put the altar in front of the Box of the Agreement. Then put the curtain at the entrance to the Holy Tent.

⁵"Put the altar* for burning offerings in front of the entrance of the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent. ⁶Put the bowl between the Meeting Tent and the altar. Put water in the bowl. ⁷Set up the wall of curtains around the courtyard. Then put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.

⁸"Use the anointing oil and anoint* the Holy Tent* and everything in it. When you put the

anoint To pour olive oil on things or people to show they are chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

oil on these things, you will make them holy.*
 "Anoint the altar for burning offerings. Anoint everything on the altar. You will make the altar holy. It will be very holy. "Then anoint the bowl and the base under it. Do this to make those things holy.

"Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Wash them with water. "Then put the special clothes on Aaron. Anoint* him with the oil and make him holy.* Then he can serve me as a priest. "Then put the clothes on his sons. "Anoint the sons in the same way that you anointed their father. Then they can also serve me as priests. When you anoint them, they will become priests. That family will continue to be priests for all time to come." "Moses obeyed the Lord. He did everything that the Lord commanded him.

"So the Holy Tent* was set up at the right time. It was the first day of the first month during the second year (from the time they left Egypt). "Moses set up the Holy Tent like the Lord had said. He put the bases down first. Then he put the frames on the bases. Then he put the braces on and set up the posts. "After that, Moses put the outer tent over the Holy Tent. Then he put the covering over the outer tent. He did these things like the Lord had commanded.

"Moses took the Agreement* and put it in the Holy Box. Moses put the poles on the Box. Then he put the cover* on the Box. "Then Moses brought the Holy Box into the Holy Tent.* He hung the curtain in the right place to protect it. In this way, he protected the Box of

the Agreement* behind the curtain, like the Lord had commanded him. "Then Moses put the table in the Meeting Tent. He put it on the north side of the Holy Tent. He put it in the Holy Place, in front of the curtain. "Then he put the bread on the table before the Lord. He did this like the Lord had commanded him. "Then Moses put the lampstand in the Meeting Tent. He put the lampstand on the south side of the Tent, across from the table. "Then Moses put the lamps on the lampstand before the Lord. He did this like the Lord had commanded him.

"Then Moses put the gold altar* in the Meeting Tent.* He put the altar in front of the curtain. "Then he burned sweet-smelling incense* on the altar. He did this like the Lord had commanded him. "Then Moses put the curtain at the entrance to the Holy Tent.*

"Moses put the altar* for burning offerings at the entrance to the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent. Then Moses offered a burnt offering on that altar. He also offered grain offerings to the Lord. He did these things like the Lord had commanded him.

"Then Moses put the bowl between the Meeting Tent* and the altar.* Moses put water in the bowl for washing. "Moses, Aaron, and Aaron's sons used this bowl to wash their hands and feet. "They washed themselves every time they entered the Meeting Tent. They also washed themselves every time they went near the altar. They did these things like the Lord commanded Moses.

"Then Moses set up the curtains around the courtyard of the Holy Tent.* Moses put the altar* in the courtyard. Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard. So Moses finished all the work that the Lord had given him to do.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

anoint To pour olive oil on things or people to show they are chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The two flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover" or "the place where sins are forgiven."

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

The Glory of the Lord

³⁴Then the cloud covered the Meeting Tent.*
The Glory of the Lord* filled the Holy Tent.*

³⁵The cloud settled on the Meeting Tent. Moses
could not enter, because the Glory of the Lord
filled the Holy Tent.

³⁶The cloud showed the people when to
move. When the cloud rose from the Holy

Tent,* then the people would begin to travel.
³⁷But while the cloud stayed on the Holy Tent,
the people did not try to move. They stayed in
that place until the cloud rose. ³⁸So the cloud of
the Lord was over the Holy Tent during the
day. And at night, there was a fire in the cloud.
So all the people of Israel could see the cloud
while they traveled.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle), where the
people of Israel went to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he
appeared to people. This was like a bright shining light.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live
among his people.

Leviticus

Sacrifices and Offerings

1 The Lord God called to Moses and spoke to him from the Meeting Tent.* The Lord said, "Tell the people of Israel: When you bring an offering to the Lord, the offering must be one of your tame animals—it can be a cow, a sheep, or a goat.

"When a person offers one of his cows as a burnt offering, then that animal must be a bull that has nothing wrong with it. The person must take the animal to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Then the Lord will accept the offering. 'The person must put his hand on the animal's head while it is being killed.' The Lord will accept that burnt offering as payment to make that person pure.*

"The person must kill the young bull in front of the Lord. Then Aaron's sons, the priests, must bring the blood to the altar* near the entrance of the Meeting Tent* and sprinkle the blood on the altar, all around it. 'The priest must cut the skin from that animal and then cut the animal into pieces. 'Aaron's sons, the priests, must put fire on the altar and then stack wood on the fire. 'Aaron's sons, the priests, must lay the pieces (the head and the fat) on the wood that is on the fire on the altar. 'The priest must wash the legs and inside parts of the animal with water. Then the priest must burn all the animal's parts on the altar. It is a burnt

offering, an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord.

"When a person offers a sheep or a goat as a burnt offering, then that animal must be a male animal that has nothing wrong with it. 'The person must kill the animal on the north side of the altar* in front of the Lord. Then Aaron's sons, the priests, must sprinkle the animal's blood on the altar, all around it. 'Then the priest must cut the animal into pieces. The priest must lay the pieces (the head and the fat) on the wood that is on the fire on the altar. 'The priest must wash the legs and inside parts of the animal with water. Then the priest must offer all the animal's parts. He must burn the animal on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord.

"When a person offers a bird as a burnt offering to the Lord, then that bird must be a dove or a young pigeon. 'The priest must bring the offering to the altar.* The priest must pull off the bird's head and burn the bird on the altar. The bird's blood must be drained out on the side of the altar. 'The priest must remove the bird's crop* and feathers and throw them on the east side of the altar. This is the place where they put the ashes from the altar. 'Then the priest must tear the bird by its wings, but he must not divide the bird into two parts. The priest must burn the bird on the altar, on the wood that is on the fire. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

crop A small bag inside a bird's throat. When a bird eats, its food goes into this bag first to be made soft.

Grain Offerings

2 "When a person gives a grain offering to the Lord God, his offering must be made from fine flour. The person must pour oil on this flour and put frankincense* on it. ²Then he must bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests. He must take a handful of the fine flour with the oil and frankincense in it. Then the priest must burn this memorial offering on the altar.* It is an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord. ³The grain offering that is left will belong to Aaron and his sons. This offering made by fire to the Lord is very holy.

Baked Grain Offerings

"When a person gives a grain offering that was baked in the oven, then it must be unleavened bread* made from fine flour mixed with oil, or wafers* with oil poured over them. ²If you bring a grain offering from the baking pan, then it must be made from fine flour mixed with oil but without yeast. ³You must break it into pieces and pour oil over it. It is a grain offering. ⁴If you bring a grain offering cooked in a frying pan, then it must be made from fine flour mixed with oil.

"You must bring grain offerings made from these things to the Lord. You must take those things to the priest, and he will put them on the altar.* ²Then the priest will take part of the grain offering, and burn this memorial offering on the altar. It is an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord. ³The grain offering that is left will belong to Aaron and his sons. This offering made by fire to the Lord is very holy.

"You must not give any grain offering to the Lord that has yeast in it. You must not burn yeast or honey as an offering made by fire to the Lord. ²You may bring yeast and honey to the Lord as an offering from the first harvest. But yeast and honey must not be burned to go up as a sweet smell on the altar.* ³You must

also put salt on every grain offering you bring. You must not let the salt of God's Agreement be missing from your grain offering. You must bring salt with all your offerings.

Grain Offerings from First Harvest

"When you bring a grain offering from the first harvest to the Lord, you must bring roasted heads of grain. They must be crushed heads of fresh grain. This will be your grain offering from the first harvest. ²You must put oil and frankincense* on it. It is a grain offering. ³The priest must burn part of the crushed grain, the oil, and all the frankincense on it as the memorial offering. It is an offering by fire to the Lord.

Fellowship Offerings

3 "When a person gives a sacrifice as a fellowship offering, the animal must have nothing wrong with it. The animal can be a cow, a sheep, or a goat. And the animal can be a male or a female animal. ²The person must put his hand on the animal's head and kill the animal at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Then Aaron's sons, the priests, must sprinkle the blood on the altar,* all around it. ³The fellowship offering is an offering made by fire to the Lord. The person must offer the fat that is on and around the animal's inside parts. ⁴The person must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the loins.* He must also offer the fat covering the liver. He must offer the liver with the kidneys. ⁵Then Aaron's sons will burn the fat on the altar. They will put it on the burnt offering that is on the wood on the fire. It is an offering by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord.

"When a person gives a sheep or a goat as a fellowship offering to the Lord, then the animal must have nothing wrong with it. The animal can be a male or a female animal. ²If he brings a lamb as his offering, then he must bring it before the Lord. ³He must put his hand on the animal's head and kill the animal in front of the

frankincense Very special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

wafers A thin bread, like crackers, made without yeast.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

loins The part from behind the ribs to the back legs.

Meeting Tent.* Then Aaron's sons must sprinkle the animal's blood on the altar,* all around it. *The person must give part of the fellowship offering as an offering made by fire to the Lord. The person must offer the fat, the whole fat tail, and the fat that is on and around the animal's inside parts. (He must cut off the tail close to the backbone.) *The person must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the loins.* He must also offer the fat covering the liver. He must offer the liver with the kidneys. *Then the priest must burn them on the altar. The fellowship offering is an offering made by fire to the Lord. But it will also be food for the people.].

A Goat as a Fellowship Offering

12 "If the offering is a goat, then the person must bring it before the Lord. 13 The person must put his hand on the goat's head and kill it in front of the Meeting Tent.* Then Aaron's son must sprinkle the goat's blood on the altar,* all around it. 14 The person must give part of the fellowship offering as an offering made by fire to the Lord. The person must offer the fat that is on and around the animal's inside parts. 15 The person must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the loins.* He must also offer the fat covering the liver. He must offer the liver with the kidneys. 16 Then the priest must burn them on the altar. The fellowship offering is an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord. It is also food for the people,—but the best parts* belong to the Lord. 17 This rule will continue forever through all your generations. Wherever you live, you must never eat fat or blood."

Offerings for Accidental Sins

4 The Lord spoke to Moses. The Lord said, 2 "Tell the people of Israel: If any person sins by accident and does any of the things the

Lord said must not be done, then that person must do these things:

1 If the anointed priest* makes a mistake in a way that leaves the people guilty for their sin, then the priest must make an offering to the Lord for his sin. The priest must offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. He must offer the young bull to the Lord as a sin offering. 2 The anointed priest must bring the bull to the entrance of the Meeting Tent* in front of the Lord. He must put his hand on the bull's head and kill the bull in front of the Lord. 3 Then the anointed priest* must get some of the blood from the bull and take it into the Meeting Tent. 4 The priest must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle the blood seven times before the Lord in front of the curtain of the Most Holy Place.* 5 The priest must put some of the blood on the corners of the incense* altar.* (This altar is in the Meeting Tent, in front of the Lord.) The priest must pour out all of the bull's blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) 6 And he must take all the fat from the bull of the sin offering. He must take the fat that is on and around the inside parts. 7 He must take the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the loins.* He must also take the fat covering the liver. He must take out the liver with the kidneys. 8 The priest must offer these parts just like they are offered from the bull of the fellowship offering.* The priest must burn the animal parts on the altar of burnt offering. 9 "But the priest must carry out the bull's skin, inside parts and body waste, and all the meat on its head and legs. The priest must carry those parts outside the camp to the special place where the ashes are poured out. The priest must put those parts there on the wood and burn them. The bull must be burned where the ashes are poured out.

anointed priest The priest chosen to serve at a particular time. The priests took turns. Special oil was poured on the one chosen to show that God chose him to serve.

Most Holy Place Most important room in the Holy Tent. The Holy Box with the Cherub Angels on it was in this room. It was like God's throne.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

just like ... fellowship offering See Lev. 3:1-5.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

loins The part from behind the ribs to the back legs.

best parts Literally, "fat."

¹³"It may happen that the whole nation of Israel sins without knowing it. They might have done any of the things that the Lord has commanded them not to do. If this happens, they will become guilty. ¹⁴If they learn about that sin, then they must offer a young bull as a sin offering for the whole nation. They must bring the bull to the Meeting Tent.* ¹⁵The elders (*leaders*) of the people must put their hands on the bull's head in front of the Lord, and then a person must kill the bull in front of the Lord. ¹⁶Then the anointed priest* must get some of the bull's blood and take it into the Meeting Tent. ¹⁷The priest must put his finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times in front of the curtain before the Lord. ¹⁸Then the priest must put some of the blood on the corners of the altar.* (This altar is in the Meeting Tent, in front of the Lord.) The priest must pour out all the blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (This altar is at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.) ¹⁹Then the priest must take all the fat from the animal and burn it on the altar. ²⁰The priest must offer these parts just like he offered the bull of the sin offering.* In this way, the priest will make the people pure.* And God will forgive the people of Israel. ²¹The priest must carry this bull outside the camp and burn it, just like he burned the other bull. This is the sin offering for the whole community.

²²"A ruler might sin by accident and do one of the things the Lord his God said must not be done. The ruler will be guilty of doing wrong. ²³If the ruler learns about his sin, then he must bring a male goat that has nothing wrong with it. That will be his offering. ²⁴The ruler must

put his hand on the goat's head and kill the goat at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the Lord. The goat is a sin offering. ²⁵The priest must take some of the blood of the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar* of burnt offering. The priest must pour the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. ²⁶And the priest must burn all the goat's fat on the altar. He must burn it like he burns the fat of the sacrifice of fellowship offerings. In this way, the priest will make the ruler pure.* And God will forgive the ruler.

²⁷"One of the common people might sin by accident and do one of the things that the Lord said must not be done. ²⁸If that person learns about his sin, then he must bring a female goat that has nothing wrong with it. That will be the person's sin offering. He must bring this goat for the sin that he has done. ²⁹He must put his hand on the animal's head and kill it at the place for the burnt offering. ³⁰Then the priest must take some of the goat's blood on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar* of burnt offering. Then the priest must pour out the rest of the goat's blood at the base of the altar. ³¹The priest must offer all the goat's fat, just like the fat is offered from the fellowship offerings. The priest must burn it on the altar as a sweet smell to the Lord. In this way, the priest will make that person pure.* And God will forgive that person.

³²"If that person brings a lamb as his sin offering, then he must bring a female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. ³³The person must put his hand on the animal's head and kill it as a sin offering in the place where they kill the burnt offering. ³⁴The priest must take some of the blood from the sin offering on his finger and put it on the corners of the altar* of burnt offering. Then the priest must pour out all the lamb's blood at the base of the altar. ³⁵The priest must offer all the lamb's fat, just like the fat of the lamb is offered from the fellowship offerings. The priest must burn it on the altar, just like any offering made by fire to the Lord. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* from the sin he did. And God will forgive that person.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

anointed priest The priest chosen to serve at a particular time. The priests took turns. Special oil was poured on the one chosen to show that God chose him to serve.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

like ... sin offering See Lev. 4:3-12.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Different Accidental Sins

5 "A person might hear a warning. Or a person might see or hear something that he should tell to other people. If that person does not tell what he saw or heard, then that person is guilty of doing wrong. ²Or a person might touch something unclean.* It might be the dead body of a tame animal, or it might be the dead body of an unclean animal. That person might not know that he touched those things, but he will still be guilty of doing wrong. ³There are many things that come from a person that make a person unclean. A person might touch any of these things from another person, but not know about it. When that person learns that he has touched something unclean, he will be guilty. ⁴Or a person might make a quick promise to do something—it makes no difference if it is bad or good. People make many kinds of quick promises. A person might make such a promise and forget it.* When he remembers* his promise, then he will be guilty, because he didn't keep his promise. ⁵So, if a person is guilty of any of these things, then he must confess (*admit*) the thing he did wrong. ⁶He must bring his guilt offering to the Lord for the sin he did. He must bring a female lamb or a female goat as a sin offering. Then the priest will do the things that will make that person pure* from the sin that person did.

⁷"If the person can't afford a lamb, he must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the Lord. These will be the guilt offering for his sin. One bird must be for a sin offering, and the other must be for a burnt offering. ⁸The person must bring them to the priest. First, the priest will offer one bird for the sin offering. The priest will pull off the bird's head from its neck. But the priest will not divide the bird into two parts. ⁹The priest must sprinkle the blood from the sin offering on the side of the altar.* Then the priest must pour out the rest of

the blood at the base of the altar. It is a sin offering. ¹⁰Then the priest must offer the second bird according to the rules for a burnt offering. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* from the sin that person did. And God will forgive that person.

¹¹"If the person can't afford two doves or two pigeons, then he must bring 8 cups* of fine flour. This will be his sin offering. The person must not put oil on the flour. He must not put frankincense* on it, because it is a sin offering. ¹²The person must bring the flour to the priest. The priest will take a handful from the flour. It will be a memorial offering. The priest will burn the flour on the altar.* It will be an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a sin offering. ¹³In this way, the priest will make that person pure.* And God will forgive that person. The grain offering that is left will belong to the priest, just like the meal offering."

¹⁴"The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁵"A person might accidentally do something wrong with the holy things of the Lord.* Then that person must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it. This will be his guilt offering to the Lord. You must use the official measure* and set the price of the ram. ¹⁶That person must pay for the sin he did with the holy things. He must give the things he promised, add one-fifth to the value, and give this money to the priest. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* with the ram of the guilt offering. And God will forgive that person.

¹⁷"If a person sins and does any of the things that the Lord has commanded not to be done, it does not matter if that person did not know. That person is guilty. That person must accept the responsibility for his sin. ¹⁸That person must bring a ram that has nothing wrong with it to the priest. The ram will be a guilt offering. In

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

forget it Literally, "it is hid from him."

remembers Literally, "knows of."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

frankincense Very special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

holy things ... Lord These are probably special gifts that a person promised but forgot to give to the Lord.

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the official standard of measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

this way, the priest will make that person pure* from the sin that person did without knowing. And God will forgive that person. ¹⁹The person is guilty, even if he did not know he was sinning. So he must give the guilt offering to the Lord."

Guilt Offerings for Other Sins

6 The Lord said to Moses, ²"A person might do wrong against the Lord by doing one of these sins: A person might lie about what happened, to something he was taking care of for someone else. Or a person might lie about a deposit* he received. Or a person might steal something. Or a person might cheat someone. ³Or a person might find something that was lost and then lie about it. Or a person might promise to do something and then not do what he promised. Or a person might do some other bad thing. ⁴If a person does any of those things, then that person is guilty of sin. That person must bring back whatever he stole, or whatever he took by cheating, or whatever he took that the other person asked him to hold for him, or whatever he found and lied about, or ⁵whatever he made a false promise about. He must pay the full price. And then he must pay an extra fifth of the value of, the thing. He must give the money to the true owner. He must do this on the day he brings his guilt offering.

⁶"That person must bring a guilt offering to the priest. It must be a ram from the flock. The ram must not have anything wrong with it. It must be worth the amount that the priest says. It will be a guilt offering to the Lord. ⁷Then the priest will go to the Lord and do the things that will make that person pure*. And God will forgive that person for all the things that made him guilty."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

deposit Literally, "pledge" or "security." This is something like a down payment given as proof that something more important will be done.

Burnt Offerings

⁹The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁰"Give this command to Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the burnt offering. The burnt offering must stay on the hearth* of the altar* all night until morning. The altar's fire must be kept burning on the altar. ¹¹The priest must put on his linen robe. He must put on his linen underwear next to his body. Then the priest must pick up the ashes left by the fire when it burned the burnt offering on the altar. The priest must put these ashes beside the altar. ¹²Then the priest must take off his clothes and put on other clothes. Then he must carry the ashes outside the camp to a special place. ¹³But the altar's fire must be kept burning on the altar. It must not be allowed to stop burning. The priest must burn wood on the altar every morning. He must put the wood on the altar. He must burn the fat of the fellowship offerings. ¹⁴Fire must be kept burning on the altar without stopping. It must not go out.

Grain Offerings

¹⁵"This is the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron must bring it to the Lord in front of the altar.* ¹⁶The priest must take a handful of the fine flour from the grain offering. The oil and the frankincense* must be on the grain offering. The priest must burn the grain offering on the altar. It will be a memorial offering, to the Lord. Its smell will please the Lord.

¹⁷Aaron and his sons must eat the grain offering that is left. The grain offering is a kind of bread made without yeast. The priests must eat this bread in a holy place. They must eat it in the courtyard around the Meeting Tent.* ¹⁸The grain offering must not be cooked with yeast. I have given it as the priests' share of the offerings made to me by fire. It is most holy,

hearth The place where a sacrifice is burned.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

frankincense Very special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

like the sin offering and the guilt offering. "Every male among the children of Aaron may eat from the offerings made to the Lord by fire. This is a rule forever through your generations. Touching these offerings makes those men holy."

The Priests' Grain Offering

"The Lord said to Moses, ²⁰"This is the offering that Aaron and his sons must bring to the Lord. They must do this on the day they anoint* Aaron to be high priest. They must bring 8 cups* of fine flour for a grain offering. (This will be offered at the times of the daily offering.) They must bring half of it in the morning and half of it in the evening. ²¹The fine flour must be mixed with oil and made on a baking pan. When it is cooked, then you must bring it in. You must break the offering into pieces. Its smell will please the Lord.

²²"The priest from among Aaron's descendants* that is chosen to take Aaron's place must make this grain offering to the Lord. This rule will continue forever. The grain offering must be completely burned for the Lord. ²³Every grain offering of the priest must be completely burned. It must not be eaten."

The Law of the Sin Offering

"The Lord said to Moses, ²⁴"Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the sin offering. The sin offering must be killed in the place where the burnt offering is killed before the Lord. It is most holy. ²⁵The priest that offers the sin offering must eat it. He must eat it in a holy place, in the courtyard around the Meeting Tent.* ²⁶Touching the meat of the sin offering, makes a person or a thing holy.

"If any of the sprinkled blood falls on a person's clothes, then you must wash the

clothes in a holy place. ²⁷If the sin offering was boiled in a clay pot, then the pot must be broken. If the sin offering was boiled in a bronze* pot, then the pot must be washed and rinsed in water.

²⁸"Any man in a priest's family may eat the sin offering. It is very holy. ²⁹But if the blood of the sin offering was taken into the Meeting Tent* and used in the Holy Place to make people pure,* then that sin offering must be burned in the fire. The priests must eat that sin offering.

Guilt Offerings

7 "These are the rules for the guilt offering. It is very holy. ²A priest must kill the guilt offering in the same place where they kill the burnt offerings. Then the priest must sprinkle the blood from the guilt offering around the altar.*

³"The priest must offer all the fat from the guilt offering. He must offer the fat tail and the fat that covers the inside parts. ⁴The priest must offer the two kidneys and the fat covering them at the loins.* He must also offer the fat covering the liver. He must offer the liver with the kidneys. ⁵The priest must burn all those things on the altar.* This will be an offering made by fire to the Lord. It is a guilt offering.

"Every man that is a priest may eat the guilt offering. It is very holy, so it must be eaten in a holy place. ⁷The guilt offering is like the sin offering. The same rules are for both offerings. The priest that does the sacrificing will get the meat for food. ⁸The priest that does the sacrificing can also have the skin* from the burnt offering. ⁹Every grain offering belongs to the priest that offers it. That priest will get the grain offerings that were baked in an oven, or cooked on a frying pan or a baking dish. ¹⁰The grain offerings will belong to Aaron's sons. It

anoint To pour olive oil on things or people to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

loins The part from behind the ribs to the back legs.

skin This was used for making leather.

does not make any difference if they are dry or mixed with oil. The sons of Aaron (*priests*) will all share this food.

Fellowship Offerings

¹¹"This is the law of the sacrifice* of fellowship offerings that a person offers to the Lord: ¹²The person may bring the fellowship offering to show his thanks. If he brings his sacrifice to give thanks, he should also bring unleavened bread* mixed with oil, wafers* with oil poured over them, and loaves of fine flour mixed with oil. ¹³The fellowship offerings is the offering that a person brings to show thanks to God. With that offering the person must bring another offering with loaves of bread made with yeast. ¹⁴One of these loaves of bread will belong to the priest that sprinkles the blood of the fellowship offerings. ¹⁵The meat of the fellowship offering must be eaten on the same day it is offered. A person offers this gift as a way of showing thanks to God. But none of the meat should remain the next morning.

¹⁶"A person might bring a fellowship offering just because he wants to give a gift to God. Or maybe a person made a special promise to God. If this is true, then the sacrifice* must be eaten the same day he offers it. If there is any left, then it must be eaten that next day. ¹⁷But if any meat from this sacrifice is still left over on the third day, it must be burned in the fire. ¹⁸If a person eats any of the meat from his fellowship offering on the third day, then the Lord will not be happy with that person. The Lord will not count the sacrifice for him. The sacrifice will become a hated thing. And if a person eats any of that meat, then that person will be responsible for his own sin.

¹⁹"Also, people must not eat the meat that touches anything that is unclean.* They must burn this meat in the fire. Every person that is

clean* may eat the meat from the fellowship offering. ²⁰But if a person is unclean and eats the meat from the fellowship offerings that belongs to the Lord, then that person must be separated from his people.

²¹"A person might touch something that is unclean.* That thing may have been made unclean by people, by an unclean animal, or by any unclean hated thing. That person will become unclean, and, if he eats any of the meat from the fellowship offerings that belong to the Lord, then that person must be separated from his people."

²²The Lord said to Moses, ²³"Tell the people of Israel: You must not eat any fat from cows, sheep, or goats. ²⁴You may use the fat from any animal that has died by itself, or was torn by other animals. But you must never eat it. ²⁵If any person eats the fat from an animal that was offered by fire to the Lord, then that person must be separated from his people.

²⁶"No matter where you live, you must never eat blood from any bird or any animal. ²⁷If a person eats any blood, then that person must be separated from his people."

Rules for the Wave Offering

²⁸The Lord said to Moses, ²⁹"Tell the people of Israel: If a person brings a fellowship offering to the Lord, then that person must give a part of that gift to the Lord. ³⁰That part of the gift will be burnt in the fire. He must carry that part of the gift in his own hands. He must bring the fat and the breast of the animal to the priest. The breast will be lifted up in front of the Lord. This will be the wave offering. ³¹Then the priest must burn the fat on the altar.* But the breast of the animal will belong to Aaron and his sons. ³²You must also give the right thigh from the fellowship offering to the priest. ³³The right thigh from the fellowship offerings will belong to the priest* that offers the blood and fat of the fellowship offering. ³⁴*(the Lord)* am taking the breast of the wave offerings and the right thigh of the fellowship offerings from

sacrifice A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

wafers A thin bread, like crackers, made without yeast.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

the priest Literally, "him of the sons of Aaron."

the people of Israel. And I am giving those things to Aaron and his sons. The people of Israel must obey this rule forever."

²²Those are the parts from the offerings made by fire to the Lord that were given to Aaron and his sons. Whenever Aaron and his sons serve as the Lord's priests, they get that share of the sacrifices. ²⁴At the time the Lord chose the priests, he commanded the people of Israel to give those parts to the priests. The people must give that share to the priests forever.

²⁵Those are the laws about burnt offerings, grain offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings, fellowship offerings, and about the choosing of priests. ²⁶The Lord gave those laws to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Lord gave those laws on the day that he commanded the people of Israel to bring their offerings to the Lord in the Sinai desert.

Moses Makes the Priests Ready

8 The Lord said to Moses, ²"Take Aaron and his sons with him and the clothes, the anointing oil,* the bull of the sin offering, the two rams, and the basket of unleavened bread.* ³Then bring the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.*"

⁴Moses did what the Lord commanded him. The people met together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ⁵Then Moses said to the people, "This is the thing that the Lord has commanded must be done."

⁶Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons. He washed them with water. ⁷Then Moses put the woven shirt on Aaron and tied the sash (*belt*) around him. Then Moses put the robe on Aaron. Moses next put the Ephod* on Aaron. Then Moses tied the beautiful sash (*belt*) on Aaron. In that way, Moses put the Ephod on

Aaron. ⁸Moses put the Judgment Pouch* on Aaron. Then he put the Urim and Thummim* in the pocket of, the Judgment Pouch. ⁹Moses also put the turban* on Aaron's head. Moses put the strip of gold on the front of the turban. This strip of gold is the holy crown. ¹⁰Moses did, this as the Lord commanded him to.

¹¹Then Moses took the anointing oil* and sprinkled it on the Holy Tent* and on all the things in it. In this way, Moses made them holy.* ¹²Moses sprinkled some of the anointing oil on the altar* seven times. Moses sprinkled the oil on the altar and on all its tools and dishes. Moses also sprinkled the oil on the bowl and its base. In this way, Moses made them holy. ¹³Then Moses poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head. In this way, he made Aaron holy. ¹⁴Then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put the woven shirts on them. He tied sashes (*belts*) on them. Then he wrapped headbands on their heads. ¹⁵Moses did these things, as the Lord had commanded him.

¹⁶Then Moses brought the bull of the sin offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the head of the bull of the sin offering. ¹⁷Then Moses killed the bull. Moses took the blood. Moses used his finger and put some of the blood on all the corners of the altar.* ¹⁸In this way, Moses made the altar ready for sacrifices. Then Moses poured out the blood at the base of the altar. In this way, Moses made the altar ready for sacrifices to make the people pure.* ¹⁹Moses took all the fat from the inside parts of the bull. Moses took the fat covering of the liver with the two kidneys and the fat on them. ²⁰Then he burned them on the altar. ²¹But Moses

Judgment Pouch A piece of clothing like a bib or an apron that covered the high priest's chest.

Urim and Thummim Used by the priest to learn God's answer to questions. They were probably like lots-stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on things or people to show that they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Ephod A special coat worn by the high priest.

took the bull's skin, its meat, and its body waste outside the camp. Moses burned those things in a fire outside the camp. Moses did those things like the Lord commanded him.

¹⁸Then Moses brought the ram of the burnt offering. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the ram's head. ¹⁹Then Moses killed the ram. He sprinkled the blood around on the altar.*

^{20,21}Moses cut the ram into pieces. Moses washed the inside parts and legs with water. Then Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. Moses burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. It was a burnt offering made by fire. Its smell pleased the Lord. Moses did those things like the Lord commanded.

²²Then Moses brought the other ram. This ram was used for appointing Aaron and his sons to become priests. Aaron and his sons put their hands on the ram's head. ²³Then Moses killed the ram. He put some of its blood on the tip of Aaron's ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of Aaron's right foot.

²⁴Then Moses brought Aaron's sons close to the altar. Moses put some of the blood on the tip of their right ears, on the thumb of their right hands, and on the big toe of their right feet. Then Moses sprinkled the blood around on the altar.* ²⁵Moses took the fat, the fat tail, all the fat on the inside parts, the fat covering of the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh. ²⁶A basket of unleavened bread* is put before the Lord each day. Moses took one of those loaves of bread, and one loaf of bread mixed with oil, and one unleavened wafer.* Moses put those pieces of bread on the fat and on the right thigh of the ram. ²⁷Then Moses put all those things, in the hands of Aaron and his sons. Moses waved the pieces as a wave offering before the Lord. ²⁸Then Moses took these things from the hands of Aaron and his sons. Moses burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering. So that was the offering for appointing Aaron and his sons as priests. It was an offering made by fire. Its smell pleased the Lord. ²⁹Moses took the breast, and waved it for

a wave offering in front of the Lord. It was Moses' share of the ram for appointing the priests. This was like the Lord had commanded Moses.

³⁰Moses took some of the anointing oil* and some of the blood that was on the altar.* Moses sprinkled some on Aaron and on Aaron's clothes. Moses sprinkled some on Aaron's sons that were with Aaron and on their clothes. In this way, Moses made Aaron, his clothes, his sons, and his sons' clothes holy.*

³¹Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Do you remember my command?" I said, "Aaron and his sons must eat these things." So take the basket of bread and meat from the ceremony for choosing the priests. Boil that meat at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Eat the meat and bread at that place. Do this like I told you. ³²If any of the meat or bread is left, then burn it. ³³The ceremony for choosing the priests will last for seven days. You must not leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent until that time is finished. ³⁴The Lord has commanded to do the things that were done today. He commanded these things to make you pure.* ³⁵You must stay at the entrance of the Meeting Tent day and night for seven days. If you don't obey the Lord's commands, then you will die! The Lord gave me those commands."

³⁶So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the Lord had commanded Moses.

The Priests Begin Their Work

9 On the eighth day, Moses called Aaron and his sons. He also called the elders (*leaders*) of Israel. ²Moses said to Aaron, "Take a bull and a ram. There must be nothing wrong with those animals. The bull will be a sin offering, and the ram will be a burnt offering. Offer those animals to the Lord. ³Tell the

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on things or people to show that they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

wafer A thin bread, like crackers, made without yeast.

people of Israel, "Take a male goat for a sin offering. And take a calf and a lamb for a burnt offering. The calf and the lamb must each be one year old. There must be nothing wrong with those animals. "Take a bull and a ram for fellowship offerings. Take those animals and a grain offering mixed with oil, and offer those things to the Lord. Why? Because today the Lord will appear to you."

⁵So all the people came to the Meeting Tent.* They all brought the things that Moses had commanded. All the people stood before the Lord. "Moses said, "You must do those things that the Lord commanded. Then the Glory of the Lord.* will appear to you."

⁶Then Moses told Aaron these things: "Go do the things the Lord commanded. Go to the altar* and offer sin offerings and burnt offerings. Do those things that will make you and the people pure.* Take the people's sacrifices and do the things that will make them pure."

⁷So Aaron went to the altar.* He killed the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering was for himself. ⁸Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to Aaron. Aaron put his finger in the blood and put it on the corners of the altar. Then Aaron poured out the blood at the base of the altar. ⁹Aaron took the fat, the kidneys, and the fat covering the liver from the sin offering. He burned those things on the altar. He did this the way the Lord had commanded Moses. ¹⁰Then Aaron burned the meat and skin on a fire outside the camp.

¹¹Next, Aaron killed the animal for the burnt offering. The animal was cut into pieces. Aaron's sons brought the blood to Aaron. And Aaron sprinkled the blood around on the altar.* ¹²Aaron's sons gave the pieces and head of the burnt offering to Aaron. Then Aaron burned them, on the altar. ¹³Aaron also

washed the inside parts and the legs of the burnt offering. And he burned them on the altar.

¹⁴Then Aaron brought the people's offering. He killed the goat of the sin offering that was for the people. He offered the goat for sin, like the first. ¹⁵Aaron brought the burnt offering and offered it, like the Lord had commanded. ¹⁶Aaron brought the grain offering to the altar.* He took a handful of the grain and put it on the altar beside that morning's daily sacrifice.

¹⁷Aaron also killed the bull and the ram, the sacrifice of fellowship offerings for the people. Aaron's sons brought the blood to Aaron. Aaron sprinkled this blood around on the altar.* ¹⁸Aaron's sons also brought to Aaron the fat of the bull and the ram. They brought the fat tail, the fat, covering the inside parts, the kidneys and the fat covering of the liver. ¹⁹Aaron's sons put these fat parts on the breasts of the bull and the ram. Aaron burned the fat parts on the altar. ²⁰Aaron waved the breasts and the right thigh for a wave offering before the Lord, like Moses had commanded.

²¹Then Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them. After Aaron finished offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offerings, he came down from the altar.

²²Moses and Aaron went into the Meeting Tent.* They came out and blessed the people. Then the Glory of the Lord* appeared to all the people. ²³Fire came out from the Lord and burned the burnt offering and fat on the altar.* When all the people saw this, they shouted and bowed their faces low to the ground.

God Destroys Aaron's Sons

10 Then Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu sinned. Each son took a dish for burning incense.* They used a different fire and lit the incense. They did not use the fire that Moses had commanded them to use. ²So fire came from the Lord and destroyed Nadab and Abihu. They died in front of the Lord.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Glory ... Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

³Then Moses said to Aaron, "The Lord says, 'The priests that come near me must respect me! I must be holy to them and to all the people.'" So Aaron did not say anything about his sons dying.

⁴Aaron's uncle Uzziel had two sons. They were Michael and Elzaphan. Moses said to those sons, "Go to the front part of the Holy Place. Take your cousins' bodies and carry them outside the camp."

⁵So Michael and Elzaphan obeyed Moses. They carried the bodies of Nadab and Abihu outside the camp. Nadab and Abihu were still wearing their special woven shirts.

⁶Then Moses spoke to Aaron and his other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses told them, "Don't show any sadness! Comb your hair and don't tear your clothes! Don't show your sadness and you will not be killed. And the Lord will not be angry against all the people. All the people of Israel are your relatives—they can cry about the Lord burning Nadab and Abihu. But you must not even leave the entrance of the Meeting Tent. If you leave, then you will die! Why? Because the Lord's anointing oil* is on you." So Aaron, Eleazar, and Ithamar obeyed Moses.

⁷Then the Lord said to Aaron, "You and your sons must not drink wine or beer when you come into the Meeting Tent. If you drink those things, then you will die! This law continues forever through your generations. ¹⁰You must make a clear distinction (*difference*) between things that are holy and things that are not holy. You must make a clear distinction between things that are clean* and things that are unclean.* ¹¹The Lord gave his laws to Moses, and Moses gave those laws to the people. Aaron, you must teach the people about all of those laws."

¹²Aaron had two sons that were still alive, Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses talked to Aaron and his two sons. Moses said, "Some of the

grain offering is left from the sacrifices that were burned on the fire. You will eat that part of the grain offering. But you must eat it without adding yeast. Eat it near the altar.* Why? Because that offering is very holy.* ¹³That is part of the offerings that were burned on the fire for the Lord. And the law I gave you teaches that a part belongs to you and your sons. But you must eat it in a holy place.

¹⁴Also you, your sons, and your daughters will be able to eat the breast from the wave offerings. You don't have to eat these in a holy place, but you must eat them in a clean* place. Why? Because they come from the fellowship offerings. The people of Israel give those gifts to God. The people eat part of those animals, but the breast is your share. ¹⁵The people must bring the fat from their animals as part of the sacrifice that is burned on the fire. They must also bring the thigh of the fellowship offering and the breast of the wave offering. That will be waved in front of the Lord, and then it will be your share of the offering. It will belong to you and your children. That part of the sacrifices will be your share forever, as the Lord has commanded."

¹⁶Moses looked for the goat of the sin offering. But it was already burned up. Moses became very angry at Aaron's other sons Eleazar and Ithamar. Moses said, ¹⁷"You were supposed to eat that goat in the holy area! It is very holy! Why did you not eat it in front of the Lord? The Lord gave it to you to carry away the guilt of the people—to make the people pure.* ¹⁸That goat's blood was not used inside the Holy Place.* So, you should have eaten it in the holy area, like I commanded!"

¹⁹But Aaron said to Moses, "Look, today they brought their sin offering and burnt offering before the Lord. But you know what happened to me today! Do you think the Lord would be happy if I ate the sin offering today? No!"

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on things or people to show that they had been chosen for a special work or purpose.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent

²⁰When Moses heard this, he agreed.

Rules About Eating Meat

11 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹Tell the people of Israel: These are the animals you can eat: ²²If an animal has hooves* that are split into two parts, and if that animal also chews the cud,* then you can eat the meat from that animal.

²³“Some animals chew the cud,* but they don’t have split hooves.* Don’t eat those animals. Camels, rock badgers, and rabbits are like that, so they are unclean* for you. ²⁴Other animals have hooves* that are split into two parts, but they don’t chew the cud. Don’t eat those animals. Pigs are like that, so they are unclean* for you. ²⁵Don’t eat the meat from those animals! Don’t even touch their dead bodies! They are unclean for you!

Rules About Sea Food

²⁶“If an animal lives in the sea or in a river and if the animal has fins and scales, then you can eat that animal. ²⁷But if an animal lives in the sea or in a river and does not have fins and scales, then you must not eat that animal. It is one of the animals the Lord says is bad to eat. Don’t eat the meat from that animal. Don’t even touch its dead body! ²⁸You must treat any animal in the water that does not have fins and scales as one of the animals that God says are bad to eat.

Birds That Must Not Be Eaten

²⁹“You must also treat these birds as animals God says are bad to eat. Don’t eat any of these birds: eagles, vultures, buzzards, ³⁰kites,* all kinds of falcons, ³¹all kinds of black birds, ³²ostriches, nighthawks, sea gulls, all kinds of hawks, ³³owls, cormorants, great owls, ³⁴water hens, pelicans, carrion-vultures, ³⁵storks, all kinds of heron, hoopoes, and bats.

hooves The hard part of the foot of certain animals.

cud The food that is brought up from the stomach of some animals (like cows) and chewed again.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

kite(s) A bird like a hawk.

Rules About Eating Insects

²⁶“If insects have wings and walk on four feet, then you should treat them as things the Lord says you must not eat. Don’t eat those insects! ²⁷But you can eat those insects if they have legs with joints above their feet so they can jump. ²⁸You can also eat all kinds of locusts, all kinds of winged locusts, all kinds of crickets, and all kinds of grasshoppers.

²⁹“But all the other insects that have wings and four feet are things the Lord says you must not eat. ³⁰Those insects will make you unclean.* Any person that touches the dead bodies of these insects will become unclean until evening. ³¹If a person picks up one of those dead insects, then that person must wash his clothes. That person will be unclean until evening.

More Rules About Animals

³²“Some animals have split hooves,* but the hooves don’t make exactly two parts. Some animals don’t chew the cud.* Some animals don’t have hooves—they, walk on their paws.* All of those animals are unclean* for you. Any person that touches them will become unclean. That person will be unclean until evening. ³³If any person picks up their dead bodies, that person must wash his clothes. That person will be unclean until evening. Those animals are unclean to you.

Rules About Crawling Animals

³⁴“These crawling animals are unclean* for you: moles, mice, all kinds of great lizards, ³⁵geckos, crocodiles, lizards, sand reptiles, and chameleons. ³⁶Those crawling animals are unclean for you. Any person that touches their dead bodies will be unclean until evening.

Rules about Unclean Animals

³⁷“If any of those unclean* animals dies and falls on something, then that thing will become unclean. It might be something made from

paws The soft feet with claws on certain animals.

wood, cloth, leather, a cloth of sadness or some work tool. Whatever it is, it must be washed with water. It will be unclean until evening. Then it will become clean again. ³¹If any of those unclean animals dies and falls into a clay bowl, then anything in the bowl will become unclean. And you must break the bowl. ³²If water from the unclean clay bowl comes on any food, then that food will become unclean. Any drink in the unclean bowl will become unclean. ³³If any part of a dead unclean animal falls on something, then that thing is unclean. It may be a clay oven or a clay baking pan. It must be broken into pieces. Those things will not be clean any more. They will always be unclean for you.

³⁴"A spring or a well that collects water will stay clean.* But any person that touches the dead bodies of any unclean animal will become unclean. ³⁵If any part of those dead unclean animals falls on any seed that is to be planted, then that seed is still clean. ³⁶But if you put water on some seeds and then if any part of those dead unclean animals falls on those seeds, then those seeds are unclean for you.

³⁷"Also, if an animal that you use for food, dies, then the person that touches its dead body will be unclean* until evening. ³⁸And the person that eats meat from this animal's body must wash his clothes. This person will be unclean until evening. The person that picks up the dead body of the animal must wash his clothes. This person will be unclean until evening.

³⁹"Every animal that crawls on the ground is one of the animals the Lord says you must not eat. You must not eat it. ⁴⁰You must not eat any of the reptiles that crawl on their stomachs or that walk on all four feet, or any of the animals that have many feet. Don't eat those animals! ⁴¹Don't let those animals make you filthy.* You must not become unclean! ⁴²Why? Because I am the Lord your God! I am holy, so you should keep yourselves holy! Don't make

yourselves unclean with those crawling things! ⁴³I brought you people from Egypt. I did this so you could be my special people and I could be your God. I am holy, so you must be holy too!"

⁴⁴Those are the rules about all of the tame animals, birds, and other animals on earth. Those are the rules about all of the animals in the sea and all of the animals that crawl on the ground. ⁴⁵Those teachings are so people can know unclean* animals from clean* animals. So people will know which animals they can eat and which animals they must not eat.

Rules for New Mothers

12 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Tell the people of Israel: If a woman gives birth to a baby boy, then that woman will be unclean* for seven days. This will be like her being unclean during her monthly time of bleeding. ²On the eighth day, the baby boy must be circumcised.* ³Then it will be 33 days before she becomes clean* from her loss of blood. She must not touch anything that is holy. She must not enter the Holy Place until the time of her being made clean is finished. ⁴But if the woman gives birth to a girl, then the mother will be unclean for two weeks, like in her monthly time of bleeding. It will be 66 days before she becomes clean from her loss of blood.

⁵"After the time for being made clean* is finished, the new mother of a baby girl or boy must bring special sacrifices to the Meeting Tent.* She must give those sacrifices to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. She must bring a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or young pigeon for a sin offering. ⁷If the woman can't afford a lamb, she may bring two doves or two young pigeons. One bird will be for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. The priest will offer those things before the Lord. In this way, the priest

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

filthy Or, "hated." Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:4-14.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

will make her pure.* Then she will be clean from her loss of blood. Those are the rules for a woman that gives birth to a baby boy or a baby girl."

Rules About Skin Diseases

13 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "A person might have a swelling on his skin, or it may be a scab or a bright spot. If the sore looks like the disease of leprosy,* then the person must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. The priest must look at the sore on the person's skin. If the hair in the sore has become white, and if the sore seems deeper than the person's skin, then it is a leprosy disease. When the priest has finished looking at the person, the priest must announce that the person is unclean.*

"Sometimes there is a white spot on a person's skin. But the spot does not seem deeper than the skin. If that is true, then the priest must separate that person from other people for seven days. On the seventh day, the priest must look at the person. If the priest sees that the sore has not changed and has not spread on the skin, then the priest must separate the person for seven more days. Seven days later the priest must look at the person again. If the sore has faded, and has not spread on the skin, then the priest must announce that the person is clean.* The sore is only a scab. The person must wash his clothes and become clean again.

"But if, after the person has shown himself to the priest to be made clean again, the scab spreads more over the skin, then the person must come again to the priest. The priest must look. If the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest must announce that the person is unclean.* That is a leprosy* disease.

"If a person has leprosy,* he must be brought to the priest. The priest must look at that person. If there is a white swelling in the

skin, and if the hair has become white, and if the skin looks raw in the swelling, then it is a leprosy that has continued for a long time on that person's skin. The priest must announce that the person is unclean.* The priest will not separate that person from other people for a short time. Why? Because he knows that the person is unclean.

"Sometimes a skin disease* will spread all over a person's body. The skin disease will cover that person's skin from his head to his feet. The priest must look at that person's whole body. If the priest sees that the skin disease covers the whole body and that it has turned all of that person's skin white, then the priest must announce that the person is clean.* But if the person has raw skin, then he is not clean. When the priest sees the raw skin, he must announce that the person is unclean.* The raw skin is not clean. It is a leprosy* disease.

"If the raw skin changes and becomes white, then the person must come to the priest. The priest must look at the person. If the infection has become white, then the priest must announce that the person that has the infection is clean.* That person is clean.

"A person might have a boil on his skin. The boil is healed, but in the place where the boil was, there is a white swelling, or a reddish-white, bright spot. Then this place on the skin must be shown to the priest. The priest must look. If the swelling is deeper than the skin, and the hair on it has become white, then the priest must announce that the person is unclean.* The spot is the infection of leprosy.* The leprosy has broken out from inside the boil. But if the priest looks at the spot, and there are no white hairs in it, and the spot is not deeper than the skin, but is faded, then the priest must separate the person for seven days. If more of the spot spreads on the skin, then the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is an infection. But if the bright spot stays in its place, and does not spread, then it is only the scar from the old boil. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

skin disease Literally, "leprosy." The Hebrew word can mean many kinds of skin disease.

²⁴“A person might get a burn on his skin. If the raw skin becomes a white or reddish-white spot, the priest must look at it. If that white spot seems to be deeper than the skin, and the hair at that spot has become white, then it is a leprosy* disease. The leprosy has broken out in the burn. Then the priest must announce that the person is unclean.* It is a leprosy disease. ²⁵But if the priest looks at the spot, and there is no white hair in the bright spot, and the spot is not deeper than the skin, but is faded, then the priest must separate the person for seven days. ²⁶On the seventh day the priest must look at the person again. If the spot spread on the skin, then the priest must announce that the person is unclean. It is a leprosy disease. ²⁷But if the bright spot did not spread on the skin, but is faded, it is the swelling from the burn. The priest must announce the person clean. It is only the scar from the burn.

²⁸“A person might get an infection on his scalp* or beard. ²⁹A priest must look at the infection. If the infection seems to be deeper than the skin, and if the hair around it is thin and yellow, then the priest must announce that the person is unclean.* It is a bad skin disease.* ³⁰If the disease does not seem deeper than the skin, but there is no dark hair in it, then the priest must separate that person for seven days. ³¹On the seventh day the priest must look at the infection. If the disease has not spread, and there are no yellow hairs growing in it, and the disease does not seem deeper than the skin, ³²then the person must shave himself. But he must not shave the disease. The priest must separate that person for seven more days. ³³On the seventh day, the priest must look at the disease. If the disease has not spread through the skin, and it does not seem deeper than the skin, then the priest must announce that the person is clean.* The person must wash his

clothes and become clean. ³⁴But if the disease spreads on the skin after the person has become clean, ³⁵then the priest must look at the person again. If the disease has spread in the skin, the priest does not need to look for the yellowish hair. The person is unclean.* ³⁶But if the priest thinks that the disease has stopped, and black hair is growing in it, the disease has healed. The person is clean. The priest must announce that the person is clean.

³⁷“If a person has white spots on his skin, ³⁸then a priest must look at those spots. If the spots on that person's skin are only dull white, then the disease is only a harmless rash. That person is clean.*

³⁹“A man might lose hair from his head. He is clean. It is only baldness. ⁴⁰A man might lose hair from the sides of his head. He is clean. It is only another kind of baldness. ⁴¹But if there is a reddish-white infection on his scalp,* then it is a skin disease.* ⁴²A priest must look at that person. If the swelling of the infection is reddish-white and looks like leprosy* on other parts of the body, ⁴³then that person has a leprosy disease on his scalp. The person is unclean.* The priest must announce that the person is unclean.

⁴⁴“If a person has a leprosy* disease, then that person must warn other people. That person must shout, ‘Unclean, unclean!’ That person's clothes must be torn at the seams. That person must let his hair grow wild.* And that person must cover his mouth. ⁴⁵That person will be unclean* the whole time he has the infection. That person is unclean. He must live alone. His home must be outside the camp.

⁴⁶“Some clothing might have mildew* on it. The cloth might be linen* or wool. The cloth might be woven or knitted. Or the mildew might be on a piece of leather or on something made from leather. ⁴⁷If that mildew is green or red, then it must be shown to a priest. ⁴⁸The

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

scalp The skin on a person's head.

skin disease Literally, “leprosy.” The Hebrew word can mean many kinds of skin disease.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

That person's clothes ... wild These things also showed a person was very sad about something.

mildew A kind of fungus that often grows on cloth, leather, or wood that is in a warm, damp place. The Hebrew word also means, “leprosy,” or “skin disease.”

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

priest must look at the mildew. He must put that thing in a separate place for seven days.

^{51,52}On the seventh day, the priest must look at the mildew. It does not matter if the mildew is on leather or cloth. It does not matter if the cloth is woven or knitted. It does not matter what the leather was used for. If the mildew spread, then that cloth or leather is unclean.* The infection is unclean. The priest must burn that cloth or leather.

⁵³"If the priest sees that the mildew* did not spread, then that cloth or leather must be washed. It does not matter if it is leather or cloth, or if the cloth is knitted or woven, it must be washed. ⁵⁴The priest must order the people to wash that piece of leather or cloth. Then the priest must separate the clothing for seven more days. ⁵⁵After that time, the priest must look again. If the mildew still looks the same, then that thing is unclean.* It does not matter if the infection has not spread. You must burn that cloth or piece of leather.

⁵⁶"But if the priest looks at that piece of leather or cloth, and the mildew has faded, then the priest must tear the infection out of the piece of leather or cloth. It does not matter if the cloth is woven or knitted. ⁵⁷But the mildew* might come back to that piece of leather or cloth. If that happens, then the mildew is spreading. That piece of leather or cloth must be burned. ⁵⁸But if the mildew did not come back after washing, then that piece of leather or cloth is clean.* It does not matter if the cloth was woven or knitted. That cloth is clean."

⁵⁹Those are the rules for mildew* on pieces of leather or cloth. It does not matter if the cloth is woven or knitted.

Rules for the Leper Made Clean

14 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"These are the rules for people that had a skin

disease* and became well. These rules are for making that person clean.*

²"A priest must look at the person that had the skin disease.* ³The priest must go to that person outside the camp. The priest must look to see if the skin disease is healed. 'If the person is healthy, then the priest will tell him to do these things: That person must get two living clean* birds. He must also get a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth, and a hyssop* plant. ⁴Then the priest must order one bird to be killed in a clay bowl over running water. ⁵The priest must take the other bird that is still alive and the piece of cedar wood, the piece of red cloth, and the hyssop plant. He must dip the living bird and the other things in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. ⁶The priest must sprinkle the blood seven times on the person that had the skin disease. Then the priest must announce that the person is clean. After that, the priest must go to an open field and let the living bird go free.

⁷"Then that person must wash his clothes. He must shave off all his hair. And he must wash with water. Then he will be clean.* Then that person may go into the camp. But he must stay outside his tent for seven days. ⁸On the seventh day, he must shave off all his hair. He must shave his head, his beard, and his eyebrows—yes, all his hair. Then he must wash his clothes and bathe his body in water. Then he will be clean.

⁹"On the eighth day, the person that had a skin disease* must take two male lambs that have nothing wrong with them. He must also take a year-old female lamb that has nothing wrong with it. He must take 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil. This fine flour is for a grain offering. The person must take 2/3 of a pint* of olive oil. ¹⁰The priest must bring that person and his sacrifices before the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* (This must be

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

mildew A kind of fungus that often grows on cloth, leather, or wood that is in a warm, damp place. The Hebrew word also means, "leprosy," or "skin disease."

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

skin disease Literally, "leprosy." The Hebrew word can mean many kinds of skin disease.

hyssop A plant with fine branches and leaves used for sprinkling blood or water in cleansing ceremonies.

24 cups Literally, "1/16," probably meaning 2/10 of an ephah.

2/3 of a pint Literally, "1 log."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

the same priest who announces that the person is clean*)¹²The priest will offer one of the male lambs as a guilt offering. He will offer that lamb and some of the oil as a wave offering before the Lord.¹³Then the priest will kill the male lamb in the holy place where they kill the sin offering and the burnt offering. The guilt offering is like the sin offering. It belongs to the priest. It is very holy.

¹⁴"The priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of this blood on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean.* The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of that person.¹⁵The priest will also take some of the oil and pour it into his left palm.¹⁶Then the priest will dip the finger of his right hand into the oil that is in his left palm. He will use his finger to sprinkle some of the oil seven times before the Lord.¹⁷Then the priest will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the person to be made clean. He will put that oil on the same places he put, the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of the oil on the tip of the person's right ear. He will put some of the oil on the thumb of the right hand. And he will put some of the oil on the big toe of the person's right foot.¹⁸The priest will put the oil that is left in his palm on the head of the person to be made clean. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* before the Lord.

¹⁹"Then the priest must offer the sin offering for the person to be made clean.* The priest will offer the sin offering and make that person pure.* After that, the priest will kill the animal for the burnt offering.²⁰Then the priest will offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar.* In this way, the priest will make that person pure. And the person will be clean.

²¹"But if the person is poor, and he can't afford [those offerings], then he must take one male lamb for a guilt offering. That will be a

wave offering, so that the priest can, make that person pure.* He must take 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil. This flour will be used for a grain offering. The person must take $\frac{2}{3}$ of a pint* of olive oil²²and two doves or two young pigeons. Even poor people can afford those things. One bird will be a sin offering, and the other will be a burnt offering.

²³"On the eighth day, the person will bring those things to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Those things will be offered before the Lord so that person can become clean.*²⁴The priest will take the lamb for the guilt offering and the oil, and the priest will offer them as a wave offering before the Lord.²⁵Then the priest will kill the lamb of the guilt offering. The priest will take some of the blood of the guilt offering. The priest will put some of this blood on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of this blood on the thumb of the right hand and on the big toe of the right foot of this person.²⁶The priest will also pour some of this oil into his left palm.²⁷The priest will use the finger of his right hand to sprinkle some of the oil that is in his left palm seven times before the Lord.²⁸Then the priest will put some of the oil that is in his palm on the same places he put the blood from the guilt offering. He will put some of the oil on the tip of the right ear of the person to be made clean. The priest will put some of the oil on the thumb of the right hand. And he will put some of the oil on the big toe of the person's right foot.²⁹The priest will put the oil that is left in his palm on the head of the person to be made clean. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* before the Lord.

³⁰"Then the priest must offer one of the doves or young pigeons. (He must offer whatever the person can afford.)³¹He must offer one of these birds as a sin offering and the other bird as a burnt offering. He must offer the birds with the grain offering. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* before the Lord. And that person will become clean.*"

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

8 cups Literally, " $\frac{1}{10}$ of an ephah."

$\frac{2}{3}$ of a pint Literally, "1 log."

¹²Those are the rules for making a person clean after he becomes well from a skin disease.* Those are the rules for people that cannot afford the regular sacrifices for becoming clean.

Rules for Mildew in a House

¹³The Lord also said to Moses and Aaron, ¹⁴"I am giving the land of Canaan to your people. Your people will enter that land. At that time, I might cause mildew* to grow in some person's house. ¹⁵The person that owns that house must come and tell the priest, 'I see something like mildew in my house.'

¹⁶"Then the priest must order the people to take everything out of the house. The people must do this before the priest goes in to look at the mildew.* Then the priest will not have to say everything in the house is unclean.* After the people have taken everything out of the house, the priest will go in to look at the house. ¹⁷The priest will look at the mildew. If the mildew on the walls of the house has holes that are a green color or red color, and if the mildew goes into the wall's surface, ¹⁸then the priest must go out of the house and lock the house for seven days.

¹⁹"On the seventh day, the priest must come back and check the house. If the mildew* has spread on the walls of the house, ²⁰then the priest must order the people to tear out the stones with the mildew on them and throw them away. They must put those stones at a special unclean* place outside the city. ²¹Then the priest must have all the house scraped inside. The people must throw away the plaster* that they scrape off. They must put that plaster at a special unclean place outside the city. ²²Then that person must put new stones in the walls. And he must cover those walls with new plaster.

²³"Maybe a person took away the old stones and plaster and put in new stones and plaster. And maybe mildew* again appears in that house. ²⁴Then the priest must come in and check the house. If the infection has spread in the house, then it is a disease that spreads quickly to other places. So the house is unclean.* ²⁵That person must tear down the house. They must take all of the stones, plaster, and pieces of wood to the special unclean place outside the city. ²⁶And any person that goes into that house will be unclean until evening. ²⁷If any person eats in that house or lies down in there, then that person must wash his clothes.

²⁸"After new stones and plaster are put in a house, the priest must check the house. If the mildew* has not spread through the house, then the priest will announce that the house is clean.* Why? Because the mildew is gone!

²⁹"Then, to make the house clean,* the priest must take two birds, a piece of cedar wood, a piece of red cloth, and a hyssop* plant. ³⁰The priest will kill one bird in a clay bowl over running water. ³¹Then the priest will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the piece of red cloth, and the living bird. The priest will dip those things in the blood of the bird that was killed over running water. Then the priest will sprinkle that blood, on the house seven times. ³²The priest will use those things in that way to make the house clean.* ³³The priest will go to an open field outside the city and let the living bird go free. In this way, the priest will make the house pure.* The house will be clean.*"

³⁴Those are the rules for any infection of leprosy,* ³⁵for mildew* on pieces of cloth or in a house. ³⁶Those are the rules for swellings, rashes, or bright spots on the skin. ³⁷Those rules teach when things are clean* and when things are unclean.* Those are the rules about those kinds of disease.

skin disease Literally, "leprosy." The Hebrew word can mean many kinds of skin disease.

mildew A kind of fungus that often grows on cloth, leather, or wood that is in a warm, damp place.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

plaster A type of mud or cement that people used to cover a wall and make it smooth.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

hyssop A plant with fine branches and leaves used for sprinkling blood or water in cleansing ceremonies.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

leprosy The Hebrew word means any of several kinds of skin disease.

Rules for Discharges from the Body

15 The Lord also said to Moses and Aaron, ¹"Say to the people of Israel: When any person has a discharge* from his body, then that person is unclean.* ²It does not matter if the discharge flows freely from his body or if his body stops it from flowing.

³"If the person that has the discharge* lies on any bed, that bed becomes unclean.* Everything that person sits on becomes unclean. ⁴If any person touches that person's bed, then he must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening. ⁵If any person sits on anything that the person with the discharge sat on, then he must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening. ⁶Also, if any person touches the person that has the discharge, then he must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening.

⁷"If the person with the discharge* spits on a clean person, then the clean person must wash his clothes and bathe in water. This person will be unclean* until evening. ⁸Any saddle the person with the discharge sits on will become unclean. ⁹So any person that touches any of the things that were under the person with the discharge will be unclean until evening. The person that carries these things that were under the person with the discharge, must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening.

¹⁰"It may happen that the person with the discharge* has not washed his hands in water and touches another person. Then that other person must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean* until evening.

¹¹"But if the person with the discharge* touches a clay bowl, then that bowl must be broken. If the person with the discharge touches a wooden bowl, then that bowl must be washed in water.

¹²"When the person with the discharge* is made clean from his discharge, then he must

wait seven days before he can be cleansed. Then he must wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water. Then he will become clean.* ¹³"On the eighth day, that person must take for himself two doves or two young pigeons. He must come before the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* That person will give the two birds to the priest. ¹⁴The priest will offer the birds, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering. In this way, the priest will make that person pure* before the Lord.

Rules for Men

¹⁵"If a man has a flow of semen,* he must bathe his whole body in water. He will be unclean until evening. ¹⁶If the semen is on any clothing or leather, then that clothing or leather must be washed with water. It will be unclean* until evening. ¹⁷If a man sleeps with a woman and has a flow of semen, then both the man and the woman must bathe in water. They will be unclean until evening.

Rules for Women

¹⁸"If a woman has a discharge* from her monthly time of bleeding, she will be unclean* for seven days. If any person touches her, that person will be unclean until evening. ¹⁹Also, everything the woman lies on during her monthly time of bleeding will be unclean. And everything she sits on during that time will be unclean. ²⁰If any person touches the woman's bed, that person must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening. ²¹If any person touches anything the woman has sat on, that person must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening. ²²It does not matter if the person touched the woman's bed or if he touched something she sat on, that person will be unclean until evening.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

semen The fluid produced by a man's sexual organs.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

²⁴"And if a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly time of bleeding, then the man will be unclean* seven days. Every bed that man lies on will be unclean.

²⁵"If a woman has a discharge* of blood many days, not during her time of her monthly bleeding, or if she has a discharge after that time, then she will be unclean,* like the time of monthly bleeding. She will be unclean for as long as she has a discharge. ²⁶Any bed the woman lies on during all the time of her discharge will be like her bed during her time of monthly bleeding. Everything the woman sits on will be unclean, like during the time she is unclean from her monthly time of bleeding.

²⁷If any person touches those things, that person will be unclean. That person must wash his clothes and bathe in water. He will be unclean until evening. ²⁸After the woman's discharge stops, she must wait seven days. After that, she will be clean. ²⁹Then on the eighth day, the woman must take two doves or two young pigeons. She must bring them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ³⁰Then the priest must offer one bird for a sin offering and the other bird for a burnt offering. In this way, the priest will make her pure* before the Lord.

³¹"So you must warn the people of Israel about being unclean.* If you don't warn the people, then, they might make my Holy Tent* unclean. And then they would have to die!"

³²Those are the rules for people with a discharge.* Those rules are for men that become unclean* from a flow of semen.* ³³And those rules are for women that become unclean from their monthly time of bleeding. And those are the rules for any person that becomes unclean by sleeping with another person that is unclean.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

semen The fluid produced by a man's sexual organs.

The Day of Atonement

16 Two of Aaron's sons died while offering incense* to the Lord.* After that time, the Lord spoke to Moses. ²The Lord said, "Talk to your brother Aaron. Tell him that he cannot go behind the curtain into the Most Holy Place* anytime he wants to. The Holy Box* is in the room behind that curtain. The special cover* is on top of that Holy Box. And I appear in a cloud over that special cover. If Aaron goes into that room, he might die!

³"Before Aaron enters the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement, he must offer a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴Aaron must wash his whole body with water. Then he must put these clothes on: Aaron must put on the holy* linen shirt. The linen underclothes will be next to his body. He must tie the linen sash (belt) around him. And he must put on the linen turban.* These are holy clothes.

⁵"Aaron must take from the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. ⁶Then Aaron must offer the bull for the sin offering. This sin offering is for himself. Aaron must do this to make him and his family pure.*

⁷"Then Aaron must take the two goats and bring them before the Lord at the doorway of the Meeting Tent. ⁸Aaron will throw lots* for the two goats. One lot will be for the Lord. The

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Two of Aaron's sons ... to the Lord See Lev. 10:1-2.

Most Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent where the Holy Box was.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement—the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "the place where sins are forgiven."

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

turban Head covering made by wrapping a piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

other lot will be for Azazel.*

⁹"Then Aaron will offer the goat chosen by the lot* for the Lord. Aaron must make this goat a sin offering. ¹⁰But the goat chosen by the lot for Azazel* must be brought alive before the Lord. And then this goat will be sent out to Azazel in the desert. This is to make the people pure.*

¹¹"Then Aaron will offer the bull as a sin offering for himself. Aaron will make himself and his family pure.* Aaron will kill the bull for the sin offering for himself. ¹²Then he must take a firepan* full of coals of fire from the altar* before the Lord. Aaron will take two handfuls of sweet incense* that has been ground into powder. Aaron must bring that incense into the room behind the curtain. ¹³Aaron must put the incense on the fire before the Lord. Then the cloud of incense will cover the special cover* that is over the Agreement.* This way Aaron will not die. ¹⁴Also, Aaron must take some of the blood from the bull and sprinkle it with his finger toward the east, onto the special cover. He will sprinkle the blood seven times with his finger in front of the special cover.

¹⁵"Then Aaron must kill the goat of the sin offering for the people. Aaron must bring this goat's blood into the room behind the curtain. Aaron must do with the goat's blood as he did with the bull's blood. Aaron must sprinkle the goat's blood on the special cover* and in front of the cover. ¹⁶In this way, Aaron will do the

things to make the Most Holy Place* pure.* Aaron must do these things because the people of Israel are unclean.* They do wrong and have many sins. Aaron must also do these things for the Meeting Tent* because it stays in the middle of unclean people! ¹⁷At the time that Aaron goes into the Most Holy Place to make it and the people, pure,* no person must be in the Meeting Tent. No person must go in there until Aaron comes out. So, Aaron will make himself and his family pure. And he will make all the people of Israel pure. ¹⁸Then Aaron will go out to the altar* that is before the Lord. Aaron will make the altar pure. Aaron will take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on the corners of the altar on all sides. ¹⁹Then Aaron will sprinkle some of the blood with his finger on the altar seven times. In this way, Aaron will make the altar holy* and clean* from all the sins of the people of Israel.

²⁰"So Aaron will make the Most Holy Place,* the Meeting Tent,* and the altar* pure.* After that, Aaron will bring the live goat to the Lord. ²¹Aaron will put both his hands on the head of the living goat. Then Aaron will confess (admit) the sins and crimes of the people of Israel over the goat. In this way, Aaron will lay the people's sins on the goat's head. Then he will send the goat away to the desert. A man will be standing by, ready to lead this goat away. ²²So the goat will carry all the people's sins on itself to the empty desert. The man that leads the goat will let it loose in the desert.

²³"Then Aaron will enter the Meeting Tent.* He will take off the linen clothes that he put on when he went into the Holy Place. He must leave these clothes there. ²⁴He will wash his whole, body with water in a holy place. Then he will put on his other special, clothes. He

Azazel Or, "scapegoat." The meaning of this word or name is not known. The main idea seems to be that the goat "carried away" the sins of the people.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

firepan A tool like a small shovel for taking the ashes from the altar.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "the place where sins are forgiven."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

Most Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent where the Holy Box was.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

will come out and offer his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering. He will make himself and the people pure.* ²⁵Then he will burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.*

²⁶"The person that led the goat to Azazel* must wash his clothes and his whole body with water. After that, he can come into the camp.

²⁷"The bull and the goat for the sin offerings must be taken outside the camp. (The blood from those animals was brought into the Holy Place to make the holy things, pure.) The priests, must burn the skins, bodies, and body waste of those animals in the fire. ²⁸Then the person that burns them must wash his clothes and wash his whole body with water. After that, he can come into the camp.

²⁹"This law will always continue for you: On the tenth day, of the seventh month, you must not eat food.* You must not do any work. None of the travelers or foreigners living in your land can do any work either. ³⁰Why? Because on this day, the priest will make you pure* and wash away your sins. Then you will be clean* to the Lord. ³¹This day is a very important day of rest for you. You must not eat food.* This law will continue forever.

³²"So the man chosen to be the high priest will do the ceremony to make things pure.* This is the man appointed to serve as high priest after his father. That priest must put on the holy linen clothes. ³³He must make the Most Holy Place,* the Meeting Tent,* and the altar* pure. And he must make the priests and all the people of Israel, pure. ³⁴That law for making the people of Israel pure will continue forever. You will do those things one time every year. Why? Because of the sins of the people of Israel."

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.
to Azazel Or, "as a scapegoat." The meaning of this word or name is not known. The main idea is that the goat "carried away" the sins of the people.

not eat food Literally, "humble yourselves."

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Most Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent that had the Holy Box in it.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

So they did the things that the Lord had commanded Moses.

Rules About Killing and Eating Animals

17 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Speak to Aaron and to his sons, and to all the people of Israel. Tell them, this is what the Lord has commanded: ²An Israelite person might kill a bull, or a lamb, or a goat in the camp or outside the camp. ³That person must bring that animal to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* He must give a part of that animal as a gift to the Lord. That person has spilled blood (*killed*), so he must take his gift to the Lord's Holy Tent.* ⁴If he does not take part of the animal as a gift to the Lord, then that person must be separated from his people! ⁵This rule is so people will bring their fellowship offering to the Lord. The people of Israel must bring the animals they kill in the fields. They must bring those animals to the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. They must bring those animals to the priest. ⁶Then the priest will throw the blood from those animals onto the Lord's altar* near the entrance of the Meeting Tent. And the priest will burn the fat from those animals on the altar. Its smell will please the Lord. ⁷They must not offer any more sacrifices to their 'goat demons'! They have chased after those other gods. In that way, they have acted like prostitutes.* These rules will continue forever!

⁸"Tell the people: Some citizen of Israel or some traveler or foreigner living among you might offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice. ⁹That person must take his sacrifice to the entrance of the Meeting Tent and offer it to the Lord. If that person does not do this, then that person must be separated from his people.

¹⁰"I (God) will be against any person that eats blood. It does not matter if that person is a citizen of Israel or if that person is a foreigner living among you! I will separate that person from his people. ¹¹Why? Because the life of the

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." The place God came to live among his people.

prostitute(s) A woman that sells her body for sex. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and starts worshipping other gods.

body is in the blood. I have given you rules for pouring that blood on the altar.* You must do this to make yourselves pure.* You must give that blood to me, as payment for the life that you took. 12So I tell the people of Israel: None of you people may eat blood. And no foreigner living among you may eat blood.

13If any person catches a wild animal or a bird that can be eaten, then that person must pour the blood on the ground and cover it with dirt. It does not matter if that person is a citizen of Israel or a foreigner living among you! 14Why must you do this? Because, if blood is still in the meat, that animal's life is still in the meat. So I give this command to the people of Israel: Don't eat meat that still has blood in it! Any person that eats blood must be separated from his people.

15Also, if any person eats an animal that died by itself, or if any person eats an animal that was killed by some other animal, then that person will be unclean* until evening. That person must wash his clothes and wash his whole body with water. It does not matter if that person is a citizen of Israel or if he is a foreigner living among you! 16If that person does not wash his clothes, or bathe his body, then he will be guilty of sin."

Rules About Sexual Relations

18 The Lord said to Moses, 1Tell the people of Israel: I am the Lord your God. 2In the past, you lived in Egypt. You must not do the things that were done in that country! I am leading you to Canaan. You must not do the things that are done in that country! Don't follow their customs. 3You must obey my rules and follow my laws! Be sure to follow those rules! Why? Because I am the Lord your God. 4So you must obey my laws and rules. If a person obeys my laws and rules, he will live! I am the Lord!

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

4You must never have sexual relations with* your close relatives! I am the Lord.

5You must never bring shame on your father by having sexual relations with* your mother. She is your mother. You must not have sexual relations with her. 6You must not have sexual relations with your father's wife. That would bring shame on your father.*

7You must not have sexual relations with* your sister, the daughter of your father or mother. It does not matter if your sister was born in your house or at another place.

8You must not have sexual relations with* your granddaughter. That would bring shame on you!

9If your father and his wife* have a daughter, then she is your sister. You must not have sexual relations with* her.

10You must not have sexual relations with* your father's sister. She is your father's close relative. 11You must not have sexual relations with your mother's sister. She is your mother's close relative. 12You must not have sexual relations with your father's brother. You must not go near your uncle's wife for sexual relations. She is your aunt.

13You must not have sexual relations with* your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife. You must not have sexual relations with her.

14You must not have sexual relations with* your brother's wife. That would bring shame on your brother.*

15You must not have sexual relations with* a woman and her daughter. And you must not have sexual relations with this woman's granddaughter. It does not matter if this granddaughter is the daughter of this woman's son or daughter. Her granddaughters are her close relatives. It is wrong to have sexual relations with them.

have sexual relations with Literally, "uncover the nakedness of."

That would bring shame on your father

Literally, "She is the nakedness of your father."

his wife This probably means "your stepmother."

That would bring shame on your brother

Literally, "She is the nakedness of your brother."

¹¹"While your wife is still living, you must not take her sister as another wife. This will make the sisters become enemies. You must not have sexual relations with* your wife's sister.

¹²"Also you must not go near a woman to have sexual relations with* her during her monthly time of bleeding. She is unclean* during this time.

¹³"And you must not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife. This will only make you filthy*!

¹⁴"You must not give any of your children through the fire, to Molech.* If you do this, you will show that you don't respect the name of your God! I am the Lord.

¹⁵"You must not have sexual relations with a man as with a woman. That is a terrible sin!

¹⁶"You must not have sexual relations with any animal. This will only make you filthy*! Also, a woman must not have sexual relations with an animal. It is against nature!

¹⁷"Don't make yourself unclean* with any of those wrong things! I am throwing nations out of their countries, and I am giving their land to you! Why? Because those people did those terrible sins! ¹⁸So the land has become filthy*! Now the land is sick of those things! And the land is vomiting out those people that lived there!

¹⁹"So you must obey my laws and rules. You must not do any of those terrible sins. Those rules are for the citizens of Israel, and they are for the people that live among you!

²⁰The people that lived in the land before you did all those terrible things. So the land became filthy*! ²¹If you do these things, then you will make the land filthy. And it will vomit you out like it vomited out the nations that were there, before you. ²²If any person does any of those terrible sins, then that person must be separated from his people! ²³Other people have done

those terrible sins. But you must obey my laws! You must not do any of those terrible sins! Don't make yourself filthy with those terrible sins! I am the Lord your God."

Israel Belongs to God

19 The Lord said to Moses, ²"Tell all the people of Israel: I am the Lord your God! I am holy, so you must be holy!

³"Each person among you must honor his mother and father and keep my special days of rest.* I am the Lord your God!

⁴"Don't worship idols.* Don't make melted statues of gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God!

⁵"When you offer a sacrifice* of fellowship offerings to the Lord, you must offer it so that you will be accepted. ⁶You may eat it the same day you offer it, and also on the next day. But if any of that sacrifice is left on the third day, then you must burn it in the fire. ⁷It is a terrible sin to eat any of the sacrifice on the third day. It will not be accepted. ⁸A person will be guilty of sin if he does that! Why? Because he did not respect the holy things that belong to the Lord. That person must be separated from his people.

⁹"When you cut your crops at harvest time, don't cut all the way to the corners of your fields. And if grain falls on the ground, you must not gather up that grain. ¹⁰Don't pick all the grapes in your vineyards and don't pick up the grapes that fall to the ground. Why? Because you must leave those things for poor people and for people traveling through your country. I am the Lord your God!

¹¹"You must not steal. You must not cheat people. You must not lie to each other. ¹²You must not make a false promise using my name. If you do that, then you will show that you don't respect the name of your God. I am the Lord!

have sexual relations with Literally, "uncover the nakedness of."

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

filthy Or, "polluted" or "unclean."

Molech A false God. People often killed their children as part of their worship to Molech.

special days of rest Or, "Sabbaths." This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all of the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

¹³"You must not do bad things to your neighbor. You must not rob him. You must not hold a hired worker's salary all night until morning.*

¹⁴"You must not curse a deaf man. You must not put something in front of a blind person to make him fall. But you must respect your God. I am the Lord!

¹⁵"You must be fair in judgment. You must not show special favor to poor people. And you must not show special favor to important people. You must be fair when you judge your neighbor. ¹⁶You must not go around spreading false stories against other people. Don't do anything that would put your neighbor's life in danger. I am the Lord!

¹⁷"You must not hate your brother in your heart. If your neighbor does something wrong, then talk to him about it. But forgive him! ¹⁸Forget about the wrong things people do to you. Don't try to get even. Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord!

¹⁹"You must obey my laws. You must not breed together two kinds of animals. You must not sow your field with two kinds of seed. You must not wear clothing made from two kinds of material mixed together.

²⁰"It may happen that a man has sexual relations with a woman that is the slave of another man. But this slave woman has not been bought or given her freedom. If this happens, then there must be punishment. But they will not be put to death. Why? Because the woman was not free. ²¹The man must bring his guilt offering to the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* The man must bring a ram for a guilt offering. ²²The priest will do the things that will make the man pure.* The priest will offer the ram as a guilt offering before the Lord. It will be for the sins the man did. Then the man will be forgiven for the sins he did.

²³"In the future, you will enter your country. At that time, you will plant many kinds of trees for food. After planting a tree, you must wait three years before you can use any of the fruit from that tree. You must not use that fruit. ²⁴In the fourth year, the fruit from that tree will be the Lord's. It will be a holy offering of praise to the Lord. ²⁵Then, in the fifth year, you can eat the fruit from that tree. And the tree will produce more and more fruit for you. I am the Lord your God!

²⁶"You must not eat any meat with blood still in it.

²⁷"You must not try to use magic and other things to predict the future.

²⁸"You must not round off the side-growth of your heads. You must not cut the edges of your beard. ²⁹You must not cut your body as a way to remember dead people. You must not make any tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the Lord!

³⁰"Don't make your daughter become a prostitute.* That only shows you don't respect her! Don't let people be prostitutes in your country. Don't let your country be filled with that kind of sin.

³¹"You must not work on my special days of rest.* You must honor my holy place. I am the Lord!

³²"Don't go to mediums* or wizards* for advice. Don't go to them; they will only make you unclean.* I am the Lord your God!

³³"Show honor to old people. Stand up when they come into the room. Show respect to your God. I am the Lord!

³⁴"Don't do bad things to foreigners living in your country! ³⁵You must treat foreigners the same as you treat your own citizens. Love foreigners like you love yourselves. Why? Because you were foreigners one time—in Egypt. I am the Lord your God!

You must not hold ... until morning Workers were paid at the end of each day for the work they did that day. See Mt. 20:1-16.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

prostitute(s) A woman that sells her body for sex.

special days of rest Or, "Sabbaths." This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all of the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

³⁴"You must be fair when you judge people. And you must be fair when you measure and weigh things. ³⁵Your baskets should be the right size. Your jars should hold the right amount of liquids. Your weights and balances should weigh things correctly. I am the Lord your God! I brought you out from the land of Egypt!

³⁶"You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am the Lord!"

Warning Against Worshipping Idols

20 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"You must also tell the people of Israel these things: A person in your country might give one of his children to the false god Molech.* That person must be killed! It does not matter if that person is a citizen of Israel or a foreigner living in Israel, you must throw stones at that person and kill him! ²I will be against that person! I will separate him from his people! Why? Because he gave his children to Molech. He showed that he did not respect my holy name! And he made my holy place unclean.* ³Maybe the common people will ignore that person. Maybe they will not kill that person that gave his children to Molech. ⁴But I will be against that person and his family! I will separate him from his people! I will separate any person that is unfaithful to me and chases after Molech.

⁵"I will be against any person that goes to mediums* and wizards* for advice. That person is being unfaithful to me. So I will separate that person from his people.

⁶"Be special! Make yourselves holy*! Why? Because I am holy. I am the Lord your God. ⁷Remember and obey my laws. I am the Lord. And I have made you my, special people,.

⁸"If any person curses* his father or mother,

that person must be put to death. He cursed his father or mother, so he must be killed!*

Punishments for Sexual Sins

⁹"If a man has sexual relations with his neighbor's wife, then both the man and the woman are guilty of adultery. So both the man and the woman must be put to death! ¹⁰If a man has sexual relations with his father's wife, then that man must be put to death. Both the man and his father's wife must be killed.* That man brought shame to his father!*

¹¹"If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them must be put to death. They have done a very bad sexual sin! They must be killed.*

¹²"If a man has sexual relations with another man as with a woman, then these two men have done a terrible sin. They must be put to death. They must be killed.*

¹³"If a man has sexual relations with a woman and her mother, then this is a sexual sin. The people must burn that man and the two women in fire! Don't let this sexual sin happen among your people!

¹⁴"If a man has sexual relations with an animal, that man must be put to death. And you must also kill the animal. ¹⁵If a woman has sexual relations with an animal, then you must kill the woman and the animal. They must be put to death. They must be killed.*

¹⁶"If a brother and his sister or half sister marry each other and have sexual relations with each other,* it is a shameful thing! They must be punished in public! They must be separated from their people! The man that has sexual relations with his sister must be punished for his sin!*

he must be killed Literally, "his blood is on him."

Both ... killed Literally, "Their blood is on them."

That man ... father Literally, "He uncovered his father's nakedness."

They must be killed Literally, "Their blood is on them."

have sexual relations with each other Literally, "he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness."

must be punished ... sin Literally, "will carry his guilt."

Molech A false god. People often killed their children as part of their worship to Molech.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

¹⁸"If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly time of bleeding, then both the woman and the man must be separated from their people. They sinned because they exposed her source of blood.

¹⁹"You must not have sexual relations with* your mother's sister or your father's sister. That is a sin of incest.* You must be punished for your sins.*

²⁰"A man must not sleep with his uncle's wife. That man and his uncle's wife will be punished for their sins. They will die without children.*

²¹"It is wrong for a man to have sexual relations with his brother's wife. That man has brought shame to his brother!* They will have no children.

²²"You must remember all my laws and rules. And you must obey them. I am leading you to your land. You will live in that country. If you obey my laws and rules, then that land will not vomit you out. ²³I am forcing other people to leave that country. Why? Because those people did all of those sins! I hate those sins. I So don't live the way those people lived!

²⁴"I have told you that you will get their land. I will give their land to you. It will be your land! It is a land filled with many good things.* I am the Lord your God!

"I have made you my special people., I have treated you differently from other people. ²⁵So you must treat clean* animals differently from unclean* animals. You must treat clean birds differently from unclean birds. Don't eat any of those unclean birds, and animals, and things that crawl on the ground. I have made those things unclean. ²⁶I have made you my

special people. So you must be holy for me! Why? Because I am the Lord, and I am holy!

²⁷"A man or a woman that is a medium* or a wizard,* must be put to death. The people must kill them with stones. They must be killed.*"

Rules for Priests

21 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell these things to Aaron's sons, the priests: A priest must not make himself unclean* by touching a dead person. ²But if the dead person was one of his close relatives, (then he can touch the dead body.). The priest can make himself unclean if the dead person is his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother or ³his unmarried* sister. (This sister is close to him because she has no husband. So the priest may make himself unclean for her if she dies.) ⁴But a priest must not make himself unclean if the dead person was only one of his slaves.*

⁵"Priests must not shave their heads bald. Priests must not shave off the edges of their beards. Priests must not make any cuts in their bodies. ⁶Priests must be holy for their God. They must show respect for God's name. Why? Because they carry the bread and the offerings by fire to the Lord. So they must be holy.*

⁷"A priest serves God in a special way. So a priest must not marry a woman that had sexual relations with some other man. A priest must not marry a prostitute* or a divorced woman. ⁸A priest serves God in a special way. So you must treat him in a special way. Why? Because he carries holy things! He brings the holy bread to God, and I am holy! I am the Lord, and I make you holy!

⁹"If a priest's daughter becomes a prostitute,* then she ruins her reputation, and

have sexual relations with Literally, "uncover the nakedness of."

incest Having sexual relations with a close relative.

must be punished ... sins Literally, "will carry your guilt."

will be punished ... children Literally, "they must bear their childlessness. They will die."

brought shame ... brother Literally, "uncovered his brother's nakedness."

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

They must be killed Literally, "Their blood is on them."

unmarried Literally, "virgin," a girl that was never married and never had sexual relations with anyone.

But a priest ... slaves Or, "A master must not become unclean for his people."

holy Chosen or set aside for a special purpose.

prostitute A woman that sells her body for sex.

she brings shame to her father! So she must be burned.

¹⁰"The high priest was chosen from among his brothers. The anointing oil* was poured on his head. In this way, he was chosen for the special job of being high priest. He was chosen to wear the special clothes. (So he must not do things to show his sadness in public.) He must not let his hair grow wild. He must not tear his clothes. ¹¹He must not make himself unclean* by touching a dead body. He must not go near a dead body, even if it is his own father or mother. ¹²The high priest must not go out of God's holy place. (Then he might become unclean,) and (then he might) make God's holy place unclean.* The anointing oil was poured on the high priest's head. This separated him from the rest of the people. I am the Lord!

¹³"The high priest must marry a wife that is a virgin.* ¹⁴The high priest must not marry a woman that has had sexual relations with some other man. The high priest must not marry a prostitute,* or a divorced woman, or a woman whose husband has died. The high priest must marry a virgin from his own people. ¹⁵In this way, people will show respect for his children.* I, the Lord, have separated the high priest for his special work."

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁷"Tell Aaron: If any of your descendants* children have something wrong with them, then they must not carry the special bread to God. ¹⁸Any man that has something wrong with him must not (serve as priest and) bring sacrifices to me. These men cannot serve as priests:

blind men,
crippled men,
men with bad scars on their faces,

men whose arms or legs are too long,
¹⁹ men with broken feet or hands,
²⁰ men that are hunchbacks,
dwarfs,* men that have something wrong with their eyes,
men that have an itching disease or a skin disease,
men that have crushed testicles.

²¹If one of Aaron's descendants has something wrong with him, then he cannot offer fire sacrifices to the Lord. And that person cannot carry the special bread to God. ²²That person is from the family of priests, so he can eat the holy bread. He can also eat the very holy bread. ²³But he cannot go through the curtain (into the Most Holy Place,) and he cannot go near the altar.* Why? Because he has something wrong with him. He must not make my holy places not holy. I, the Lord, make those places holy!"

²⁴So Moses told these things to Aaron, Aaron's sons, and all the people of Israel.

22 The Lord God said to Moses, ¹"Tell Aaron and his sons: The people of Israel will give things to me. Those things will become holy. They are mine. So you priests must not take those things. If you use those holy things, then you will show that you don't respect my holy name. I am the Lord! ²If any person from among all your descendants* touches those things, then that person will become unclean.* That person must be separated from me! The people of Israel gave those things to me. I am the Lord!

³"If any of Aaron's descendants* has one of the bad skin diseases,* or a discharge,* he can't eat the holy food until he becomes clean.* That rule is for any priest that becomes unclean.* That priest can become unclean from a dead

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on people or things to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

virgin A pure woman that has never been married.

prostitute A woman that sells her body for sex.

people ... children Or, "his children will not become unclean from the people."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

dwarfs A dwarf is a person whose body stopped growing properly.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

bad skin diseases This might be leprosy, or it might be some other serious skin disease.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

body or from his semen.* ⁵He can become unclean if he touches any unclean crawling animals. And he can become unclean if he touches an unclean person. It does not matter what made that person unclean. ⁶If a person touches any of those things, he will become unclean until evening. That person must not eat any of the holy food. Even if he washes with water, he can't eat the holy food. ⁷He will be clean only after the sun goes down. Then he can eat the holy food. Why? Because that food belongs to him.

⁸"If a priest finds an animal that died by itself or that was killed by wild animals, he must not eat that dead animal. If that person eats that animal, he will become unclean.* I am the Lord!

⁹"The priests will have special times to serve me. They must be careful at those times. They must be careful not to make the holy things not holy. If they are careful, then they will not die. I, the Lord, have separated them for this special job. ¹⁰"Only people from a priests' family can eat the holy food. A visitor staying with the priest or a hired worker must not eat any of the holy food. ¹¹But if the priest buys a person as a slave with his own money, then that person may eat some of the holy things. Slaves, that were born in the priest's house may also eat some of the priest's food. ¹²A priest's daughter might marry a person that is not a priest. If she does that, then she can't eat any of the holy offerings. ¹³A priest's daughter might become a widow,* or she might become divorced. If she does not have any children to support her, and she goes back to her father's house, where she lived, as a child, then she can eat some of her father's food. But only people from a priest's family can eat this food.

¹⁴"A person might eat some of the holy food by mistake. That person must give the same amount to the priest, and he must give another fifth of the price of that food.

¹⁵"The people of Israel will give gifts to the Lord. Those gifts become holy. So the priest must not make those holy things not holy. ¹⁶If the priests treat those things as not holy, then they will add to their sin when they eat the holy food. I, the Lord, make them holy!"

¹⁷The Lord God said to Moses, ¹⁸"Tell Aaron and his sons and all the people of Israel: Maybe a citizen of Israel or a foreigner will want to bring an offering. Maybe it is for some special promise that person made. Or maybe it is some special sacrifice that person wanted to bring. ¹⁹"Those are gifts that the people bring because they really want to give a gift to God. You must not accept any offering that has anything wrong with it. I will not be happy with that gift! If the gift is a bull, or a sheep, or a goat, then that animal must be a male. And it must not have anything wrong with it!

²⁰"A person might bring a fellowship offering to the Lord. That fellowship offering might be payment for a special promise that person made. Or maybe it is a special gift that person wanted to give to the Lord. It might be a bull or a sheep. But it must be healthy. There must be nothing wrong with that animal! ²¹You must not offer to the Lord any animal that is blind, or has broken bones, or is crippled, or has a discharge,* or a bad skin disease. You must not offer sick animals on the fire of the Lord's altar.*

²²"Sometimes a bull or lamb will have a leg that is too long, or a foot that did not grow right. If a person wants to give that animal as a special gift to the Lord, then it will be accepted. But it will not be accepted as payment for a special promise that person made.

²³"If an animal has bruised, crushed, or torn testicles, then you must not offer that animal to the Lord.

²⁴"You must not take animals from foreigners as sacrifices to the Lord. Why? Because the animals might have been hurt in some way. They might have something wrong with them. They will not be accepted!"

semen The fluid produced by a man's sexual organs.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

²¹The Lord said to Moses, ²²"When a calf, or a sheep, or a goat is born, it must stay seven days with its mother. Then on the eighth day and after, this animal will be accepted as a sacrifice offered by fire to the Lord. ²³But you must not kill the animal and its mother on the same day! This rule is the same for cows and sheep.

²⁴"If you want to offer some special offering of thanks to the Lord, then you are free to offer that gift. But you must do it in a way that pleases God. ²⁵You must eat the whole animal that day. You must not leave any of the meat for the next morning. I am the Lord!

²⁶"Remember my commands, and obey them. I am the Lord! ²⁷Show respect for my holy name! I must be very special to the people of Israel. I, the Lord, have made you my special people. ²⁸I brought you from Egypt. I became your God. I am the Lord!"

Special Holidays

23 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Tell the people of Israel: You will announce the Lord's chosen festivals as holy meetings. These are my special holidays:

Sabbath

²"Work for six days. But the seventh day, the Sabbath, will be a special day of rest, a holy meeting. You must not do any work. It is a Sabbath to the Lord in all your homes.

Passover

³"These are the Lord's chosen holidays. You will announce the holy meetings at the times chosen for them. ⁴The Lord's Passover is on the 14th day of the first month* at twilight.*

Festival of Unleavened Bread

⁵"The Festival of Unleavened Bread* is on the 15th day of the same month (*Nisan*). You

will eat unleavened bread for seven days. ⁶On the first day of this holiday you will have a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day. ⁷For seven days, you will bring an offering by fire to the Lord. Then there will be another special meeting on the seventh day. You must not do any work on that day."

Festival of the First Harvests

⁸The Lord said to Moses, ⁹"Tell the people of Israel: You will enter the land that I will give you. You will reap its harvest. At that time, you must bring in the first sheaf* of your harvest to the priest. ¹⁰The priest will wave the sheaf before the Lord. Then you will be accepted. The priest will wave the sheaf on Sunday morning.*

¹¹"On the day when you wave the sheaf,* you will offer a one-year-old male lamb. There must be nothing wrong with that lamb. That lamb will be a burnt offering to the Lord. ¹²You must also offer a grain offering of 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil. You must also offer 1 quart* of wine. The smell of that offering will please the Lord. ¹³You must not eat any of the new grain, or fruit, or bread made from the new grain, until you bring that offering to your God. This law will always continue through your generations wherever you live.

Festival of Pentecost

¹⁴"From that Sunday morning,* (the day you bring the sheaf* for the wave offering) count seven weeks. ¹⁵On the Sunday following the seventh week, (that is 50 days later) you will bring a new grain offering to the Lord. ¹⁶On that day, bring two loaves of bread from your homes. That bread will be for a wave offering. Use yeast and 16 cups* of flour to make those loaves of bread. That will be your gift to the Lord from your first harvest.

sheaf A stack of grain.

Sunday morning Literally, "the morning after the Sabbath."

16 cups Literally, "1/4 of an ephah."

1 quart Literally, "1/4 of a hin."

first month Nisan, the first month of the Jewish calendar. It was during March-April.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

Unleavened Bread Bread made without yeast.

³¹“One bull, one ram, and seven one-year-old male lambs will be offered with the grain offerings from the people. There must be nothing wrong with those animals. They will be a burnt offering to the Lord. They will be an offering by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. ³²You will also offer one male goat for a sin offering and two one-year-old male lambs as a fellowship offering.

³³“The priest will wave them with the bread from the first harvest for a wave offering with two lambs before the Lord. They are holy to the Lord. They will belong to the priest. ³⁴On that same day, you will call a holy meeting. You must not do any work. This law continues forever in all your homes.

³⁵“Also, when you harvest the crops on your land, don’t cut all the way to the corners of your field. Don’t pick up the grain that falls on the ground. Leave those things for poor people and for foreigners traveling through your country. I am the Lord your God!”

Festival of Trumpets

³⁶Again the Lord said to Moses, ³⁷“Tell the people of Israel: On the first day of the seventh month, you must have a special day of rest. There will be a holy meeting. You must blow the trumpet for a special time of remembering. ³⁸You must not do any work. You will bring an offering by fire to the Lord.”

Day of Atonement

³⁹The Lord said to Moses, ⁴⁰“The Day of Atonement* will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. There will be a holy meeting. You must not eat food* and you must bring an offering by fire to the Lord. ⁴¹You must not do any work on that day. Why? Because it is the Day of Atonement. On that day, the priests will go, before the Lord and do the ceremony

that makes you pure.*

⁴²“If any person refuses to fast* on this day, he must be separated from his people. ⁴³If a person does any work on this day, I (God) will destroy that person from among his people. ⁴⁴You must not do any work at all. This law that continues forever wherever you live. ⁴⁵It will be a special day of rest for you. You must not eat food.* You will start this special day of rest on the evening following the ninth day of the month.* This special day of rest continues from that evening until the next evening.”

Festival of Shelters

⁴⁶Again the Lord said to Moses, ⁴⁷“Tell the people of Israel: On the 15th day of the seventh month is the Festival of Shelters. This holiday to the Lord will continue for seven days. ⁴⁸There will be a holy meeting on the first day. You must not do any work. ⁴⁹You will bring an offering by fire to the Lord for seven days. On the eighth day you will have another holy meeting. You will bring an offering by fire to the Lord. This will be a holy meeting. You must not do any work.

⁵⁰“Those are the Lord’s special holidays. There will be holy meetings on those holidays. You will bring offerings by fire to the Lord—burnt offerings, grain offerings, sacrifices, and drink offerings. You will bring those gifts at the right time. ⁵¹You will celebrate those holidays in addition to remembering the Lord’s Sabbath* days. You will offer those gifts in addition to your other gifts to the Lord. You will offer those things in addition to any offerings you give as payment for your special promises. They will be in addition to any special offerings you want to give to the Lord.

⁵²“On the 15th day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you will celebrate the Lord’s festival for

Day of Atonement Also called “Yom Kippur”—the most important Jewish holy day. On this day the high priest went into the Most Holy Place and did the ceremony that atoned (covered or erased) the sins of the people.
not eat food Literally, “humble yourselves.”

make ... pure Literally, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

fast To live without food for a time of prayer and worship.

evening following ... month According to Jewish time, the day starts at sunset.

Sabbath Saturday—a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

seven days. You will rest on the first day and on the seventh day. ⁴⁰On the first day you will take good fruit from fruit trees. And you will take branches from palm trees, poplar trees and willow trees by the brook. You will celebrate before the Lord your God for seven days. ⁴¹You will celebrate this holiday to the Lord for seven days each year. This law will continue forever. You will celebrate this holiday in the seventh month. ⁴²You will live in temporary shelters for seven days. All the people born in Israel will live in those shelters. ⁴³Why? So all of your descendants* will know that I made the people of Israel live in temporary shelters during the time I brought them from Egypt. I am the Lord your God!"

⁴⁴So Moses told the people of Israel about all of the special meetings to honor the Lord.

The Lampstand and the Holy Bread

24 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Command the people of Israel to bring to you pure oil from crushed olives. That oil is for the lamps. Those lamps must burn without stopping. ²Aaron will keep the light burning in the Meeting Tent* from evening until morning before the Lord. This will be outside the curtain in front of the Agreement.* This law will continue forever. ³Aaron must always keep the lamps burning on the lampstand of pure gold before the Lord.

⁴"Take fine flour and bake twelve loaves with it. Use 16 cups* of flour for each loaf. ⁵Put them in two rows on the golden table before the Lord. Six loaves will be in each row. ⁶Put pure frankincense* on each row. This will help the Lord remember the offering by fire to

the Lord. ⁷Every Sabbath day* Aaron will put the bread in order before the Lord. This must be done forever. This Agreement with the people of Israel will continue forever. ⁸That bread will belong to Aaron and his sons. They will eat the bread in a holy place. Why? Because that bread is one of the offerings made by fire to the Lord. That bread is Aaron's share forever."

The Man That Cursed God

¹There was a son of an Israelite woman. His father was an Egyptian. This Israelite woman's son was an Israelite. He was walking among the people of Israel, and he started fighting in camp. ²The Israelite woman's son began cursing and saying bad things about the Lord's name. So the people brought this man to Moses. (The name of the man's mother was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, from the family group of Dan.) ³The people held the man as a prisoner and waited for the Lord's command to be made clear to them.

⁴Then the Lord said to Moses, ⁵"Bring the man that has cursed to a place outside the camp. Then bring together all the people that heard him curse. Those people will put their hands on his head.* And then all the people must throw stones at him and kill him. ⁶You must tell the people of Israel: If a person curses his God, then he must be punished.* ⁷Any person that speaks against the name of the Lord must be put to death. All the people must stone him. Foreigners must be punished just like the person that was born in Israel. If a person curses the Lord's, name, then he must be put to death.

⁸"And if one person kills another person, he must be put to death. ⁹The person that kills an animal (that belongs to another person, must give another animal to take its place.*

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

16 cups Literally, "2/3 of an ephah."

frankincense Very special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Sabbath day Saturday—a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

put ... head This shows that all those people were sharing in punishing the man.

he must be punished Literally, "he must bear his sin."

give ... place Literally, "pay for it; life for life."

¹⁹"And if a person causes an injury to his neighbor, then the same kind of injury must be given that person. ²⁰A broken bone for a broken bone; an eye for an eye; and a tooth for a tooth. The same kind of injury a person gives another person must be given that person. ²¹So if a person kills an animal, then that person must pay for the animal. But if a person kills another person, then he must be put to death.

²²"The law will be fair,—it will be the same for foreigners and for people from your own country. Why? Because I am the Lord your God."

²³Then Moses spoke to the people of Israel, and they brought the man that had cursed to a place outside the camp. Then they killed him with stones. So the people of Israel did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

A Time of Rest for the Land

25 The Lord spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai. The Lord said, ²"Tell the people of Israel: You will enter the land that I am giving to you. At that time, you must let the land have a special time of rest. This will be a special time of rest to honor the Lord. ³You will plant seed, in your field for six years. You will trim the plants in your grape fields for six years and bring in its fruits. ⁴But during the seventh year, you will let the land rest. This will be a special time of rest to honor the Lord. You must not plant seed in your field or trim the plants in your grape fields. ⁵You must not cut the crops that grow by themselves after your harvest. You must not gather the grapes from your vines that are not trimmed. The land will have a year of rest.

⁶"The land will have a year of rest, but you will still have enough food. There will be enough food for your men and women servants. There will be food for your hired workers and for the foreigners living in your country. ⁷And there will be enough food for your cows and other animals to eat.

Jubilee

⁸"You will also count seven groups of seven years. This will be 49 years. During that time, there will be seven years of rest for the land. ⁹On the Day of Atonement,* you must blow a ram's horn. That will be on the tenth day of the seventh month. You must blow the ram's horn through the whole country. ¹⁰You will make the 50th year a special year. You will announce freedom for all the people living in your country. This time will be called "Jubilee."¹¹ Each of you will go back to his own property.¹² And each of you will go back to his family. ¹³The 50th year will be a special celebration¹⁴ for you. Don't plant seeds. Don't harvest the crops that grow by themselves. Don't gather grapes from the vines that are not trimmed. ¹⁵That year is Jubilee. It will be a holy time for you. You will eat the crops that come from the field. ¹⁶In the year of Jubilee, each person will go back to his own property."

¹⁷"Don't cheat your neighbor when you sell your land to him. And don't let him cheat you when you buy land from him. ¹⁸If you want to buy your neighbor's land, then count the number of years since the last Jubilee, and use that number to decide the right price. If you sell the land, then count the number of years for harvesting crops, and use that number to decide the right price. ¹⁹If there are many years, then the price will be high. If the years are few, then lower the price. Why? Because your neighbor is really selling only a number of crops to you. At the next Jubilee the land will again belong to his family. ²⁰You must not cheat each other. You must honor your God! I am the Lord your God!

Day of Atonement Also called "Yom Kippur"—the most important Jewish holy day. On this day the high priest went into the Most Holy Place and did the ceremony that atoned (covered or erased) the sins of the people.

Jubilee The word comes from the Hebrew word for the horn that was blown at this time.

own property In Israel, the land belonged to the family or family group. A person might sell his land, but at Jubilee that land again belonged to the family and family group that it was originally given to.

special celebration Literally, "Jubilee."

¹⁸“Remember my laws and rules. Obey them! Then you will live safely in your country. ¹⁹And the land will produce good crops for you. Then you will have plenty of food and you will live safely on the land.

²⁰“But maybe you will say, ‘If we don’t plant seeds or gather our crops, we will not have anything to eat during the seventh year.’

²¹‘Don’t worry!’ I will order my blessing to come to you during the sixth year. The land will continue growing crops for three years.

²²When you plant in the eighth year, you will still be eating things from the old crop. You will eat the old crop until the ninth year, when the crop you planted in the eighth year comes in.

Property Laws

²³“The land really belongs to me. So you can’t really sell it permanently. You are only foreigners and travelers living on my land, with me. ²⁴People might sell their land, but the family will always get their land back. ²⁵A person in your country might become very poor. He might be so poor that he must sell his property. So his close relative must come and buy back the property for his relative. ²⁶A person might not have a close relative to buy back his land for him. But he might get enough money to buy back the land for himself. ²⁷Then he must count the years since the land was sold. He must use that number to decide how much to pay for the land. Then he must buy back the land. Then the land will be his property again. ²⁸But if this person can’t find enough money to get the land back for himself, then what he has sold will stay in the hands of the person that bought it until the year of Jubilee.* Then during that special celebration, the land will go back to the first owner’s family. So the property will again belong to the right family.

²⁹“If a person sells a home in a walled city, then he still has the right to get it back until a full year after he sold the house. His right to get the house back will continue one year. ³⁰But if

the owner does not, buy back the house before a full year is finished, then the house that is in the walled city will belong to the person that bought it, and to his descendants.* The house will not go back to the first owner, at the time of Jubilee.* ³¹Towns without walls around them will be treated like open fields. So houses built in those small towns will go back to the first owners at the time of Jubilee.*

³²“But about the cities of the Levites: The Levites can buy back their houses at any time in the cities that belong to them. ³³If a person buys a house from a Levite, that house in the Levites’ city will again belong to the Levites at the time of Jubilee.* Why? Because houses in Levite cities belong to people from the family group of Levi. The people of Israel gave those cities to the Levite people. ³⁴Also, the fields and pastures around the Levite cities can’t be sold. Those fields belong to the Levites forever.

Rules for Slave Owners

³⁵“Maybe a person from your own country* will become too poor to support himself. You must let him live with you like a visitor. ³⁶Don’t charge him any interest on money you might loan to him. Respect your God, and let your brother* live with you. ³⁷Don’t charge him interest on any money you lend him. And don’t try to make a profit from the food you sell him. ³⁸I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of the land of Egypt to give the land of Canaan to you and to become your God.

³⁹“Maybe a person from your own country* will become so poor that he sells himself as a slave to you. You must not make him work like a slave. ⁴⁰He will be like a hired worker and a visitor with you until the year of Jubilee.* ⁴¹Then he can leave you. He can take his children and go back to his family. He can go back to the property of his ancestors.* ⁴²Why? Because they are my servants! I brought them

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

a person ... country Literally, “one of your brothers.”
your brother Or, “the person from your own country.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Jubilee The word comes from the Hebrew word for the horn that was blown at this time. See Leviticus 25:9.

out of slavery, in Egypt. They must not become slaves again.⁴³ You must not be a cruel master to this person. You must respect your God.

⁴⁴“About your men and women slaves: You may get men and women slaves from the other nations around you. ⁴⁵Also, you may get children as slaves if they come from the families of the foreigners living in your land. Those children slaves will belong to you. ⁴⁶You may even pass these foreign slaves on to your children after you die so that they will belong to your children. They will be your slaves forever. You may make slaves of these foreigners. But you must not be a cruel master over your own brothers, the people of Israel.

⁴⁷“Maybe a foreigner or visitor among you will become rich. Maybe a person from your own country* will become poor, so that he sells himself as a slave to a foreigner living among you or to a member of a foreigner’s family. ⁴⁸That person will have the right to be bought back and become free. One of his brothers* can buy him back. ⁴⁹Or his uncle or his cousin can buy him back. Or one of his close relatives from his family can buy him back. Or if the person gets enough money, he can pay the money himself and become free again.

⁵⁰“How do you decide the price? You must count the years from the time he sold himself to the foreigner up to the next year of Jubilee.* Use that number to decide the price. Why? Because really the person only ‘hired’ him for a few years! ⁵¹If there are still many years before the year of Jubilee, then the person must give back a large part of the price. It all depends on the numbers of years. ⁵²If only a few years are left until the year of Jubilee, then the person must pay a small part of the original price. ⁵³But that person will live like a hired man with the foreigner every year. Don’t let the foreigner be a cruel master over that person.

⁵⁴“That person will become free, even if no one buys him back. At the year of Jubilee* he and his children will become free. ⁵⁵Why? Because the people of Israel are my servants. They are my servants that I brought them out of slavery, in Egypt. I am the Lord your God!

Rewards for Obeying God

26 “Don’t make idols for yourselves. Don’t set up statues or memorials* in your land to bow down to. Why? Because I am the Lord your God!

²“Remember my special days of rest* and honor my holy place. I am the Lord!

³“Remember my laws and commands, and obey them! If you do those things, then I will give you rains at the time they should come. The land will grow crops and the trees of the field will grow their fruit. ⁴Your threshing* will continue until it is time to gather grapes. And your grape gathering will continue until it is time to plant. Then you will have plenty to eat. And you will live safely in your land. ⁵I will give peace to your country. You will lie down in peace. No person will come to make you afraid. I will keep harmful animals out of your country. And armies will not come through your country.

⁶“You will chase your enemies, and defeat them. You will kill them with your sword. ⁷Five of you will chase 100 men, and 100 of you will chase 10,000 men. You will defeat your enemies and kill them with your sword.

⁸“Then I will turn to you. I will let you have many children. I will keep my Agreement with you. ⁹You will have enough crops to last for more than a year. You will harvest the new crops. But then you will have to throw out the old crops to make room for the new crops! ¹⁰Also, I will place my Holy Tent* among you.

memorial A stone marker to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stone markers as places to worship false gods.

special days of rest Or, “Sabbaths.”

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls from the grain.

Holy Tent Or, “tabernacle.” The place God came to live among his people.

a person ... country Literally, “one of your brothers.”

One of his brothers Or, “A person from his own country.”

Jubilee The word comes from the Hebrew word for the horn that was blown at this time. See Leviticus 25:9.

I will not turn away from you! ¹²I will walk with you and be your God. And you will be my people. ¹³I am the Lord your God. You were slaves in Egypt. But I brought you out of Egypt. You were bent low from the heavy weights you carried as slaves. But I broke the poles that were on your shoulders. I let you walk tall again!

Punishment for Not Obeying God

¹⁴"But if you don't obey me and all my commands, then these bad things will happen. ¹⁵If you refuse to obey my laws and commands, then you have broken my Agreement. ¹⁶If you do that, then I will cause terrible things to happen to you. I will cause you to have disease and fever. They will destroy your eyes and take away your life. You will not have success when you plant your seed. And your enemies will eat your crops! ¹⁷I will be against you, so your enemies will defeat you. Those enemies hate you, and they will rule over you. You will run away even when no one is chasing you.

¹⁸"After these things, if you still don't obey me, I will punish you seven times more for your sins. ¹⁹And I will also break the great cities that make you proud. The skies will not give rain, and the earth will not produce crops.* ²⁰You will work hard, but it will not help. Your land will not give any crops, and your trees will not grow their fruit.

²¹"If you still turn against me and refuse to obey me, then I will beat you seven times harder! The more you sin, the more you will be punished! ²²I will send wild animals against you. They will take your children away from you. They will destroy your animals. They will kill many of your people. People will be afraid to travel—the roads will be empty!

²³"If you don't learn your lesson after all those things, and if you still turn against me, ²⁴then I will also turn against you. I—yes, I (*the Lord*)—will punish you seven times for your sins. ²⁵You broke my Agreement, so I will punish you. I will bring armies against you.

You will go into your cities for safety. But I will cause diseases to spread among you. And your enemies will defeat you. ²⁶I will give you a share of the grain left in that city. But there will be very little food to eat. Ten women will be able to cook all their bread in one oven. They will measure each piece of bread. You will eat, but you will still be hungry!

²⁷"If you still refuse to listen to me, and if you still turn against me, ²⁸then I will really show my anger! I—yes, I (*the Lord*)—will punish you seven times for your sins! ²⁹You will become so hungry that, you will eat the bodies of your sons and daughters. ³⁰I will destroy your high places.* I will cut down your incense* altars.* I will put your dead bodies on the dead bodies of your idols.* You will be very disgusting to me. ³¹I will destroy your cities. I will make your holy places empty. I will stop smelling your offerings. ³²I will make your land empty. And your enemies that come to live there will be shocked at it. ³³I will scatter you among the nations. I will pull out my sword and destroy you. Your land will become empty and your cities will be destroyed.

³⁴"You will be taken to your enemy's country. Your country will be empty. So your land will finally get its rest. The land will enjoy its time of rest. ³⁵The law says the land should have a year of rest every seven years. During the time that the land is empty, it will get the time of rest that you did not give it while you lived there. ³⁶The survivors* will lose their courage in the land of their enemies. They will be scared of everything. They will run around like a leaf being blown by the wind. They will run like someone is chasing them with a sword. They will fall even when no one is chasing them! ³⁷They will run like someone is chasing them with a sword. They will fall over each other—even when no person is chasing them.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

altars A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshipped.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here, this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy's armies.

The skies ... crops Literally, "Your skies will be like iron, your land like bronze."

"You will not be strong enough to stand up against your enemies. ²³You will be lost in other nations. You will disappear in the land of your enemies. ²⁴So the survivors* will rot away in their sin in their enemies' countries. They will rot away in their sins just like their ancestors* did.

There Is Always Hope

⁴⁴"But maybe the people will confess (admit) their sins. And maybe they will confess the sins of their ancestors.* Maybe they will admit that they turned against me. Maybe they will admit that they sinned against me. ⁴⁵Maybe they will admit that I turned against them and brought them into the land of their enemies. Those people will be like strangers to me. But maybe they will become humble* and accept the punishment for their sin. ⁴⁶If they do, then I will remember my Agreement with Jacob. I will remember my Agreement with Isaac. I will remember my Agreement with Abraham. And I will remember the land.

⁴⁷"The land will be empty. The land will enjoy its time of rest. Then the survivors* will accept the punishment for their sins. They will learn that they were punished because they hated my laws and refused to obey my rules. ⁴⁸"They truly sinned. But if they come to me for help, I will not turn away from them. I will listen to them, even if they are in the land of their enemies. I will not completely destroy them. I will not break my Agreement with them. Why? Because I am the Lord their God! ⁴⁹"For them, I will remember the Agreement with their ancestors.* I brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt so I could become their God. The other nations saw those things. I am the Lord!"

⁵⁰"Those are the laws, rules and teachings that the Lord gave to the people of Israel.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here, this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Those people ... humble Literally, "If they humble their uncircumcised heart."

[Those laws are the Agreement, between the Lord and the people of Israel. The Lord gave those laws to Moses at Mount Sinai, and Moses gave them to the people.]

Promises Are Important

27 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Tell the people of Israel: A person might make a special promise to the Lord. That person might promise to give a person to the Lord. [That person will then serve the Lord in a special way.] The priest must set a price for that person. People will have to pay that price if they want to buy the person back from the Lord. ²The price for a man from 20 to 60 years old is 50 shekels* of silver. (You must use the official measure* for the silver.) ³The price for a woman [that is 20 to 60 years old] is 30 shekels. ⁴The price for a man from 5 to 20 years old is 20 shekels. The price for a woman [from 5 to 20 years old] is 10 shekels. ⁵The price for a baby boy from one month to five years old is 5 shekels. For a baby girl, the price is 3 shekels. ⁶The price for a man that is 60 years old or older is 15 shekels. The price for a woman is 10 shekels.

⁷"If a person is too poor to pay the price, then bring that person to the priest. The priest will decide how much money the person can afford to pay.

Gifts to the Lord

⁸"Some animals can be used as sacrifices to the Lord. If a person brings one of those animals, then that animal will become holy. ⁹[That person promises to give that animal to the Lord,] so that person must not try to put another animal in its place. He must not try to change it for something else. He must not try to change a good animal for a bad animal. He must not change a bad animal for a good animal. If that person does try to change animals, then both animals will become holy—both animals will belong to the Lord.]

shekels A shekel is 1/3 of an ounce.

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the official standard of measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

¹¹"Some animals can't be offered as sacrifices to the Lord. If a person brings one of those unclean* animals to the Lord, then that animal must be brought to the priest. ¹²The priest will decide a price for that animal. It does not make any difference if the animal is good or bad. If the priest decides on a price, then that is the price for the animal. ¹³If the person wants to buy back the animal,* then he must add a fifth to the price.

The Value of a House

¹⁴"Now if a person dedicates his house as holy to the Lord, then the priest must decide its price. It does not make any difference if the house is good or bad. If the priest decides on a price, then that is the price for the house. ¹⁵But if the person that gives the house wants to get it back, then he must add a fifth to the price. Then the house will belong to that person.

Value of Property

¹⁶"If a person dedicates part of his fields to the Lord, the value of those fields will depend on how much seed is needed to plant it. It will be 50 shekels* of silver for each homer* of barley seed. ¹⁷If the person gives his field to God during the year of Jubilee,* then its value will be whatever the priest decides. ¹⁸But if the person gives his field after the Jubilee, then the priest must calculate its exact price. He must count the number of years to the next year of Jubilee. Then he must use that number to decide the price. ¹⁹If the person that gave the field wants to buy back the field, then he must add a fifth to that price. Then the field will again belong to that person. ²⁰If the person does not buy back the field, then the field will always belong to the priests. If the land is sold to someone else, then that first person can't buy

back the land. ²¹If the person did not buy back the land, then at the year of Jubilee,* the field will remain holy to the Lord—it will belong to the priest forever! It will be like land that was given completely to the Lord.

²²"If a person dedicates to the Lord a field that he has bought, and it is not a part of his family's property,* ²³then the priest must count the years to the year of Jubilee* and decide the price for the land. Then that land will belong to the Lord. ²⁴At the year of Jubilee, the land will go to the original owner. It will go back to the family that owns the land.

²⁵"You must use the official measure* in paying those prices. The shekel by that measure weighs 20 gerahs.*

Value of Animals

²⁶"People can give cows and sheep as special gifts to the Lord. But if the animal is the firstborn, then that animal already belongs to the Lord. So people can't give those animals as special gifts. ²⁷People must give firstborn animals to the Lord. But if the firstborn animal is an unclean* animal, then the person must buy back that animal. The priest will decide the price of the animal, and the person must add a fifth to that price. If the person does not buy back that animal, then the priest must sell the animal for the price he decided.

²⁸"There is a special kind of gift* that people give to the Lord. That gift belongs only to the Lord. That gift cannot be bought back or sold. That gift belongs to the Lord. That type of gift includes people, animals, and fields from the family property.

²⁹"If that special kind of gift* to the Lord is a person, then that person cannot be bought back. That person must be killed.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

buy ... animal See Exodus 13:1-16 for the laws about giving to God or "buying back" firstborn children or animals.

shekels A shekel was 1/2 of an ounce.

homer A dry measure equal to about 6 bushels.

Jubilee The word comes from the Hebrew word for the horn that was blown at this time. See Leviticus 25:9.

family's property That is, land that was owned originally by his family and family group.

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the official standard of measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

gerahs A gerah is 1/20 of an ounce.

special kind of gift This usually means things taken in war. Those things (gifts) belonged only to the Lord, so they could not be used for anything else.

³⁰"A tenth of all crops belong to the Lord. This means the crops from fields and the fruit from trees—a tenth belongs to the Lord. ³¹So if a person wants to get back his tenth, he must add a fifth to its price and then buy it back.

³²"The priests will take every tenth animal from a person's cows or sheep. Every tenth animal will belong to the Lord. ³³The owner

should not worry if the chosen animal is good or bad. He should not change the animal for another animal. If he decides to change it for another animal, then both animals will belong to the Lord. That animal can't be bought back.

³⁴Those are the commands that the Lord gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the people of Israel.

Numbers

Moses Counts the People of Israel

1 The Lord spoke to Moses in the Meeting Tent.* This was in the Sinai Desert. It was on the first day of the second month of the second year after the people of Israel left Egypt. The Lord said to Moses: ²"Count the number of all the people of Israel. List the name of each man with his family and his family group. ³You and Aaron will count all the men of Israel. Count the men that are 20 years old or older. (These are the men who serve in the army of Israel.) List them by their group.* ⁴"One man from each and every family group will help you. This man will be the leader of his family group. ⁵These are the names of the men that will stand with you, and help you,;

from Reuben's family group—Elizur son of Shedeur;

⁶ from Simeon's family group—Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

⁷ from Judah's family group—Nahshon son of Amminadab;

⁸ from Issachar's family group—Nethanel son of Zuar;

⁹ from Zebulun's family group—Eliab son of Helon;

¹⁰ from Ephraim's family group—Elishama son of Ammihud (Ephraim was Joseph's son);

from Manasseh's family group, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur (Manasseh was also Joseph's son);

¹¹ from Benjamin's family group—Abidan son of Gideon;

¹² from Dan's family group—Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

¹³ from Asher's family group—Pagiel son of Ocran;

¹⁴ from Gad's family group—Eliasaph son of Deuel;*

¹⁵ from Naphtali's family group—Ahira son of Enam."

¹⁶All those men were the leaders of their families. The people also chose them to be leaders of their family groups. ¹⁷Moses and Aaron took these men that had been chosen to be leaders. ¹⁸And Moses and Aaron called all the people of Israel together. Then the people were listed by their families and their family groups. All the men that were 20 years old or older were listed. ¹⁹Moses did exactly what the Lord commanded—Moses counted the people while they were in the Sinai desert.

²⁰They counted Reuben's family group. (Reuben was the firstborn* son of Israel.) The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²¹The total number of men counted from Reuben's family group was 46,500.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

group Or, "division." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

Deuel Or, "Reuel."

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

²²They counted Simeon's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²³The total number of men counted from Simeon's family group was 59,300.

²⁴They counted Gad's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁵The total number of men counted from Gad's family group was 45,650.

²⁶They counted Judah's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁷The total number of men counted from Judah's family group was 74,600.

²⁸They counted Issachar's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ²⁹The total number of men counted from Issachar's family group was 54,400.

³⁰They counted Zebulun's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³¹The total number of men counted from Zebulun's family group was 57,400.

³²They counted Ephraim's family group. (Ephraim was the son of Joseph.) The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³³The total number of men counted from Ephraim's family group was 40,500.

³⁴They counted Manasseh's family group. (Manasseh was also the son of Joseph.) The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁵The total number of men counted from Manasseh's family group was 32,200.

³⁶They counted Benjamin's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and

family groups. ³⁷The total number of men counted from Benjamin's family group was 35,400.

³⁸They counted Dan's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ³⁹The total number of men counted from Dan's family group was 62,700.

⁴⁰They counted Asher's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed with their families and family groups. ⁴¹The total number of men counted from Asher's family group was 41,500.

⁴²They counted Naphtali's family group. The names of all the men that were 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army were listed. They were listed by name with their families and family groups. ⁴³The total number of men counted from Naphtali's family group was 53,400.

⁴⁴Moses, Aaron, and the twelve leaders of Israel counted these men. (There was one leader from each family group.) ⁴⁵They counted every man that was 20 years old or older and able to serve in the army. Each man was listed with his family. ⁴⁶The total number of men counted was 603,550 men.

⁴⁷The families from the Levi family group were not counted with the other people of Israel. ⁴⁸The Lord had told Moses: ⁴⁹"Don't count the men from Levi's family group or include them with the other people of Israel. ⁵⁰Tell the people of Levi that they are responsible for the Holy Tent* of the Agreement. They must take care of that and all the things that are with it. They must carry the Holy Tent and everything in it. They must make their camp around it and take care of it. ⁵¹Any time that the Holy Tent is moved, the people of Levi must do it. Any time the Holy Tent is put in a place, the people of Levi must do it. They are the ones that care for the Holy Tent. If any other person that is not from Levi's

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

family group tries to care for the tent, he will be killed. "The people of Israel will make their camps in separate groups.* Each person should camp near his family flag. "But the people of Levi must make their camp around the Holy Tent. The people of Levi will guard the Holy Tent of the Agreement. They will protect the Holy Tent, so that nothing bad will happen to the people of Israel."

"So the people of Israel obeyed all the things that the Lord commanded Moses.

The Camp Arrangement

2 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "The people of Israel should make their camps around the Meeting Tent.* Each group* will have its own special flag, and each person should camp near his group's flag."

"The flag of the camp of Judah will be on the east side, where the sun rises. The people of Judah will camp near its flag. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab. "There are 74,600 men in his group.*

"Issachar's family group will camp next to Judah's family group. The leader of the people of Issachar is Nethanel son of Zuar. "There are 54,400 men in his group.*

"Zebulun's family group will also camp next to Judah's family group. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. "There are 57,400 men in his group.*

"There is a total of 186,400 men in Judah's camp. All these men are divided into their different family groups. Judah will be the first group to move when the people travel from one place to another.

"The flag of Reuben's camp will be south of the Holy Tent.* Each group will camp near its flag. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. "There are 46,500 people in this group.*

"Simeon's family group will camp next to Reuben's family group. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. "There are 59,300 people in this group.*

"Gad's family group will also camp next to the people of Reuben. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.* "There are 45,650 people in this group.*

"There are 151,450 men in all the groups* in Reuben's camp. Reuben's camp will be the second group to move when the people travel from place to place.

"When the people travel, Levi's camp will move next. The Meeting Tent* will be with them between the other camps. The people will make their camps in the same order that they move. Each person will be with his family flag.

"The flag of the Camp of Ephraim will be on the west side. The family groups* of Ephraim will camp there. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. "There are 40,500 people in this group.*

"Manasseh's family group will camp next to Ephraim's family. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. "There are 32,200 people in this group.*

"Benjamin's family group will also camp next to Ephraim's family. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Avidan son of Gideoni. "There are 35,400 people in this group.*

"There are 108,100 men in Ephraim's camp. They will be the third family to move when the people travel from one place to another.

"The flag of Dan's camp will be on the north side. The family groups* of Dan will camp there. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. "There are 62,700 people in this group.*

"The people from Asher's family group will camp next to Dan's family group. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Ocran. "There are 41,500 people in this group.*

group(s) Or, "division(s)." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

Deuel Or, "Reuel"

²⁹Naphtali's family group will also camp next to Dan's family group. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan.

³⁰There are 53,400 people in this group.*

³¹There are 157,600 men in Dan's camp. They will be the last family to move when the people travel from place to place. Each person will be with his family's flag.

³²So those were the people of Israel. They were counted by families. The total number of Israelites in the camps, counted by groups,* is 603,550. ³³Moses obeyed the Lord and did not count the Levites with the other people of Israel.

³⁴So the people of Israel did everything the Lord told Moses. Each group camped under its own flag. And each person stayed with his own family and family group.

Aaron's Family, the Priests

3 This is the family history of Aaron and Moses at the time the Lord talked to Moses on Mount Sinai.

¹Aaron had four sons. Nadab was the firstborn* son. Then there were Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²These sons were the chosen* priests.

These sons were given the special work of serving the Lord as priests. ³But Nadab and Abihu died because they sinned, while serving the Lord. They made an offering to the Lord but they used fire that the Lord did not allow. This happened in the Sinai desert. So Nadab and Abihu died there. They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar became priests and served the Lord. They did this during the time that their father Aaron was living.

Levites—the Priests' Helpers

¹The Lord said to Moses, ²"Bring all the people from Levi's family group. Bring them to

Aaron the priest. Those people will be Aaron's helpers. ³The Levites will help Aaron when he serves at the Meeting Tent.* And the Levites will help all the people of Israel when they come to worship at the Holy Tent.* ⁴The people of Israel should protect all the things in the Meeting Tent; it is their duty. But the Levites will serve the people of Israel by caring for these things. This will be their way of worshiping at the Holy Tent.

⁵"Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons. The Levites were chosen from all the people of Israel to help Aaron and his sons.

⁶"Appoint Aaron and his sons to be priests. They must do their duty and serve as priests. Any other person that tries to come near the holy things* must be killed."

⁷The Lord also said to Moses, ⁸"I told you that every family of Israel must give their firstborn* son to me,—but now I am choosing the Levites to serve me. They will be mine. So all the other people of Israel will not have to give their firstborn sons to me.

⁹"When you were in Egypt, I killed all the firstborn* children of the Egyptian people. At that time, I took all of the firstborn children of Israel to be mine. All of the firstborn children and all the firstborn animals are mine. But now I am giving your firstborn children back to you, and I am making the Levites mine. I am the Lord."

¹⁰The Lord again talked to Moses in the Sinai desert. The Lord said, ¹¹"Count all the families and family groups in Levi's family group. Count every man or boy that is a month old or older." ¹²So Moses obeyed the Lord. He counted them all.

¹³Levi had three sons. Their names were: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ¹⁴Each son was the leader of several family groups.

The Gershon family groups were: Libni and Shimei.

group(s) Or, "division(s)." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

chosen Or, "anointed." A special oil was poured on their heads to show they were chosen by God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

tries ... holy things Or, "tries to serve as a priest."

¹⁰The Kohath family groups were: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹¹The Merari family groups were: Mahli and Mushi.

Those are the families that belonged to Levi's family group.

¹²The families of Libni and Shimei belonged to the family of Gershon. They were the Gershonite family groups. ¹³There were 7,500 boys and men over the age of one month in these two family groups. ¹⁴The Gershonite family groups were told to camp in the west. They made their camp behind the Holy Tent.*

¹⁵The leader of the family groups of the Gershonite people was Eliasaph son of Lael. ¹⁶In the Meeting Tent,* the Gershonite people had the job of taking care of the Holy Tent, the outer tent, and the covering. They also took care of the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ¹⁷They cared for the curtain in the courtyard. And they cared for the curtain at the entrance of the courtyard. This courtyard was around the Holy Tent and the altar.* And they cared for the ropes and for everything that was used with the curtains.

¹⁸The families of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, belonged to the family of Kohath. They were the Kohathite family groups. ¹⁹In this family group there were 8,300* men and boys a month old or over. The Kohathite people were given the job of taking care of the things in the holy place. ²⁰The Kohathite family groups were given the area to the south of the Holy Tent.* This was the area where they camped. ²¹The leader of the Kohathite family groups was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. ²²Their job was to care for the Holy Box,* the table, the

lampstand, and the tools of the Holy Place.* They also cared for the curtain and all the things that were used with the curtain.

²³The leader over the leaders of the Levite people was Eleazar son of Aaron. (He was the priest.) Eleazar was in charge of all the people that cared for the holy things.

²⁴The family groups of Mahli and Mushi belonged to the Merari family. There were 6,200 men and boys that were one month old or older in the Mahli family group. ²⁵The leader of the Merari family group was Zuriel son of Abihail. This family group was given the area to the north of the Holy Tent.* This is the area where they camped. ²⁶The people from the Merari family were given the job of caring for the frames of the Holy Tent. They cared for all the braces, posts, bases, and everything that was used with the frames of the Holy Tent. ²⁷They also cared for all the posts in the courtyard around the Holy Tent. This included all the bases, tent pegs, and ropes.

²⁸Moses, Aaron, and his sons camped east of the Holy Tent,* in front of the Meeting Tent. They were given the work of caring for the Holy Place. They did this for all the people of Israel. Any other person that came near the Holy Place was to be killed.

²⁹The Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to count all the men and boys one month old or older in Levi's family group. The total number was 22,000.

Levites Take the Place of the Firstborn Sons

¹The Lord said to Moses, "Count all the firstborn* men and boys in Israel that are one month old or older. Make a list of their names. ²Now, I will not take all the firstborn* men and boys of Israel. Now I, the Lord, will take the Levites. I will also take the firstborn animals of the Levites instead of taking all the firstborn animals from the other people in Israel."

³So Moses did what the Lord commanded. Moses counted all the firstborn* children of the

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

8,300 Some copies of the ancient Greek version have "8,300." The Hebrew copies have "8,600." See Num. 3:22, 28, 34, 39.

Holy Box Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

people of Israel. "Moses listed all the firstborn men and boys that were one month old or older. There were 22,273 names on that list.

"The Lord also said to Moses, "I, the Lord, give this command: 'Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn* men from the other families of Israel. And I will take the animals of the Levites instead of the animals of the other people. The Levites are mine. "There are 22,000 Levites, but there are 22,273 firstborn sons from the other families. This leaves 273 more firstborn sons than Levites. "Using the official measure,* collect five shekels* of silver for each of the 273 people. (The shekel by the official measure weighs 20 gerahs. *) Collect that silver from the people of Israel. "Give that silver to Aaron and his sons. It is the payment for the 273 people of Israel."

"So Moses gathered the money for the 273 people. These are the 273 people that the Levite family group could not take the place of. "Moses collected the silver from the firstborn* men of the people of Israel. He collected 1,365 shekels* of silver, using the official measure. *) "Moses obeyed the Lord. Moses gave the silver to Aaron and his sons the way the Lord had commanded.

The Jobs of the Kohath Family

4 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Count the men in the families of the Kohath family group. (The Kohath family group is a part of Levi's family group.) "Count all the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men will work in the Meeting Tent.* "Their job is to care for the most holy things in the Meeting Tent.

"When the people of Israel travel to a new place, then Aaron and his sons must go into the

Meeting Tent* and take down the curtain and cover the Holy Box of the Agreement* with it. "Then they must cover all of this with covering made from fine leather.* Then they must spread the solid blue cloth over the leather and put the poles in the rings on the Holy Box. "

"Then they must spread a blue cloth over the holy table. Then they must put the plates, spoons, bowls, and the jars for drink offerings on the table. Also, put the special bread on the table. "Then you must put a red cloth over all of these things. Then cover everything with fine leather.* Then put the poles in the rings of the table. "

"Then they must cover the lampstand and its lamps with a blue cloth. They must also cover all the things used to keep the lamps burning and all the jars of oil that are used in the lamps. "Then wrap everything in fine leather.* Then they must put all these things on poles used for carrying them.

"They must spread a blue cloth over the golden altar.* They must cover that with fine leather.* Then they must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar. "

"Then they must gather together all the special things that are used for worship in the Holy Place.* They must gather those things together and wrap them in a blue cloth. Then they must cover that with fine leather.* They must put these things on a frame for carrying them.

"They must clean the ashes out of the bronze, altar* and spread a purple cloth over it. "Then they must gather together all the things that are used for worship at the altar. These are the fire pans, forks, shovels, and the bowls. They must put these things on the bronze, altar. Then they must spread a covering of fine leather* over the altar. They

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the standard of measure used in the tabernacle and the temple.

five shekels Or, "2 ounces."

gerah(s) A gerah is 1/20 of an ounce.

1,365 shekels Or, "35 pounds."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Holy Box of the Agreement Also called "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like the seal or sea cow.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

must put the poles for carrying it in the rings on the altar.

¹⁵"Aaron and his sons must finish covering all the holy things in the Holy Place.* Then the men from the Kohath family can go in and begin carrying those things. In this way, they can touch the Holy Place and not die.

¹⁶"Eleazar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for the Holy Tent.* He will be responsible for the Holy Place* and for everything in it. He will be responsible for the oil for the lamp, the sweet-smelling incense,* the daily offering,* and the anointing oil.**

¹⁷"The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "Be careful! Don't let these Kohathite men be destroyed. ¹⁸You must do these things so that the Kohathite men can go near the Most Holy Place* and not die. Aaron and his sons must go in and show each Kohathite man what to do. They must give each man the things he needs to carry. ¹⁹If you do not do this, then the Kohathite men might go in and look at the holy things. If they look at those things, even for a moment, then they must die."

The Jobs of the Gershon Family

²¹The Lord said to Moses, ²²"Count all the people of the Gershon family. List them by family and family group. ²³Count all the men that are from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men will have the job of caring for the Meeting Tent.*

²⁴"This is what the Gershonite family must do and the things they must carry: ²⁵They must carry the curtains of the Holy Tent,* the Meeting Tent, its covering, and the covering

made from fine leather.* They must also carry the curtain at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ²⁶They must carry the curtains of the courtyard that are around the Holy Tent and the altar.* And they must carry the curtain for the entrance of the courtyard. They must also carry all of the ropes and all the things that are used with the curtains. The Gershonite men will be responsible for anything that needs to be done with these things. ²⁷Aaron and his sons will watch all the work that is done. Everything the Gershonite people carry and the other work they do will be watched by Aaron and his sons. You must tell them all the things that they are responsible for carrying. ²⁸This is the work that the men of the Gershonite family group must do for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work."

The Jobs of the Merari Family

²⁹"Count all of the men in the families and family groups in the Merari family group. ³⁰Count all the men that are from 30 to 50 years old and served in the army. These men will do a special work for the Meeting Tent.* ³¹When you travel, it is their job to carry the frames of the Meeting Tent. They must carry the braces, the posts, and the bases. ³²They must also carry the posts that are around the courtyard. They must carry the bases, the tent pegs, the ropes, and everything that is used for the poles around the courtyard. List the names and tell each man exactly what he must carry. ³³These are the things that the people from the Merari family will do to serve in the work for the Meeting Tent. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest will be responsible for their work."

The Levite Families

³⁴Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the people of Israel counted the Kohathite people. They counted them by families and family groups. ³⁵They counted all the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army. These men

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

daily offering Offerings that were placed twice each day in the Holy Place as a gift to God.

anointing oil Olive oil that was poured on people or things to show they were chosen for a special work or purpose.

Most Holy Place The room inside the Holy Tent where the Holy Box was kept.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

fine leather A special kind of leather made from the skin of an animal like the seal or sea cow.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

were given special work to do for the Meeting Tent.*

*There were 2,750 men in the Kohath family group that were qualified to do this work. *So these men from the Kohath family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord had told Moses to do.

*Also, the Gershonite family group was counted. *All the men from 30 to 50 years old that served in the army were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* *There were 2,630 men in the families of the Gershon family group that were qualified. *So these men from the Gershon family group were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent. Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord had told Moses to do.

*Also, the men in the families and family groups of the Merari family were counted. *All the men from 30 to 50 years old that had served in the army were counted. These men were given their special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* *There were 3,200 men in the families of the Merari family group that were qualified. *So these men from the Merari family group were given their special work. Moses and Aaron did this the way the Lord told Moses to do.

*So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the people of Israel counted all the people in Levi's family group. They had counted each family and each family group. *All the men between the ages of 30 and 50 that served in the army were counted. These men were given a special work to do for the Meeting Tent.* They did the work of carrying the Meeting Tent when they traveled. *The total number was 8,580.

*So, each man was counted like the Lord commanded Moses. Each man was given his own work and told what he must carry. This was done like the Lord commanded.

Rules About Cleanliness

5 The Lord said to Moses, "I command the people of Israel to keep their camp free from sickness and disease. Tell the people to send away from the camp any person that has a bad skin disease.* Tell them to send away from the camp any person that has a discharge.* And tell them to send away from their camp any person that has touched a dead body. *It doesn't matter if that person is a man or a woman, send them away from your camp. Send them away so that they will not cause any more sickness and disease. I am living among you in your camp."

*So the people of Israel obeyed God's command. They sent those people outside the camp. They did this thing that the Lord had commanded to Moses.

Paying for Doing Wrong

*The Lord said to Moses, "Tell this to the people of Israel: A person might do something bad to another person. (When someone does bad things to other people, he is really sinning against God.) That person is guilty. *So that person must tell the people about the sin he has done. Then that person must fully pay for the wrong that he has done. And he must add one-fifth to the payment and pay it all to the person that he did wrong to. *But maybe the person he did wrong to is dead., And maybe that dead person doesn't have any close relatives to take the payment. In that case, the person that did wrong will give the payment to the Lord. That person will give the full payment to the priest. The priest must sacrifice the ram that makes people pure. This ram must be sacrificed to cover over the sins of the person that did wrong. But the priest can keep the rest of the payment.

*"If one of the people of Israel gives a special gift to God, then the priest that accepts that gift can keep it. It is his. *A person doesn't

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

bad skin disease Or, "leprosy." The Hebrew word includes many kinds of skin diseases.

discharge Fluid from a person's body, including pus from sores, a man's semen, or a woman's period flow.

have to give these special gifts. But if he gives them, then the gifts belong to the priest."

Suspicious Husbands

"Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell these things to the people of Israel: A man's wife might be unfaithful to him. "She might have sexual relations with another man and hide this from her husband. Her husband might never know about the wrong thing she did. There will be no one to tell him that she did this sin. And the woman will not tell her husband about her sin. "But the husband might begin to suspect that his wife sinned against him. He might become jealous. He might begin to believe that she is not pure and true to him. "If that happens, then he must take his wife to the priest. The husband must also take an offering. This offering will be 8 cups* of barley flour. He must not pour oil or incense* on the barley flour. This barley flour is a grain offering to the Lord. It is given because the husband is jealous. This offering will show that he believes that his wife has been unfaithful to him.

"The priest will take the woman, and the woman will stand before the Lord. "Then the priest will take some special water and put it in a clay jar. The priest will put some dirt from the floor of the Holy Tent into the water. "The priest will force the woman to stand before the Lord. Then he will loosen her hair and put the grain offering in her hand. This is the barley flour that was given for jealousy. At the same time, he will hold the clay jar of special water. This is the special water that brings trouble to the woman.

"Then the priest will tell the woman that she must not lie. She must promise to tell the truth. The priest will say to her: 'If you have not slept with another man, and if you have not sinned against your husband while you were married to him, then this water that causes trouble will not hurt you. "But if you have sinned against your husband—if you have slept

with a man that is not your husband—then you are not pure. "So, when you drink this special water, much trouble will come to you. You will not be able to have any children. And if you are pregnant, your baby will die.* Then your people will leave you, and they will say bad things about you. Then the priest must tell the woman to make a special promise to the Lord. The woman must agree that these bad things will happen to her if she lies. "The priest must say, 'You must drink this water that causes trouble. If you have sinned, you will not be able to have children and any baby you have will die before it is born.' Then the woman should say: 'I agree to do as you say.'

"The priest should write these warnings on a scroll.* Then he should wash the words off into the water. "Then the woman must drink the water that brings trouble. This water will enter her and, if she is guilty, it will cause her much suffering.

"Then the priest will take the grain offering from her (the offering for jealousy) and raise it before the Lord. Then he will bring it to the altar.* "The priest will fill his hands with some of the grain and put it on the altar. Then he will burn it there. After that, he will tell the woman to drink the water. "If the woman has sinned against her husband, then the water will bring trouble to her. The water will go into her body and cause her much suffering. Any baby that is in her will die before it is born, and she will never be able to have children. All the people will turn against her.* "But if the woman has not sinned against her husband and she is pure, then the priest will say that she is not guilty. Then she will be normal, able to have children.

"So this is the law about jealousy. This is what you should do when a woman sins against her husband while she is married to him. "Or if

You will ... die Literally, "Your loins will fall and your belly will swell."

scroll A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

All ... turn against her Literally, "She will be like a curse among the people."

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

the man becomes jealous and suspects his wife has sinned against him, then that is what the man should do. The priest must tell the woman to stand before the Lord. Then the priest will do all these things. This is the law. ³¹The husband will not be guilty of doing anything wrong. But the woman will suffer if she has sinned."

Nazirites

6 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Tell these things to the people of Israel: A man or a woman might want to separate from other people for a time. This time of separation allows a person to give himself totally to the Lord for a time. That person will be called a Nazirite.* ²During that time, that person must not drink any wine or other strong drink. The person must not drink vinegar that is made from wine or from other strong drink. That person must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. ³During that special time of separation, that person must not eat anything that comes from the grape. That person must not even eat the seeds or the skins from grapes.

⁴"During that time of separation, that person must not cut his hair. He must be holy until the time that his separation is ended. He must let his hair grow long. That person's hair is a special part of his promise to God. He will give that hair as a gift to God. So, that person must let his hair grow long until the time of separation is ended.

⁵"During his time of separation, a Nazirite* must not go near a dead body. Why? Because that person has given himself fully to the Lord. ⁶Even if his own father or mother or brother or sister dies, he must not touch them. This would make him unclean. He must show that he is separated and has given himself fully to God. ⁷During all of the time he is separated, he is giving himself fully to the Lord.

⁸"It might happen that the Nazirite* is with another person and that other person suddenly dies. If the Nazirite touches this dead man, the

Nazirite will become unclean.* If that happens, then the Nazirite must shave the hair from his head. (That hair was part of his special promise.) He must cut his hair on the seventh day, because on that day he is made clean.* ⁹Then on the eighth day, that Nazirite must bring two doves and two young pigeons to the priest. He must give them to the priest at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ¹⁰Then the priest will offer one as a sin offering. He will offer the other as a burnt offering. This burnt offering will be a payment for the sin that the person did. (He sinned because he was near a dead body.) At that time, the person will again promise to give the hair on his head as a gift to God. ¹¹This means that person must again give himself to the Lord for another time of separation. That person must bring a male lamb that is a year old. He will give this as a guilt offering. All of the days that he was separated are forgotten. The man must start over with a new time of separation. This must be done because he touched a dead body during his first time of separation.

¹²"After the man's time of separation is ended, then this is what he must do: He must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ¹³There he must give his offering to the Lord. His offering must be:

- A one-year-old male lamb with nothing wrong with it for a burnt offering;
- A one-year-old female lamb with nothing wrong with it for a sin offering;
- One ram with nothing wrong with it for a fellowship offering;
- ¹⁵ A basket of bread made without yeast (cakes made with fine flour mixed with oil).
- Oil must be spread on these cakes.
- The grain offerings and drink offerings that are a part of these gifts.

¹⁶"Then the priest will give these things to the Lord. The priest will make the sin offering

Nazirite A person that has made a special promise to God.

The name is from a Hebrew word meaning, "to separate from."

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

and the burnt offering. ¹⁷The priest will give the basket of bread without yeast to the Lord. Then he will kill the ram as a fellowship offering to the Lord. He will give it to the Lord with the grain offering and the drink offering.

¹⁸"The Nazirite* must go to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* There he must shave off his hair that he grew for the Lord. That hair will be put in the fire that is burning under the sacrifice of the fellowship offering.

¹⁹"After the Nazirite* has cut off his hair, then the priest will give him a boiled shoulder from the ram and a large and a small cake from the basket. Both of these cakes are made without yeast. ²⁰Then the priest will wave these things before the Lord. This is a wave offering. These things are holy and belong to the priest. Also, the breast and the thigh from the ram are waved before the Lord. These things also belong to the priest. After that, the Nazirite man can drink wine.

²¹"If a person decides to make the Nazirite* separation, then he must give all of those gifts to the Lord. That is the law of the Nazirite promise. But a person might be able to give much more to the Lord. If that person promised to do more, then he must keep his promise. That is also the law of the Nazirite promise."

The Priests' Blessings

²²The Lord said to Moses, ²³"Tell Aaron and his sons that this is how they should bless the people of Israel. They should say:

²⁴ May the Lord bless you and keep you.

²⁵ May the Lord be good to you*
and show you his kindness.

²⁶ May the Lord answer your prayers*
and give you peace."

Nazirite A person that has made a special promise to God. The name is from a Hebrew word meaning, "to separate from."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

May ... you Literally, "May the Lord make his face shine on you."

May ... prayers Literally, "May the Lord lift his face to you."

²⁷Then the Lord said, "In that way, Aaron and his sons will use my name to give a blessing to the people of Israel. And I will bless them and do the things they ask."

Dedicating the Holy Tent

7 Moses finished setting up the Holy Tent.* On that day, he dedicated it to the Lord. Moses anointed* the Tent and on all the things in it. Moses also anointed the altar* and on all the things used with it. This showed these things should be used only for worshiping the Lord.

²Then the leaders of Israel made offerings. These men were the heads of their families and leaders of their family group. These were the same men that were in charge of counting the people. ³These leaders brought gifts to the Lord. They brought six covered wagons and twelve cows for pulling the wagons. (One cow was given by each leader. Each leader joined with another leader to give one wagon.) The leaders gave these things to the Lord at the Holy Tent.

⁴The Lord said to Moses, ⁵"Accept these gifts from the leaders. These gifts can be used in the work of the Meeting Tent.* Give these things to the Levite men. This will help them do their work."

⁶So Moses accepted the wagons and the cows. He gave these things to the Levite men. ⁷He gave two carts and four cows to the men in Gershon's group. They needed the wagons and the cows for their work. ⁸Then Moses gave four wagons and eight cows to the men in Merari's group. They needed the wagons and cows for their work. Ithamar son of Aaron the priest was responsible for the work of all these men. ⁹Moses did not give any cows or wagons to the men in Kohath's group. These men must carry the holy things on their shoulders. This was the work they were given to do.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

anoint To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

¹⁰Moses anointed* the altar.* That same day, the leaders brought their offerings for dedicating the altar. They gave their offerings to the Lord at the altar. ¹¹The Lord told Moses, "Each day one leader must bring his gift for dedicating the altar."

¹²⁻¹³* Each of the twelve leaders brought his gifts. These are the gifts:—

Each leader brought one silver plate that weighed $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds.* Each leader brought one silver bowl that weighed $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds.* Both of these gifts were weighed by the official measure.* The bowl and the plate were each filled with fine flour mixed with oil. This was to be used as a grain offering. Each leader also brought a large gold spoon that weighed about 4 ounces.* The spoon was filled with incense.*

Each leader also brought 1 young bull, 1 ram, and 1 male lamb a year old. These animals were for a burnt offering. Each leader also brought 1 male goat to be used as a sin offering. Each leader brought 2 cows, 5 rams, 5 male goats, and 5 male lambs a year old. All of these things were sacrificed for a fellowship offering.

On the first day, the leader of Judah's family group, Nahshon son of Amminadab brought his gifts.

On the second day, the leader of Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar brought his gifts.

On the third day, the leader of the people of Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon brought his gifts.

On the fourth day, the leader of the people of Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur brought his gifts.

On the fifth day, the leader of the people of Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai brought his gifts.

On the sixth day, the leader of the people of Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel* brought his gifts.

On the seventh day, the leader of the people of Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud brought his gifts.

On the eighth day, the leader of the people of Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur brought his gifts.

On the ninth day, the leader of the people of Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideon brought his gifts.

On the tenth day, the leader of the people of Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai brought his gifts.

On the eleventh day, the leader of the people of Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran brought his gifts.

On the twelfth day, the leader of the people of Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan brought his gifts.

¹⁴So all those things were the gifts from the leaders of the people of Israel. They brought those things during the time that Moses dedicated the altar* by anointing* it. They brought 12 silver plates, 12 silver bowls, and 12 gold spoons. ¹⁵Each silver plate weighed about $3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds.* And each bowl weighed about $1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds.* The silver plates and the silver bowls together all weighed about 60 pounds,* using the official measure.* ¹⁶The 12 gold spoons filled with incense* weighed 4 ounces* each, using the official measure. The 12 gold spoons all together weighed about 3 pounds.*

¹⁷The total number of animals for the burnt offering was 12 bulls, 12 rams, and 12 male lambs that were one year old. There were also the grain offerings that must be given with those offerings. And there were 12 male goats that were used for a sin offering to the Lord.

¹⁸The leaders also gave animals to be killed and used as a fellowship offering. The total number

anoint To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Verses 12-83 In the Hebrew text each leader's gift is listed separately. But the text is the same for each gift, so it has been merged for easier reading.

$3\frac{1}{4}$ pounds Or, "130 shekels."

$1\frac{3}{4}$ pounds Or, "70 shekels."

official measure Literally, "holy shekel," the standard of measure used in the tabernacle and the temple.

4 ounces Or, "10 shekels."

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Deuel Or, "Reuel."

60 pounds Or, "2,400 shekels."

3 pounds Or, "120 shekels."

of these animals was 24 bulls, 60 rams, 60 male goats, and 60 male lambs that were one year old. In this way, they dedicated the altar after Moses anointed* it.

Moses went into the Meeting Tent to speak to the Lord. At that time, he heard the Lord's voice speaking to him. The voice was coming from the area between the two Cherub angels on the special cover* on top of the Box of the Agreement.* This was the way, God spoke to Moses.

The Lampstand

8 The Lord said to Moses, "Tell Aaron to put the seven lamps in the place I showed you. Those lamps should light the area in front of the lampstand."

*Aaron did this. Aaron put the lamps in the right place and faced them so that they lighted the area in front of the lampstand. He obeyed the command that the Lord gave Moses. The lampstand was made from hammered gold. The gold started at the base and went up to the golden flowers. It was made just like the Lord showed Moses.

Dedicating the Levites

The Lord said to Moses, "Separate the Levite people from the other people of Israel. Make those Levite people clean." This is what you should do to make them pure. Sprinkle the special water from the sin offering* on them. This water will make them pure. Then they must shave their bodies and wash their clothes. This will make their bodies clean.

anoint To pour olive oil on people or things to show they are chosen for a special work or purpose.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

cover Also called "mercy seat." The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "place where sins are forgiven."

Box ... Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

water ... offering In this water were the ashes from the red cow that had been burnt on the altar as a sin offering.

"The Levite men must take a young bull and the grain offering that must be offered with it. This grain offering will be flour mixed with oil. Then take another young bull for a sin offering. *Bring the Levite people to the area in front of the Meeting Tent.* Then bring all the people of Israel together at that place. *Bring the Levite people before the Lord. The people of Israel will put their hands on them.* *Then Aaron will give the Levite people to the Lord—they will be like an offering to God. In this way, the Levite people will be ready to do their special work for the Lord.

"Tell the Levite people to put their hands on the heads of the bulls. One bull will be a sin offering to the Lord. The other bull will be used as a burnt offering to the Lord. These offerings will make the Levite people pure.* *Tell the Levite people to stand in front of Aaron and his sons. Then give the Levite men to the Lord. They will be like a wave offering. *This will make the Levite people holy—it will show that they will be used in a special way for God. They will be different than the other people of Israel. The Levite people will belong to me.

"So make the Levite people pure.* And give them to the Lord. They will be like a wave offering. After you do this they can come and do their work at the Meeting Tent.* *The Israelite people will give me the Levites. They will belong to me. In the past, I told every Israelite family to give me their firstborn* son. But now I am taking the Levite people in place of those firstborn sons from the other families in Israel. *Every firstborn male in Israel is mine. It doesn't matter if it is a man or animal, it is still mine. Why? Because I killed all the firstborn children and animals in Egypt. And I chose to take the firstborn sons to belong to me. *But now I will take the Levite people in their place. I will take the Levite people in place of all the firstborn sons from the other families in

put their hands on them This showed the people shared in appointing the Levite people to their special work.

make ... pure Literally, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

firstborn The first child born into a family. In ancient times, the firstborn son was very important.

Israel. ¹⁹I chose the Levite people from among all the people of Israel. And I give them as gifts to Aaron and his sons. I want them to do the work at the Meeting Tent. They will serve for all the people of Israel. They will help make the sacrifices that make the people of Israel pure. Then no great sickness or trouble will come to the people of Israel when they come near the holy place."

²⁰So Moses, Aaron, and all the people of Israel obeyed the Lord. They did with the Levite people everything that the Lord commanded Moses. ²¹The Levites washed themselves and their clothes. Then Aaron gave them to the Lord like wave offerings. Aaron gave the offerings that covered their sins and made them pure. ²²After that, the Levite people came to the Meeting Tent* to do their work. Aaron and his sons watched them. They were responsible for the work of the Levite people. Aaron and his sons did the things that the Lord told Moses.

²³Then the Lord said to Moses, ²⁴"This is a special command for the Levite people: Every Levite man that is 25 years old or older must come and share in the work at the Meeting Tent.* ²⁵But when a man is 50 years old, he must retire from this work. He will not need to work again. ²⁶Those men 50 years old or older can help their brothers with their work at the Meeting Tent. But those men must not do the work themselves. You must do these things when you choose Levite men to do their work."

Passover

9 The Lord spoke to Moses in the Sinai desert. This was during the first month of the second year after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Tell the people of Israel to celebrate Passover at the chosen time—²they must eat the Passover* meal at twilight* on the 14th day of this month. They

must do this at the chosen time, and they must follow all the rules about Passover."

³So Moses told the people of Israel to celebrate Passover.* ⁴The people did this in the Sinai desert at twilight* on the 14th day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just like the Lord commanded Moses.

⁵But some of the people could not celebrate Passover* that day. They were unclean* because they had touched a dead body. So they went to Moses and Aaron that day. ⁶Those people said to Moses, "We touched a person's dead body and became unclean. The priests stopped us from giving gifts to the Lord at the chosen time. So we can't celebrate Passover, with the other people of Israel! What should we do?"

⁷Moses said to them, "I will ask the Lord what he says about this."

⁸Then the Lord said to Moses, ⁹"Tell these things to the people of Israel: This rule will be for you and your descendants.* Maybe a person is not able to celebrate Passover* at the right time. Maybe that person is unclean* because he touched a dead body. Or maybe that person was away on a trip. ¹⁰That person will still be able to celebrate Passover (at another time). That person must celebrate Passover at twilight* on the 14th day of the second month. At that time, he must eat the lamb, the bread made without yeast, and the bitter herbs. ¹¹That person must not leave any of that food until the next morning. And that person must not break any of the bones of the lamb. That person must follow all the rules about Passover. ¹²But any person that is able must celebrate Passover at the right time. If he is clean* and he is not away on a trip, then he has no excuse. If that person does not celebrate Passover at the right time, then he must be separated from his people. He is guilty and must be punished! Why? Because he did not give the Lord his gift at the right time.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every spring to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

¹⁴"A foreigner living among you might want to share in the Lord's Passover* with you. This is allowed, but that person must follow all the rules about Passover. The same rules are for everyone."

The Cloud and the Fire

¹⁵"On the day the Holy Tent,* the Tent of the Agreement, was set up, the Lord's cloud covered it. At night, the cloud over the Holy Tent looked like fire. ¹⁶"The cloud stayed over the Holy Tent all the time. And at night the cloud looked like fire. ¹⁷"When the cloud moved from its place over the Holy Tent, the Israelites followed it. When the cloud stopped, that is the place where the people of Israel camped. ¹⁸"This was the way the Lord showed the people of Israel when to move and when to stop and set up camp. While the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent, the people continued to camp in that same place. ¹⁹"Sometimes the cloud would stay over the Holy Tent for a long time. The Israelites obeyed the Lord and did not move. ²⁰"Sometimes the cloud was over the Holy Tent for only a few days. So the people obeyed the Lord's command—they followed the cloud when it moved. ²¹"Sometimes the cloud stayed only during the night—the next morning the cloud moved. So the people gathered their things and followed it. If the cloud moved, during the day or during the night, then the people followed it. ²²"If the cloud stayed over the Holy Tent for two days, or a month, or a year, the people continued to obey the Lord. They stayed at that place and did not leave until the cloud moved. Then when the cloud rose from its place and moved, the people also moved. ²³"So the people obeyed the Lord's command. They camped where the Lord showed them. And when the Lord commanded them to leave, the people left, following the cloud. The people watched carefully and obeyed the Lord's commands to Moses.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every spring to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

The Silver Trumpets

10 The Lord said to Moses: ¹"Make two trumpets. Use silver and hammer it to make the trumpets. These trumpets will be for calling the people together and for telling them when it is time to move the camp. ²If you blow long blasts on both trumpets, then all the people must meet together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* ³But if you blow long blasts on only one trumpet, then only the leaders will come to meet with you. (These are the leaders of the twelve family groups of Israel.)

⁴"Short blasts on the trumpets will be the way to tell the people to move the camp. The first time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the family groups camping on the east side of the Meeting Tent, must begin to move. ⁵The second time you blow a short blast on the trumpets, the family groups camping on the south side of the Meeting Tent, will begin to move. ⁶But if you want to gather the people together for a special meeting, then blow the trumpets in a different way—blow a long steady blast on the trumpets. ⁷Only Aaron's sons, the priests, should blow the trumpets. This is a law for you that will continue forever, for generations to come.

⁸"If you are fighting an enemy in your own land, then blow loudly on the trumpets before you go to fight them. The Lord your God will hear you, and he will save you from your enemies. ⁹Also you should blow these trumpets for your special meetings, new moon days, and all your happy times together. Blow the trumpets when you give your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. This will be a special way for the Lord your God to remember you. I command you to do this; I am the Lord your God."

The People of Israel Move Their Camp

¹"On the 20th day of the second month of the second year after the people of Israel left Egypt, the cloud rose from above the Tent of

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

the Agreement.* ¹²So the people of Israel began their journeys. They left the Sinai desert and traveled until the cloud stopped in the desert of Paran. ¹³This was the first time the people moved their camp. They moved it the way the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁴The three groups* from Judah's camp went first. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Judah's family group. Nahshon son of Amminadab was the commander of that group. ¹⁵Next came Issachar's family group. Nethanel son of Zuar was the commander of that group. ¹⁶And then came Zebulun's family group. Eliab son of Helon was the commander of that group.

¹⁷Then the Holy Tent* was taken down. And the men from the Gershon and the Merari families carried the Holy Tent. So the people from these families were next in line.

¹⁸Then came the three groups* from Reuben's camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Reuben's family group. Elizur son of Shedeur was the commander of that group. ¹⁹Next came Simeon's family group. Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was the commander of that group. ²⁰And then came Gad's family group. Eliasaph son of Deuel* was the commander of that group. ²¹Then came the people from the Kohath family. They carried the holy things from inside the Holy Place. These people came at this time so that the other people could set up the Holy Tent* and make it ready at the new camp, before these people arrived.

²²Next came the three groups from Ephraim's camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Ephraim's family group. Elishama son of Ammihud was the commander of that group. ²³Next came Manasseh's family group. Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was the commander of that group.

²⁴Then came Benjamin's family group. Abidan son of Gideoni was the commander of that group.

²⁵The last three family groups in the line were the rear guard for all the other family groups. These were the groups from Dan's camp. They traveled under their flag. The first group was Dan's family group. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was their commander. ²⁶Next came Asher's family group. Pagiel son of Ocran was the commander of that group. ²⁷Then came Naphtali's family group. Ahira son of Enan was the commander of that group. ²⁸That was the way the people of Israel marched when they moved from place to place.

²⁹Hobab was the son of Reuel, the Midianite. (Reuel was Moses' father-in-law.) Moses said to Hobab, "We are traveling to the land that God promised to give to us. Come with us and we will be good to you. The Lord has promised good things to the people of Israel."

³⁰But Hobab answered, "No, I will not go with you. I will go back to my homeland and to my own people."

³¹Then Moses said, "Please don't leave us. You know more about the desert than we do. You can be our guide. ³²If you come with us, then we will share with you all the good things that the Lord gives us."

³³So Hobab agreed, and they began traveling from the mountain of the Lord. The priests took the Box of the Lord's Agreement* and walked in front of the people. They carried the Holy Box for three days, looking for a place to camp. ³⁴The Lord's cloud was over them every day. And when they left their camp every morning, the cloud was there to lead them.

³⁵When the people lifted the Holy Box to move the camp, Moses always said,

"Get up, Lord!

May your enemies run away in all

Tent of the Agreement The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the Box of the Agreement was kept.

groups Or, "divisions." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

Deuel Or, "Reuel."

Box of the Lord's Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the Holy Box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

directions.

May all your enemies run away from you."

*And when the Holy Box was put in its place, Moses always said,

"Come back, Lord,
to the millions of people of Israel."

The People Complain Again

11 The people started complaining about their troubles. The Lord heard their complaints. The Lord heard these things and became angry. Fire from the Lord burned among the people. The fire burned some of the areas at the edge of the camp. ²So the people cried to Moses for help. Moses prayed to the Lord and the fire stopped burning. ³So that place was called Taberah.* The people gave the place that name because the Lord caused a fire to burn in their camp.

The 70 Older Leaders

⁴The foreigners that had joined the people of Israel began wanting other things to eat. Soon all the people of Israel began complaining again. The people said, "We want to eat meat! ⁵We remember the fish we ate in Egypt. That fish cost us nothing. We also had good vegetables like cucumbers, melons, chives, onions, and garlic. ⁶But now we have lost our strength. We never eat anything—only this manna!" ⁷(The manna was like small coriander seeds, and it looked like gum from a tree. ⁸The people gathered the manna. Then they used rocks to crush it and cooked it in a pot. Or they ground it into a flour and made thin cakes with it. The cakes tasted like sweet cakes cooked with olive oil. ⁹The manna fell on the ground each night when the ground became wet with dew.)

¹⁰Moses heard the people complaining. People from every family were sitting by their tents and complaining. The Lord became very angry, and this made Moses very upset.

"Moses asked the Lord, "Lord, why did you bring this trouble on me? I am your servant. What did I do wrong? What did I do to upset you? Why did you give me responsibility over all these people? ¹¹You know that I am not the father of all these people. You know that I did not give birth to them. But I must take care of them, like a nurse carrying a baby in her arms. Why do you force me to do this? Why do you force me to carry them to the land that you promised to our fathers? ¹²I don't have enough meat for all these people! And they continue complaining to me. They say, 'Give us meat to eat!' ¹³I cannot care for all these people alone. The burden is too heavy for me. ¹⁴If you plan to continue giving me their troubles, then kill me now. If you accept me as your servant, then let me die now. Then I will be finished with all my troubles!"

¹⁵The Lord said to Moses, "Bring to me 70 of the elders of Israel. These men are the leaders among the people. Bring them to the Meeting Tent.* Let them stand there with you. ¹⁶Then I will come down and speak with you there. The Spirit* is on you now. But I will also give some of that Spirit* to them. Then they will help you care for the people. In this way, you will not have to be responsible for these people alone.

¹⁷"Tell these things to the people: Make yourselves ready for tomorrow. Tomorrow you will eat meat. The Lord heard you when you cried. The Lord heard your words when you said, 'We need meat to eat! It was better for us in Egypt!' So now the Lord will give you meat. And you will eat it. ¹⁸You will eat it for more than one, or two, or five, or ten, or even twenty days! ¹⁹You will eat that meat for a whole month. You will eat the meat until you are sick of it. This will happen to you because you complained against the Lord. The Lord lives among you and knows what you need. But you cried and complained to him! You said, 'Why did we ever leave Egypt?'"

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Spirit Or, "spirit."

Taberah This name means "burning."

¹"Moses said, "Lord, there are 600,000 men walking around here. And you say, 'I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month!'"

²"If we were to kill all of the sheep and cattle, then that would still not be enough to feed this many people for a month. And if we caught all the fish in the sea, it would not be enough for them!"

³"But the Lord said to Moses, "Don't limit the power of the Lord! You will see that I can do the things I say I can do."

⁴"So Moses went out to speak with the people. Moses told them what the Lord said. Then Moses gathered 70 of the elders (*leaders*) together. Moses told them to stand around the Tent. ⁵Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to Moses. The Spirit* was on Moses. The Lord put that same Spirit on the 70 elders (*leaders*). After the Spirit came down on them, they began to prophesy.* But that was the only time these men ever did this.

⁶Two of the elders, Eldad and Medad, did not go out to the Tent. Their names were on the list of elders (*leaders*), but they stayed in camp. But the Spirit also came on them, and they began prophesying* in camp. ⁷A young man ran and told Moses. The man said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in camp."

⁸Joshua son of Nun said to Moses, "Moses, sir, you must stop them!" (Joshua had been Moses' helper since Joshua was a young boy.)

⁹"But Moses answered, "Are you afraid the people will think that I am not the leader now? I wish that all the Lord's people were able to prophesy. I wish that the Lord would put his Spirit* on all of them!" ¹⁰Then Moses and the leaders of Israel went back to the camp.

The Quails Come

¹"Then the Lord made a powerful wind to blow in from the sea. The wind blew quail* into that area. The quail flew all around the camp. There were so many quail that the

ground was covered. The quail were about three feet deep on the ground. There were quail in every direction as far as a man can walk in one day. ²The people went crazy! They went out and gathered quail all that day and all that night. And they gathered quail all the next day too! The smallest amount any person gathered was 60 bushels. Then the people spread the quail meat all around the camp to dry in the sun.

³People began to eat the meat, but the Lord became very angry. While the meat was still in their mouth, before the people could finish eating it, the Lord caused the people to become very sick. Many people died and were buried in that place. ⁴So the people named that place Kibroth Hattaavah.* They gave the place that name because that is the place they buried the people that had the strong desire for meat.

⁵From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Complain About Moses

12 Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses. They criticized him because he married an Ethiopian* woman. They thought that it was not right for Moses to marry an Ethiopian woman. ²They said to themselves, "The Lord used Moses to speak to the people. But Moses is not the only one. The Lord also spoke through us!"

The Lord heard this. ³(Moses was a very humble man. He did not boast or brag. He was more humble than any other person on earth.) ⁴So, suddenly, the Lord came and spoke to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. The Lord said, "You three, come to the Meeting Tent,* now!"

So Moses, Aaron, and Miriam went to the Tent. ⁵The Lord came down in the tall cloud and stood at the entrance to the Tent. The Lord called out, "Aaron and Miriam!" Aaron and Miriam went to him. ⁶God said, "Listen to me!

Spirit Or, "spirit."

prophesy Usually this means "to speak for God." But here it might mean that God's Spirit took control of these men in some special way.

quail A kind of bird.

Kibroth Hattaavah This name means "Graves of Strong Desire."

Ethiopian Or, "Cushite," a person from Ethiopia, in Africa.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

You will have prophets. * I, the Lord, will show myself to them in visions. * I will speak to them in dreams. 'But Moses is not like that. Moses is my faithful servant—I trust him with my whole house (*family*)! 'When I speak to him, I talk face to face with him. I don't use stories with hidden meanings—I show him clearly the things I want him to know. And Moses can look at the very image of the Lord. So why were you brave enough to speak against my servant Moses?"

'The Lord was very angry at them. The Lord left them. "The cloud rose from the Tent. Aaron turned and looked at Miriam. Her skin was white like snow—she had a terrible skin disease!"

"Then Aaron said to Moses, "Please, sir, forgive us for the foolish sin that we did. "Don't let her lose her skin like a baby that is born dead." (Sometimes a baby will be born like that, with half of its skin eaten away.)

"So Moses prayed to the Lord, "God, please heal her from this sickness!"

"The Lord answered Moses, "If her father spit in her face, then she would be shamed for seven days. So put her outside the camp for seven days. After that time, she will become well. Then she can come back into the camp."

"So they took Miriam outside the camp for seven days. And the people did not move from that place until she was brought in again. "After that, the people left Hazeroth and traveled to the desert of Paran. The people camped in that desert.

The Spies Go to Canaan

13 The Lord said to Moses, "Send some men to explore the land of Canaan. This is the land that I will give to the people of Israel. Send one leader from each of the twelve family groups."

'So Moses obeyed the Lord's command. Moses sent out these leaders while the people were camped in the desert of Paran. "These are the names of those leaders:

from Reuben's family group—Shammua son of Zaccur;

³ from Simeon's family group—Shaphat son of Hori;

⁶ from Judah's family group—Caleb son of Jephunneh;

⁷ from Issachar's family group—Igal son of Joseph;

⁸ from Ephraim's family group—Hoshea* son of Nun;

⁹ from Benjamin's family group—Palti son of Raphu;

¹⁰ from Zebulun's family group—Gaddiel son of Sodi;

¹¹ from Joseph's family group (Manassah)—Gaddi son of Susi;

¹² from Dan's family group—Ammiel son of Gemalli;

¹³ from Asher's family group—Sethur son of Michael;

¹⁴ from Naphtali's family group—Nahbi son of Vophsi;

¹⁵ from Gad's family group—Geuel son of Maki.

"Those are the names of the men that Moses sent to look at and study the land. (Moses called Hoshea son of Nun by another name. Moses called him Joshua.)

"When Moses was sending them out to explore Canaan, he said, "Go through the Negev* and then into the hill country. "See what the land looks like. Learn about the people that live there. Are they strong or are they weak? Are they few or are they many? "Learn about the land that they live in. Is it good land or bad land? What kind of towns do they live in? Do the towns have walls protecting them? Are the towns strongly defended? "And learn other things about the land. Is the dirt good for growing things, or is it poor soil? Are there trees on the land? Also, try to bring back some of the fruit from that land." (This was during the time when the first grapes should be ripe.)

prophet(s) A person called by God to be a special servant.

God gave them messages to tell the people.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Hoshea Or, "Joshua."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

¹¹So they went to explore the country. They explored the area from the Zin desert to Rehob and Lebo Hamath. ¹²They entered the country through the Negev* and went to Hebron. (The town of Hebron was built seven years before the town of Zoan in Egypt.) Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmi lived there. These men were descendants* of Anak. ¹³Then the men went to Eshcol Valley. There, the men cut off a branch from a grapevine. The branch had a bunch of grapes on it. They put that branch on a pole. And two men carried it between them. They also carried some pomegranates,* and figs. ¹⁴That place is called the Eshcol* Valley, because that is the place where the men of Israel cut off the bunch of grapes.

¹⁵The men explored that country for 40 days. Then they went back to the camp. ¹⁶The people of Israel were camped near Kadesh, in the desert of Paran. The men went to Moses and Aaron and all the Israelite people. The men told Moses, Aaron, and all the people about the things they saw. And they showed them the fruit from the land. ¹⁷The men told Moses, "We went to the land where you sent us. It is a land filled with many good things!¹ Here is some of the fruit that grows there. ¹⁸But the people living there are very powerful. The cities are very large. The cities are strongly defended. We even saw some Anakite* people there. ¹⁹The Amalekite people live in the Negev.* The Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites live in the hill country. The Canaanites live near the sea and by the Jordan River."

²⁰Caleb told the people near Moses to be quiet. Then Caleb said, "We should go up and take that land for ourselves. We can easily take that land."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

pomegranates A red fruit with many small seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Eshcol This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "a bunch of grapes."

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

Anakite These people were famous for being big, powerful fighters.

²¹But the men that had gone with him said, "We can't fight those people! They are much stronger than we are." ²²And those men told all the people of Israel that they were not strong enough to defeat the people in that land. They said, "The land we saw is full of strong people. Those people are strong enough to easily defeat any person that goes there." ²³We saw the giant Nephilim* people there! (The descendants* of Anak come from the Nephilim people.) They looked at us like we were little grasshoppers. Yes, we were like grasshoppers to them!"

The People Complain Again

14 That night all the people in the camp began yelling loudly. ²The people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. All the people came together and said to Moses and Aaron, "We should have died in Egypt or in the desert. That would have been better than being killed in this new land." ³Did the Lord bring us to this new land to be killed in war? The enemy will kill us and take our wives and children! It would be better for us to go back to Egypt."

⁴Then the people said to each other, "Let's choose another leader and go back to Egypt."

⁵Moses and Aaron bowed low to the ground in front of all the people gathered there. ⁶Joshua and Caleb became very upset. (Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephuneh were two of the men that explored the land.) ⁷These two men said to all of the people of Israel gathered there, "The land that we saw is very good. ⁸It is a land filled with many good things.* And if the Lord is pleased with us, then he will lead us into that land. And the Lord will give that land to us! ⁹So don't turn against the Lord! Don't be afraid of the people in that land. We can defeat them. They have no protection, nothing to keep them safe. But we have the Lord with us. So don't be afraid!"

¹⁰All of the people began talking about killing Joshua and Caleb with stones. But the

Nephilim A famous family of tall and powerful fighting men. See Gen. 6:2-4.

Glory of the Lord* appeared over the Meeting Tent* where all the people could see it. "The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "How long will these people continue to turn against me? They show that they don't trust me. They show that they don't believe in my power. They refuse to believe me, even after I have shown them many powerful signs. I have done many great things among them. "I will kill them all with a terrible sickness. I will destroy them, and I will use you to make another nation. And your nation will be greater and stronger than these people."

¹³Then Moses said to the Lord, "If you do that, the Egyptians will hear about it! They know that you used your great power to bring your people out of Egypt. "And the people of Egypt told the people in Canaan about it. They already know you are the Lord. They know that you are with your people. They know that the people saw you. Those people know about the special cloud. They know you use the cloud to lead your people during the day. And they know the cloud becomes a fire to lead your people at night. "So you must not kill these people now. If you kill them, then all the nations that have heard about your power will say, "The Lord was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them. So the Lord killed them in the desert."

¹⁴"So now, Master, show your strength! Show it the way you said you would! "You said, "The Lord is slow to become angry. The Lord is full of great love. The Lord forgives* people that are guilty and break the law. But the Lord always punishes people that are guilty. The Lord punishes those people, and he also punishes their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren for those bad things!"* ¹⁵Now, show your great love to these people. Forgive their sin. Forgive them the

same way you have been forgiving them since the time they left Egypt until now."

¹⁶The Lord answered, "Yes, I will forgive the people like you asked. "But, I tell you the truth. As surely as I live and as surely as my power fills the whole earth, I make you this promise! "None of the people that I led out of Egypt will ever see the land of Canaan. Those people saw my glory and the great signs that I did in Egypt. And they saw the great things that I did in the desert. But they disobeyed me and tested me ten times. "I made a promise to their ancestors.* I promised that I would give them that land. But none of these people that turned against me will ever enter that land! "But my servant Caleb was different. He follows me completely. So I will bring him into the land that he has already seen. And his people will get that land. "The Amalekite and the Canaanite people are living in the valley. So tomorrow you must leave this place. Go back to the desert on the road to the Red Sea."

The Lord Punishes the People

¹The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²"How long will these bad people continue to complain against me? I have heard their complaints and their griping. "So tell them, "The Lord says that he will surely do all those things to you that you complained about. This is what will happen to you: "You will die in this desert. Every one of you people that is 20 years old or older and was counted as one of my people will die. You complained against me, the Lord. "So none of you will ever enter and live in the land that I promised to give you. Only Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun will enter that land. "You were afraid and complained that your enemies in that new land would take your children away from you. But I tell you that I will bring those children into the land. They will enjoy the things that you refused to accept. "As for you people, you will die in this desert.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. Here this might be a bright shining light, or it might be the tall cloud.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Forgives Or, "spares."

But the Lord ... bad things Or, "The Lord credits the guilt of the fathers to their children and grandchildren, to the third and fourth generation."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

¹³"Your children will be shepherds here in the desert for 40 years. They will suffer because you were not faithful to me. They must suffer until all of you lie dead in the desert. ¹⁴For 40 years you will suffer for your sins. (That is one year for each of the 40 days that the men explored the land.) You will know that it is a terrible thing for me to be against you.

¹⁵"I am the Lord, and I have spoken. And I promise that I will do these things to all of these evil people. These people have come together against me. So they will all die here in this desert."

¹⁶Those men that Moses sent to explore the new land were the ones that came back and spread complaining among all the Israelite people. Those men said that the people were not strong enough to enter that land. ¹⁷Those men were responsible for spreading the trouble among the Israelite people. So the Lord caused a sickness to kill all of those men. ¹⁸But Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh were among the men that were sent out to explore the land. And the Lord saved those two men. They did not get the sickness that caused the other ten men to die.

The People Try to Go into Canaan

¹Moses told all these things to the Israelite people. The people were very, very sad. ²Early the next morning the people started to go up to the high hill country. The people said, "We have sinned. We are sorry that we did not trust the Lord. We will go to the place that the Lord promised."

³But Moses said, "Why are you not obeying the Lord's command? You will not be successful! ⁴Don't go into that land. The Lord is with you. Your enemies will easily defeat you. ⁵The Amalekite people and Canaanite people will fight against you there. You have turned away from the Lord. So he will not be with you when you fight them. And you will all be killed in battle."

⁶But the people did not believe Moses. They went toward the high hill country. But

Moses and the Box of the Lord's Agreement^{*} did not go with the people. ⁷The Amalekite people and the Canaanite people living in the hill country came down and attacked the people of Israel. The Amalekites and the Canaanites easily defeated them and chased them all the way to Hormah.

Rules About Sacrifices

15 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Speak to the people of Israel and say to them: I am giving you a land to be your home. When you enter that land, ²you must give special offerings made by fire to the Lord. Their smell will please the Lord. You will use your cows, sheep, and goats for burnt offerings, sacrifices, special promises, special gifts, fellowship offerings, or special holidays.

³"At the time a person brings his offering, he must also give a grain offering to the Lord. The grain offering will be 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with 1 quart* of olive oil. ⁴Each time you offer a lamb as a burnt offering, you must also prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering.

⁵"If you are giving a ram, then you must also prepare a grain offering. This grain offering should be 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with 1 1/4 quarts* of olive oil. ⁶And you must prepare 1 1/4 quarts* of wine as a drink offering. Its smell will please the Lord.

⁷"You might prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, a sacrifice, a fellowship offering, or to keep a special promise to the Lord. ⁸At that time, you must also bring a grain offering with the bull. That grain offering should be 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with 2 quarts* of olive oil. ⁹Also bring 2 quarts* of wine as a drink offering. This will be an offering made by fire.

Box of the Lord's Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

1 quart Literally, "1/4 hin."

16 cups Literally, "1/5 of an ephah."

1 1/4 quarts Literally, "1/5 hin."

24 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

2 quarts Literally, "1/2 hin."

Its smell will please the Lord. ¹¹Each bull or ram, or lamb or young goat that you give to the Lord must be prepared in this way. ¹²Do this for every one of these animals that you give.

¹³“That is the way every citizen of Israel must give the offerings made by fire to please the Lord. ¹⁴Foreigners will live among you. If those people give offerings made by fire to please the Lord, then they must offer them the same way you do. ¹⁵The same rules will be for everyone—the people of Israel and the foreigners living in your country. This law will continue forever. You and the people living among you will be the same before the Lord. ¹⁶This means that you must follow the same laws and the same rules. Those laws and rules are for you people of Israel and for the other people that are living among you.”

¹⁷The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁸“Tell the people of Israel these things: I am taking you to another land. ¹⁹When you eat the food that grows in that land, you must give part of that food as an offering to the Lord. ²⁰You will gather grain and grind it into flour to make dough for bread. You must give the first of that dough as a gift to the Lord. It will be like the grain offering that comes from the threshing floor.* ²¹This rule will continue forever, you must give the first of that dough as a gift to the Lord.

²²“Now what should you do if you make a mistake and forget to obey one of the commands that the Lord gave Moses? ²³The Lord gave these commands to you through Moses. These commands started the day that the Lord gave them to you. And the commands continue forever. ²⁴So, what do you do if you make a mistake and forget to obey all of these commands. If all the people of Israel made that mistake, then together the people must offer one young bull as a burnt offering to the Lord. Its smell will please the Lord. Also remember to give the grain offering and the drink offering that must be offered with the bull. You must also give a male goat as a sin offering.

²⁵“So the priest must do the things that will make the people pure.* He must do this for all of the people of Israel. The people did not know they were sinning. But when they learned about it, they brought a gift to the Lord. They brought the offering made by fire and the sin offering. So the people will be forgiven. ²⁶All of the people of Israel and all the other people living among them will be forgiven. They will be forgiven because they did not know they were doing wrong.

²⁷“But if only one person makes a mistake and sins, then he must bring a female goat that is one year old. That goat will be the sin offering. ²⁸The priest must do the things that will make the person pure.* That person made a mistake and sinned before the Lord. But the priest made that person pure, and he will be forgiven. ²⁹That law is for every person that makes a mistake and sins. The same law is for the people born in the family of Israel and for the foreigners living among you.

³⁰“But if a person sins and knows that he is doing wrong, then that person is against the Lord. That person must be separated from his people. It is the same for a person born into the family of Israel or for a foreigner living among you. ³¹That person did not think the Lord’s word was important. He broke the Lord’s commands. That person must surely be separated from your group. That person is guilty and must be punished!†”

A Man Works on the Day of Rest

¹At this time, the people of Israel were still in the desert. It happened that a man found some wood to burn. So the man was gathering the wood, but it was the Sabbath day.* Some other people saw him doing this. ²The people that saw him gathering the wood brought him to Moses and Aaron. And all the people gathered around. ³They kept the man there because they did not know how they should

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

That ... punished Literally, “His guilt is on him.”

Sabbath day Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

punish him.

³²Then the Lord said to Moses, "The man must die. All the people must throw stones at him outside the camp." ³³So the people took him outside the camp and killed him with stones. They did this the way that the Lord commanded Moses.

God Helps His People Remember the Rules

¹The Lord said to Moses, ²"Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them these things: I will give you something to remember my commands. Tie several pieces of thread together and tie them in the corner of your clothes. Put a piece of blue thread in each one of these tassels. You must wear these things now and forever. ³You will be able to look at these tassels and remember all the commands that the Lord has given you. Then you will obey the commands. You will not do wrong by forgetting about the commands and doing the things that your own bodies and eyes want. ⁴You will remember to obey all my commands. Then you will be God's special people. ⁵I am the Lord your God. I am the One who brought you out of Egypt. I did this to be your God. I am the Lord your God."

Some Leaders Turn Against Moses

16 Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On turned against Moses. (Korah was the son of Izhar. Izhar was the son of Kohath, and Kohath was the son of Levi. Dathan and Abiram were brothers, the sons of Eliab. And On was the son of Peleth. Dathan, Abiram, and On were descendants* of Reuben.) ²Those four men gathered 250 other men from Israel together and came against Moses. They were leaders that had been chosen by the people. All the people knew them. ³They came as a group to speak against Moses and Aaron. These men said to Moses and Aaron, "You have gone too far—you are wrong! All the people of Israel are holy—the Lord still lives among them! You are

making yourself more important than the rest of the Lord's people."

⁴When Moses heard these things, he bowed his face to the ground to show he was not being proud. ⁵Then Moses said to Korah and all his followers, "Tomorrow morning the Lord will show which person truly belongs to him. The Lord will show which person is truly holy. And the Lord will bring that person near to him. The Lord will choose that man, and the Lord will bring that man near to him. ⁶So Korah, you and all your followers should do this: ⁷Tomorrow put fire and incense* in some special pans. Then bring those pans before the Lord. The Lord will choose the person that is truly holy. You Levites have gone too far—you are wrong!"

⁸Moses also said to Korah, "You Levites, listen to me. ⁹You should be happy that the God of Israel chose you and made you special. You are different from the rest of the Israelite people. The Lord brought you near to him to do the special work in the Lord's Holy Tent* to help the people of Israel worship him. Isn't that enough? ¹⁰The Lord brought you Levite people near to him to help the priests. But now you are trying to become priests also. ¹¹You and your followers have joined together and turned against the Lord! Did Aaron do anything wrong? No! So why are you complaining against Aaron?"

¹²Then Moses called Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But the two men said, "We will not come! ¹³You have brought us out of a land filled with many good things.* You brought us to the desert to kill us. And now you want to show that you have even more power over us. ¹⁴Why should we follow you? You did not bring us into the new land filled with many good things.* You did not give us the land God promised. You did not give us the fields or the

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

filled with many good things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

vineyards. Will you make these men your slaves? No! We will not come."

¹⁵So Moses became very angry. He said to the Lord, "I never did anything wrong to these people. I never took anything from them—not even a donkey! Lord, don't accept their gifts!"

¹⁶Then Moses said to Korah, "You and all your followers will stand before the Lord tomorrow. There will be Aaron and you and your followers. ¹⁷Each of you must bring a pan, put incense* on it, and present it to the Lord. There will be 250 pans for the leaders, and one pan for you and one pan for Aaron."

¹⁸So each man got a pan and put burning incense* on it. Then they stood at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* Moses and Aaron also stood there. ¹⁹Korah also gathered all the people together at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. Then the Glory of the Lord* appeared to every person there.

²⁰The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²¹"Move away from these men! I want to destroy them now!"

²²But Moses and Aaron bowed to the ground and cried out, "God, you know what people are thinking.* Please don't be angry at all these people. Only one man really sinned."

²³Then the Lord said to Moses, ²⁴"Tell the people to move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram."

²⁵Moses stood and went to Dathan and Abiram. All the elders (leaders) of Israel followed him. ²⁶Moses warned the people, "Move away from the tents of these evil men. Don't touch anything that belongs to them! If you do, then you will be destroyed because of their sins."

²⁷So the men moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram went to their tents. They stood outside of their tents with their wives, children, and

little babies.

²⁸Then Moses said, "I will show you proof that the Lord sent me to do all the things I told you. I will show you that all those things were not my own idea. ²⁹These men here will die. But if they die in a normal way—the way men always die—then that will show that the Lord did not really send me. ³⁰But if the Lord causes these men to die in a different way—something new—then you will know that these men have truly sinned against the Lord. (This is the proof: the earth will open and swallow these men. They will go down to their grave still alive. And everything that belongs to these men will go down with them.)"

³¹When Moses finished saying these things, the ground under the men opened. ³²It was like the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them. All of Korah's men, their families, and everything they owned went down into the earth. ³³Those people went down into their grave alive. Everything they owned went with them. Then the earth closed over them. They were finished—gone from the camp!

³⁴The people of Israel heard the cries of the men being destroyed. So they all ran in different directions and said, "The earth will kill us, too!"

³⁵Then a fire came from the Lord and destroyed the 250 men that were offering the incense.*

³⁶The Lord said to Moses, ³⁷"Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to get all the incense* pans from the fire. Tell him to scatter the coals and ashes. Those men sinned against me, and their sin cost them their lives. But the incense pans are still holy.* The pans are holy because they gave them to the Lord. Hammer the pans into flat sheets. Use the metal sheets to cover the altar.* This will be a warning to all of the people of Israel."

³⁸So Eleazar the priest gathered together all the bronze* pans that the men had brought. Those men were all burned up, but the pans

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright shining light.

God ... thinking Literally, "God, God of the spirits of all people."

holy Set aside or chosen for a special purpose.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

were still there. Then Eleazar told some men to hammer the pans into flat metal. Then he put the metal sheets on the altar.* ⁴⁰He did this the way the Lord commanded him through Moses. This was a sign to help the people of Israel remember that only a person from the family of Aaron should burn incense* before the Lord. Any other person that burns incense before the Lord will die like Korah and his followers.

Aaron Saves the People

¹"The next day all the people of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron. They said, "You killed the Lord's people."

²"Moses and Aaron were standing at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* The people gathered together at that place to complain against Moses and Aaron. But when they looked toward the Meeting Tent, the cloud covered it and the Glory of the Lord* appeared there. ³"Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the Meeting Tent.

⁴"The Lord said to Moses, ⁴"Move away from those people so that I can destroy them now." So Moses and Aaron bowed with their faces to the ground.

⁵"Then Moses said to Aaron, "Get your bronze* pan and some fire from the altar.* Then put incense* on it. Hurry to the group of people and do the things that will make the people pure.* The Lord is angry at them. The trouble has already started."

⁶⁻⁸So Aaron did what Moses said. Aaron got the incense* and the fire, and he ran to the middle of the people. But the sickness had already started among the people. So Aaron stood between the dead people and the people that were still alive. Aaron did the things to

make the people pure.* And the sickness stopped there. ⁹"But 14,700 people died from that sickness—and that is not counting the people that died because of Korah. ¹⁰So, the terrible sickness was stopped and Aaron went back to Moses at the entrance of the Meeting Tent.*

God Proves Aaron Is the High Priest

17 The Lord said to Moses, ¹"Speak to the people of Israel. Get twelve wooden walking sticks from them. Get one from the leader of each of the twelve family groups. Write the name of each man on his walking stick. ²On the stick from Levi, write Aaron's name. There must be one stick for the head of each of the twelve family groups. ³Put these walking sticks in the Meeting Tent* in front of the Box of the Agreement.* This is the place where I meet with you. ⁴I will choose one man to be the true priest. You will know which man I choose because his walking stick will begin to grow new leaves. In this way, I will stop the people from always complaining against you and me."

⁵So Moses spoke to the people of Israel. Each of the leaders gave him a walking stick. There were twelve walking sticks. There was one stick from each leader of each family group. One of the walking sticks belonged to Aaron. ⁶Moses put the walking sticks before the Lord in the Tent of the Agreement.*

⁷The next day Moses entered the Tent. He saw that Aaron's walking stick, the stick from the family of Levi, was the one that had grown new leaves. That walking stick had even grown branches and made almonds. ⁸So Moses brought out all the sticks from the Lord's place. Moses showed the walking sticks to the people of Israel. They all looked at the sticks, and each man took his own stick back.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright shining light.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

Tent of the Agreement The Holy Tent where the Box of the Agreement was kept.

¹⁰Then the Lord said to Moses, "Put Aaron's walking stick back into the Tent, in front of the Agreement.* This will be a warning for these people that are always turning against me. This will stop their complaining against me, so that I won't destroy them." ¹¹So Moses did what the Lord commanded him.

¹²The people of Israel said to Moses, "We know that we will die! We are lost! We will all be destroyed! ¹³Any person that even comes near the Lord's holy place will die. Is it true that we will all die?"

The Work of the Priests and Levites

18 The Lord said to Aaron, "You, your sons, and all the people in your father's family are now responsible for any wrong things that are done against the holy place. You and your sons are responsible for wrong things that are done against the priests. ²Bring the other Levite men from your family group to join you. They will help you and your sons do your work in the Tent of the Agreement.* ³Those people from the family of Levi are under your control. They will do all the work that needs to be done in the Tent. But they must not go near the things in the Holy Place* or the altar.* If they do, then they will die—and you will die also. ⁴They will join you and work with you. They will be responsible for caring for the Meeting Tent.* All the work that must be done in the Tent will be done by them. No one else may come near the place where you are.

⁵"You are responsible for caring for the holy place and the altar.* I don't want to become angry with the people of Israel again. ⁶I myself chose the Levite people from among all the people of Israel. They are like a gift to you. I

gave them to you to serve the Lord and work in the Meeting Tent.* ⁷But, Aaron, only you and your sons may serve as priests. You are the only ones that can go near the altar. You are the only ones that can go inside the curtain into the Most Holy Place. I am giving you a gift—your service as a priest. Anyone else that comes near my holy place must be killed."

⁸Then the Lord said to Aaron, "I myself gave you responsibility over all the special gifts people give to me. All the holy* gifts that the people of Israel give to me, I give to you. You and your sons can share in these gifts. They will always belong to you. ⁹The people will bring sacrifices, grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings. Those offerings are most holy. Your share in the most holy offerings will come from the parts that are not burned. All those things will be for you and your sons. ¹⁰Eat those things only in the very holy place. Every male in your family may eat them, but you must remember that those offerings are holy.

¹¹"And all the gifts that the Israelite people give as wave offerings will also be yours. I give this to you and your sons and your daughters. This is your share. Every person in your family that is clean* will be able to eat it.

¹²"And I give you all the best olive oil and all the best new wine and grain. These are the things that the people of Israel give to me, the Lord. These are the first things that they gather in their harvest. ¹³When the people gather a harvest, they bring all the first things to the Lord. So these things I will give to you. And every person in your family that is clean* may eat it.

¹⁴"Everything in Israel that is given to the Lord* is yours.

¹⁵"A woman's first baby and an animal's first baby must be given to the Lord. That baby will belong to you. If the firstborn animal is unclean,* then it must be bought back. If the baby is a child, that child must be bought back.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them. These were proof of the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

Tent of the Agreement The Holy Tent where the Box of the Agreement was kept.

Holy Place One of the rooms in the Holy Tent.

altar A table of raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

holy Chosen or set aside for God.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

given to the Lord Things that were given to God and could not be bought back. See Lev. 27:28-29.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

That child will again belong to its family.¹⁵ They must make the payment when the baby is one month old. The cost will be 2 ounces* of silver. You must use the official measure* to weigh this silver. A shekel by the official measure is 20 gerahs.*

¹⁶"But you must not make a payment for the firstborn cow, sheep, or goat. Those animals are holy.* Sprinkle their blood on the altar* and burn their fat. This is an offering made by fire. Its smell pleases the Lord. ¹⁷But the meat from those animals will be yours. And also the breast from a wave offering will be yours. And the right thigh from other offerings will be yours. ¹⁸Anything that the people offer as holy gifts, I, the Lord, give to you. This is your share. I give it to you and your sons and your daughters. This law will continue forever. It is an agreement with the Lord that can't be broken.* I make this promise to you and to your descendants.*"

¹⁹The Lord also said to Aaron, "You will not get any of the land. And you will not own anything that the other people own. I, the Lord, will be yours. The Israelite people will get the land that I promised. But I am my gift to you."

²⁰"The people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they have. So I give that one tenth to all the descendants* of Levi. This is their payment for the work that they do while they serve at the Meeting Tent.* ²¹But the other people of Israel must never go near that Meeting Tent. If they do, then they must be put to death! ²²The Levite people that are working in the Meeting Tent are responsible for the sins against it. This is a law that will continue forever. The Levite people will not get any of

the land that I promised to the other people of Israel. ²³But the people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they have to me. And I will give that one tenth to the Levite people. That is why I said these words about the Levite people: Those people will not get the land that I promised the people of Israel."

²⁴The Lord said to Moses, ²⁵"Speak to the Levite people and tell them: The people of Israel will give one tenth of everything they own to the Lord. That one tenth will belong to the Levite people. But you must give one tenth of that to the Lord as his offering. ²⁶You will be given grain after it is harvested and juice from the winepress. Then that will also be your offering to the Lord. ²⁷In this way, you will also give an offering to the Lord in the same way that the other people of Israel do. You will get the one tenth that the people of Israel give to the Lord. And then you will give one tenth of that to Aaron the priest. ²⁸When the people of Israel give you one tenth of everything that they own, then you should choose the best and the holiest part of those things. That is the one tenth that you must give to the Lord."

²⁹"Moses, tell the Levite people: The people of Israel will give you one tenth of their harvest and of their wine. Then you will give the best part of that to the Lord. ³⁰You and your families can eat all that is left. This is your payment for the work you do in the Meeting Tent.* ³¹And if you always give the best part of it to the Lord, then you will never be guilty. You will always remember that those gifts are the holy* offerings from the people of Israel. And you will not die."

The Ashes of the Red Cow

19 The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron. He said, ²"These are the laws from the teachings that the Lord gave to the people of Israel. Get a red cow that has nothing wrong with it. That cow must not have any bruises. And that cow must never have worn a yoke.* ³Give that cow to Eliezar the priest. Eliezar will

2 ounces Literally, "5 shekels."

official measure The standard measure used in the tabernacle or temple.

gerah(s) Or, "1/24 of an ounce."

holy Chosen or set aside for God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

It is an agreement ... broken Literally, "It is an eternal, salt agreement before the Lord."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

yoke A piece of wood that joins two work animals together for pulling a wagon or plow.

take the cow outside the camp and kill it there. "Then Eliezar the priest must put some of its blood on his finger and sprinkle some of the blood towards the Holy Tent. He must do this seven times. "Then the whole cow must be burned in front of him. The skin, the meat, the blood, and the intestines must all be burned. "Then the priest must take a cedar stick, a hyssop* branch, and some red string. The priest must throw those things into the fire where the cow is burning. "Then the priest must wash himself and his clothes with water. Then he must come back into the camp. The priest will be unclean* until evening. "The person that burns that cow must wash himself and his clothes in water. He will be unclean until evening.

"Then a person that is clean* will collect the ashes from the cow. He will put those ashes in a clean place outside the camp. These ashes will be used when people must keep a special ceremony to become clean. These ashes will also be used to remove a person's sins.

"The person that collected the cow's ashes must wash his clothes. He will be unclean* until evening.

"This rule will continue forever. This rule is for the citizens of Israel. And this rule is for the foreigners living with you. "If someone touches a dead person's body, then he will be unclean* for seven days. "He must wash himself with the special water on the third day and again on the seventh day. If he does not do this, then he will remain unclean. "If a person touches a dead body, then that person is unclean. If that person stays unclean and then goes to the Holy Tent,* then the Holy Tent becomes unclean. So that person must be separated from the people of Israel. If the special water is not thrown on an unclean person, then that person will stay unclean.

"This is the rule about people that die in their tents. If a person dies in his tent, then everyone in the tent will be unclean.* They will be unclean for seven days. "And every jar or pot without a lid becomes unclean. "If anyone touches a dead body, then that person will be unclean for seven days. This is true if the dead body is out in the field or if the person was killed in war. Also, if anyone touches the bones from a dead person then that person is unclean.

"So you must use the ashes from the burnt cow to make that person clean* again. Pour fresh water* over the ashes into a jar. "A clean person must take a hyssop* branch and dip it into the water. Then he must sprinkle it over the tent, the dishes, and the people that were in the tent. You must do this to anyone that touches a dead person's body. You must do this to anyone that touches the body of someone killed in war, and to anyone that touches the bones from a dead person.

"Then a clean* person must sprinkle this water on the unclean* person on the third day and again on the seventh day. On the seventh day, that person becomes clean. He must wash his clothes in water. He will become clean in the evening.

"If a person becomes unclean* and does not become clean,* that person must be separated from the people of Israel. That person was not sprinkled with the special water. He did not become clean. So he might make the Holy Tent* unclean. "This rule will be for you forever. If a person is sprinkled with the special water, then he must also wash his clothes. Any person that touches the special water will be unclean until evening. "If an unclean person touches someone else, then that other person also becomes unclean. That person will be unclean until evening."

Miriam Dies

20 The people of Israel arrived at the Zin desert on the first month. The people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died, and she was buried there.

fresh water Literally, "living water." This means fresh, flowing water.

hyssop A plant with fine branches and leaves used for sprinkling water or blood in cleansing ceremonies.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle," the place God came to live among his people.

Moses Makes a Mistake

¹There was not enough water for the people at that place. So the people met together to complain to Moses and Aaron. ²The people argued with Moses. They said, "Maybe we should have died in front of the Lord like our brothers did. 'Why did you bring the Lord's people into this desert? Do you want us and our animals to die here?' 'Why did you bring us from Egypt? Why did you bring us to this bad place? There is no grain. There are no figs, grapes, or pomegranates.* And there is no water to drink. 'So Moses and Aaron left the crowd of people and went to the entrance of the Meeting Tent.* They bowed down to the ground. And the Glory of the Lord* appeared to them.

³The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "'Get the special walking stick. Take your brother Aaron and the crowd of people and go to that rock. Speak to the rock in front of the people. Then water will flow from the rock. And you can give that water to the people and to their animals."

⁴The walking stick was in the Holy Tent, in front of the Lord. Moses took the walking stick like the Lord said. ⁵Moses and Aaron told the people to meet together in front of the rock. Then Moses said, "You people are always complaining. Now listen to me. I will cause water to flow from this rock." ⁶Moses lifted his arm and hit the rock twice. Water began flowing from the rock. And the people and their animals drank that water.

⁷But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "All the people of Israel were gathered around. But you did not show me honor. You did not show the people of Israel that the power to make the water came from me. You did not show the people that you trusted in me. I will give those people the land that I promised them. But you will not lead them into that land!"

pomegranate A red fruit with many small seeds inside it.

Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

⁸This place was called the waters of Meribah.* This was the place where the Israelite people argued with the Lord. And this was the place that the Lord showed them that he was holy.

Edom Won't Let Israel Pass

⁹While Moses was at Kadesh, he sent some men with a message to the king of Edom. The message said: "Your brothers, the people of Israel, say to you: You know about all the troubles that we have had. ¹⁰Many, many years ago our ancestors* went down into Egypt. And we lived there for many years. The people of Egypt were cruel to us. ¹¹But we asked the Lord for help. The Lord heard us and sent an angel to help us. The Lord has brought us out of Egypt.

¹²Now we are here at Kadesh, where your land begins. ¹³Please let us travel through your country. We will not travel through any fields or vineyards. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along the King's Road. We will not leave that road to the right or to the left. We will stay on the road until we have traveled through your country."

¹⁴But the king of Edom answered, "You may not travel through our land. If you try to travel through our land, then we will come and fight you with swords."

¹⁵The people of Israel answered, "We will travel along the main road. If our animals drink any of your water, we will pay you for it. We only want to walk through your country. We don't want to take it for ourselves."

¹⁶But again Edom answered, "We won't allow you to come through our country."

Then the king of Edom gathered a large and powerful army and went out to fight against the people of Israel. ¹⁷The king of Edom refused to let the people of Israel travel through his country. And the people of Israel turned around and went another way.

Meribah This name means "argument," or "rebellion."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Aaron Dies

²²All the people of Israel traveled from Kadesh to Mount Hor. ²³Mount Hor was near the border of Edom. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ²⁴"It is time for Aaron to die and go to be with his ancestors.* Aaron will not enter the land that I promised to the people of Israel. Moses, I say this to you because both you and Aaron did not fully obey the command I gave you at the waters of Meribah.

²⁵"Now, bring Aaron and his son Eleazar up to Mount Hor. ²⁶Take Aaron's special clothes from him and put those clothes on his son Eleazar. Aaron will die there on the mountain. And he will go to be with his ancestors.*"

²⁷Moses obeyed the Lord's command. Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar went up on Mount Hor. All the people of Israel watched them go. ²⁸Moses removed Aaron's special clothes and put those clothes on Aaron's son Eleazar. Then Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Moses and Eleazar came back down the mountain. ²⁹All the people of Israel learned that Aaron was dead. So every person in Israel mourned* for 30 days.

War with the Canaanites

21 The king of the Canaanite people was named Arad. He lived in the Negev.* King Arad heard that the people of Israel were coming on the road to Atharim. So the king went out and attacked the people of Israel. Arad captured some of the people and made them prisoners. ²Then the people of Israel made a special promise to the Lord: "Lord, please help us defeat these people. If you do this, then we will give their cities to you. We will totally destroy them."

³The Lord listened to the people of Israel. And the Lord helped the people of Israel to defeat the Canaanite people. The people of

Israel completely destroyed the Canaanite people and their cities. So that place was named Hormah.*

The Bronze Snake

"The people of Israel left Mount Hor and traveled on the road that goes to the Red Sea. They did this to go around the country of Edom. But the people became impatient. ²They began complaining against God and Moses. The people said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? We will die here in the desert! There is no bread! There is no water! And we hate this terrible food!"

³So the Lord sent poisonous snakes among the people. The snakes bit the people, and many of the people of Israel died. ⁴The people came to Moses and said, "We know that we sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord. Ask him to take away these snakes." So Moses prayed for the people.

⁵The Lord said to Moses, "Make a bronze* snake and put it on a pole. If any person is bitten by a snake, then that person should look at the bronze snake on the pole. Then that person will not die." ⁶So Moses obeyed the Lord. He made a bronze snake and put it on a pole. Then when a snake bit any person, that person looked at the bronze snake on the pole and lived.

From Mount Hor to Moab

¹The people of Israel continued to travel. They camped at a place called Obotoh. ²Then the people traveled from Obotoh to Abarim. This was in the desert east of Moab. ³Then the people left that place and traveled to Zered Valley. They camped there. ⁴Then the people moved and camped across from the Arnon River. This was in the desert in the country of the Amorites. This valley is the border between Moab and the country of the Amorites. "That is

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

mourn To show sadness for a person that died. In ancient Israel people often cried very loudly, wore special clothes, and put ashes on their head to show their sadness.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Hormah This name means "completely destroyed," or "a gift given totally to God." See Lev. 27:28-29.

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

why these things are written in the Book of the Wars of the Lord:

"... and Waheb in Suphah, and the Valleys of the Arnon,¹⁵ and the hills by the valleys that lead to the town of Ar. These places are at the border of Moab."

¹⁶"The people of Israel left that place and traveled to Beer.* This was the place with the well. This was the place where the Lord said to Moses, "Bring the people together here and I will give them water." ¹⁷Then the people of Israel sang this song:

"Well, flow with water!

Sing about it!

¹⁸ Great men dug this well.

Important leaders dug this well.

With their staffs and walking sticks they dug this well.

It is a gift in the desert.*"

(So the people called that well "Mattanah.")

¹⁹The people traveled from Mattanah to Nahaliel. Then they traveled from Nahaliel to Bamoth. ²⁰The people traveled from Bamoth to the Valley of Moab. In this place the top of the Pisgah Mountain looks over the desert.

Sihon and Og

²¹The people of Israel sent some men to Sihon, the king of the Amorite people. The men said to the king, ²²"Allow us to travel through your country. We will not travel through any field or vineyard. We will not drink water from any of your wells. We will travel only along King's Road. We will stay on that road until we have traveled through your country."

²³But King Sihon would not allow the people of Israel to travel through his country. The king gathered together his army and marched out to the desert. He was marching to fight against the people of Israel. At Jahaz, the king's army fought against the people of Israel.

²⁴But the people of Israel killed the king. Then they took his land from the Arnon River

to the Jabbok River. The people of Israel took the land as far as the Ammonite border. They stopped at that border because it was strongly defended by the Ammonite people. ²⁵Israel took all the Amorite cities and began living in them. They even defeated the city of Heshbon and all the small towns around it. ²⁶Heshbon was the city where Sihon, the Amorite king, lived. In the past, Sihon had fought with the king of Moab. Sihon had taken the land as far as the Arnon River. ²⁷That is why the singers sing this song:

"Heshbon, you should be built again.

Let Sihon's city be built again.

²⁸ A fire began in Heshbon.

That fire began in Sihon's city.

The fire destroyed the city of Ar in Moab. It burned the hills above the Arnon River.

²⁹ It is bad for you, Moab.

Chemosh's* people have been destroyed.

His sons ran away.

His daughters were taken prisoners by Sihon, king of the Amorite people.

³⁰ But we defeated those Amorites.

We destroyed their towns from

Heshbon to Dibon,

from Nashim to Nophah, near Medeba."

³¹So the people of Israel made their camp in the land of the Amorite people.

³²Moses sent some men to look at the town of Jazer. After Moses did this, the people of Israel captured that town. They captured the small towns that were around it. The people of Israel forced the Amorite people that were living there to leave.

³³Then the people of Israel traveled on the road toward Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, got his army and marched out to meet the people of Israel. He fought against them at Edrei.

³⁴But the Lord said to Moses, "Don't be afraid of that king. I will allow you to defeat

Beer This Hebrew name means "Well."

gift in the desert In Hebrew this is the name "Mattanah."

Chemosh Chemosh was the god of the Moabite people.

him. You will take his whole army and all his land. Do the same to him as you did to Sihon, the Amorite king that lived in Heshbon."

²²So the people of Israel defeated Og and his army. They killed him and his sons and all his army. Then the people of Israel took all his land.

Balaam and the King of Moab

22 Then the people of Israel traveled to the Jordan Valley in Moab. They camped near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

¹Balak son of Zippor saw all the things that the people of Israel had done to the Amorite people. (The king of Moab was very afraid, because there were so many people of Israel. Moab was really scared of them.)

"The king of Moab said to the leaders of Midian, "This large group of people will destroy everything around us, the way a cow eats all the grass in a field."

Balak son of Zippor was the king of Moab at this time. He sent some men to call Balaam son of Beor. Balaam was at the Pethor, near the Euphrates River. This was where Balaam's people lived.* This was Balak's message: "A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover all the land. They have camped next to me. Come and help me. These people are too powerful for me. I know that you have great power. If you bless a person, then good things happen to him. And if you speak against a person, then bad things happen to him. So come and speak against these people. Maybe then I will be able to defeat them. Then I can force them to leave my country."

²The leaders of Moab and Midian left. They went to talk to Balaam. They carried with them money to pay him for his service.* Then they told him what Balak had said.

This ... lived Or, "This was the land of the Ammonites."
for his service Or, "for the things he needed to make curses." In ancient times, when people asked bad things to happen to other people, they often wrote the curses on special bowls and used them in ceremonies. They did this to try to force those bad things to happen. See Deut. 18:10.

³Balaam said to them, "Stay here for the night. I will talk to the Lord and tell you the answer he gives me." So the leaders of Moab stayed there with Balaam that night.

⁴God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you?"

⁵Balaam said to God, "The king of Moab, Balak son of Zippor, sent them to give me a message. "This is the message: A new nation of people has come out of Egypt. There are so many people that they cover all the land. So, come and speak against these people. Then maybe I will be able to fight them and force them to leave my land."

⁶But God said to Balaam, "Don't go with them. You must not speak against those people. They are my people."

⁷The next morning Balaam got up and said to leaders from Balak, "Go back to your own country. The Lord will not let me go with you."

⁸So the leaders of Moab went back to Balak and told him this. They said, "Balaam refused to come with us."

⁹So Balak sent other leaders to Balaam. This time he sent many more than the first time. And these leaders were much more important than the first ones he sent. "They went to Balaam and said: "Balak son of Zippor says this to you: Please don't let anything stop you from coming. I will pay you very much if you will do what I ask.* Come and speak against these people for me."

¹⁰Balaam gave Balak's officials his answer. He said, "I must obey the Lord my God. I cannot do anything against his command. I cannot do anything, great or small, unless the Lord says that I can. I will not do anything against the Lord's command, even if King Balak gives me his beautiful home filled with silver and gold. "But you can stay here tonight like the other men did. And during the night I will learn what the Lord wants to tell me."

¹¹That night, God came to Balaam. God said, "These men have come again to ask you to go with them. So you can go with them. But do only the things that I tell you to do."

I will ... ask Or, "I will honor you very much."

Balaam and His Donkey

¹¹The next morning, Balaam got up and put a saddle on his donkey. Then he went with the leaders of Moab. ¹²Balaam was riding on his donkey. Two of his servants were with him. While Balaam was traveling, God became angry. So the Lord's angel stood in the road in front of Balaam. The angel was going to stop* Balaam.

¹³Balaam's donkey saw the Lord's angel standing in the road. The angel was holding a sword in his hand. So the donkey turned from the road and went into the field. Balaam could not see the angel. So he was very angry with the donkey. He hit the donkey and forced it to go back on the road.

¹⁴Later, the Lord's angel stood at a place where the road became narrow. This was between two vineyards. There were walls on both sides of the road. ¹⁵Again the donkey saw the Lord's angel. So the donkey walked very close to one wall. This crushed Balaam's foot against the wall. So Balaam hit his donkey again.

¹⁶Later the Lord's angel stood at another place. This was another place where the road became narrow. There was no place where the donkey could go around him. The donkey could not turn to the left or to the right. ¹⁷The donkey saw the the Lord's angel. So the donkey lay down with Balaam sitting on top of it. Balaam was very angry at the donkey. So he hit it with his walking stick.

¹⁸Then the Lord caused the donkey to speak. The donkey said to Balaam, "Why are you angry at me? What have I done to you? You have hit me three times!"

¹⁹Balaam answered the donkey, "You have made me look foolish. If I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now!"

²⁰But the donkey said to Balaam, "Look, I am your own donkey! You have ridden me for many, many years. And you know that I have never done this to you before!"

"That is true," Balaam said.

²¹Then the Lord allowed Balaam to see the angel. The Lord's angel was standing in the road, holding a sword in his hand. Balaam bowed low to the ground.

²²Then the Lord's angel asked Balaam, "Why did you hit your donkey three times? I am the one that came to stop* you. But just in time,* ²³your donkey saw me and turned away from me. That happend three times. If the donkey had not turned away, I probably would have killed you already. And I would have let your donkey live."

²⁴Then Balaam said to the Lord's angel, "I have sinned. I did not know that you were standing in the road. If I am doing wrong, then I will go back home."

²⁵Then the Lord's angel said to Balaam, "No! You can go with these men. But be careful. Speak only the words that I will tell you to say." So Balaam went with the leaders that Balak had sent.

²⁶Balak heard that Balaam was coming. So Balak went out to meet him at the Moabite town* near the Arnon River. This was at the northern border of his country. ²⁷When Balak saw Balaam, he said to him, "I asked you before to come. I told you it was very, very important. Why didn't you come to me? I might not be able to pay you now."

²⁸Balaam answered, "But I am here now. I came, but I might not be able to do the thing you asked. I can only say the words that the Lord God tells me to say."

²⁹Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath Huzoth. ³⁰Balak killed some cattle and some sheep as his sacrifice. He gave some of the meat to Balaam and some to the leaders that were with him.

³¹The next morning Balak took Balaam to the town of Bamoth Baal. From there, they could see part of the Israelite camp.

But just in time Literally, "Just as the path in front of me dropped away..." or, "Because you are not doing right,..."

The Hebrew is very hard to understand.

Moabite town Or possibly, "Ar Moab."

Balaam's First Message

23 Balaam said, "Build seven altars* here. And prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me." Balak did the thing that Balaam asked. Then Balak and Balaam killed a ram and a bull on each of the altars.

"Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here near this altar.* I will go to another place. Then the Lord will come to me, and he will tell me what I must say." Then Balaam went away to a higher place.

"God came to Balaam at that place. And Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars.* And I have killed a bull and a ram as a sacrifice on each altar."

"Then the Lord told Balaam what he should say. Then the Lord said, "Go back to Balak and say these things that I have given you to say."

"So Balaam went back to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar.* And all the leaders of Moab were standing there with them. Then Balaam said these things:

Balak, king of Moab, brought me here
from Aram,
from the eastern mountains.

Balak said to me,
"Come, speak against Jacob* for me.
Come and speak against the people of
Israel."

¹ But God is not against those people,
So I can't speak against them either!
The Lord has not asked for bad things to
happen to those people.
So I can't do that either.

⁹ I see those people from the mountain.
I see them from the high hills.
Those people live alone.
Those people are not part of any other
nation.

¹⁶ Jacob has more people than there are
grains of sand.
No person can count even a fourth of all
the people of Israel.

Let me die like a good man.

Let my life end as happy as theirs!

"Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you here to speak against my enemies. But you have only blessed them!"

"But Balaam answered, "I must say the things that the Lord tells me to say."

"Then Balak said to him, "So come with me to another place. At that place you can see more of those people. You can't see all of them—you can only see part of them. Maybe from that place you can speak against them for me." "So Balak led Balaam to Watchmen Hills.* This was on top of Mount Pisgah. At that place, Balak built seven altars.* And then Balak killed a bull and a ram on each altar as a sacrifice.

"So Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here by this altar.* I will go meet with God over at that place."

"So the Lord came to Balaam and told Balaam what to say. Then the Lord told Balaam to go back to Balak and say those things. "So Balaam went to Balak. Balak was still standing near the altar.* The leaders of Moab were there with him. Balak saw Balaam coming and said, "What did the Lord say?"

Balaam's Second Message

"Then Balaam said these things:

"Stand up, Balak, and listen to me.
Hear me, Balak son of Zippor.

¹⁹ God is not a man;
he will not lie.
God is not a human being;
his decisions will not change.
If the Lord says he will do something,
then he will do it.
If the Lord makes a promise,
then he will do the thing he promised.
²⁰ The Lord commanded me to bless those
people.
The Lord blessed them,
so I cannot change that.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Jacob This is another name for Israel.

Watchmen Hills Or, "the fields of Zophim."

- ²¹ God saw nothing wrong with the people of Jacob.

God saw no sin among the people of Israel.

The Lord is their God,
and he is with them.

The Great King is with them!

- ²² God brought those people out of Egypt.

They are as strong as a wild ox.

- ²³ There is no power that can defeat the people of Jacob.*

There is no magic that can stop the people of Israel.

People will say this about Jacob
and about the people of Israel:

"Look at the great things that God has done!"

- ³⁴ The people are strong, like a lion.

They fight like a lion.

And that lion will never rest,
until he has eaten his enemy.

And that lion will never rest,
until he drinks the blood of those
that are against him."

²⁵Then Balak said to Balaam, "You didn't ask for good things to happen to those people. But you didn't ask for bad things to happen to them either!"

²⁶Balaam answered, "I told you before that I can only say the things that the Lord tells me to say."

²⁷Then Balak said to Balaam, "So come with me to another place. Maybe God will be pleased and will allow you to curse them from that place." ²⁸So Balak led Balaam to the top of Peor Mountain. This mountain looks out over the desert.

²⁹Balaam said, "Build seven altars* here. Then prepare seven bulls and seven rams for the altars." ³⁰Balak did the thing that Balaam asked. Balak offered the bulls and rams on the altars.

Balaam's Third Message

24 Balaam saw that the Lord wanted to bless Israel. So Balaam did not try to change that by using any kind of magic. But Balaam turned and looked toward the desert. ¹Balaam looked out across the desert and saw all the people of Israel. They were camped with the family groups in their different areas. Then the Spirit of God came to Balaam. ²And Balaam said these words:

"This message is from Balaam
son of Beor.

I am speaking about things I see clearly.

- ⁴ I heard this message from God.

I saw the things God All-Powerful*
showed me.

I bow down to God,
and I see these things clearly.

- ⁵ "People of Jacob, your tents are
very beautiful!

The places you live are beautiful,
people of Israel!

- ⁶ Your people spread across the land
like streams.

You are like a garden growing
beside a river.

You people are like sweet-smelling
bushes the Lord planted.

You are like beautiful trees growing
by the water.

- ⁷ You will always have enough water
to drink.

Your seeds will always have enough
water to grow.

Your king will be greater than king Agag.
Your kingdom will be very great.

- ⁸ "God brought those people out of Egypt.

They are as strong as a wild ox.

They will defeat all their enemies.

They will break the bones
of their enemies.

And their arrows will kill
their enemies.

Jacob This is another name for Israel.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

God All-Powerful Literally, "El Shaddai."

- * "They are like a lion waiting
to jump on its prey.
Those people are like a sleeping lion.
No person is brave enough
to wake him.
Any person that blesses you
will be blessed.
And any person that speaks against you
will have great troubles."

²⁰Balak became very angry at Balaam. Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to come and speak against my enemies. But you have blessed them. You have blessed them three times. ²¹Now leave and go home! I told you that I would give you a very good payment. But the Lord has caused you to lose your reward."

²²Balaam said to Balak, "You sent men to me. Those men asked me to come. But I told them, ²³'Balak can give me his most beautiful home filled with silver and gold. But I can still say only the things that the Lord commands me to say. I cannot do anything myself, good or bad. I must say what the Lord commands.' Surely you remember that I told your men these things. ²⁴Now I am going back to my own people. But I will give you this warning. I will tell you what these people of Israel will do to you and your people in the future."

Balaam's Last Message

- ¹⁵Then Balaam said these things:
"This message is from Balaam
son of Beor.
I am speaking about things I see clearly.
¹⁶ I heard this message from God.
I learned these things from God
Most-High.
I saw the things God All-Powerful*
showed me.
I bow down to God,
and I see these things clearly.
¹⁷ "I see the Lord coming, but not now.
I see him coming, but not soon.

- A star will come from the
family of Jacob.*
A new ruler will come from
the people of Israel.
That ruler will crush the heads
of the Moabite people.
That ruler will crush the heads
of all the sons of Sheth.*
¹⁸ Israel will grow strong!
He will get the land of Edom.
He will get the land of Seir,* his enemy.

- ¹⁹ "A new ruler will come from
the family of Jacob.*
That ruler will destroy the people left
alive in that city."

²⁰Then Balaam saw the Amalekite people
and said these words:

- "Amalek was the strongest among
all the nations.
But even Amalek will be destroyed!"

²¹Then Balaam saw the Kenite people and
he said these words:

- "You believe that your country is safe,
like a bird's nest* high on a mountain.
²² But you Kenite* people will be
destroyed,
just like the Lord destroyed Cain.*
Assyria will make you prisoners."

²³Then Balaam said these words:

- "No person can live when God does this.
²⁴ Ships will come from the shores
of Cyprus.*
Those ships will defeat Assyria
and Eber.*

Jacob This is another name for Israel.
sons of Sheth Or, "Seth." Seth was Adam's third son. This might be like the phrases "son of Man (Adam)" and "son of Enosh" and mean simply "all those people."

Seir Another name for Edom.

nest, Kenite, Cain A play on words. The names "Cain" and "Kenite" are like the Hebrew word meaning "nest."

Cyprus Literally, "Kittim." This might be Cyprus, Crete, or other places west of Israel in the Mediterranean Sea.

Eber This might mean the people living west of the Euphrates River, or it might mean descendants of Eber. See Gen. 10:21.

But then those ships will also be destroyed."

²²Then Balaam got up and went back home. And Balak went his own way.

Israel at Peor

25 The people of Israel were camped near Acacia. At that time, the men began doing sexual sins* with Moabite women.²³The Moabite women invited the men to come and join in their sacrifices to their false gods. So the Israelite people joined in worshiping those false gods—they ate the sacrifices and worshiped those gods. At that place, the people of Israel began worshiping the false god, Baal of Peor. And the Lord became very angry at them.

"The Lord said to Moses, "Get all the leaders of these people. Then kill them so that all the people can see.* Lay their bodies before the Lord. Then the Lord will not show his anger against all the people of Israel."

³So Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must find the men in your family group that have led people to worship the false god, Baal of Peor. Then you must kill those men."

"At the time, Moses and all the elders (leaders) of Israel were gathered together at the entrance to the Meeting Tent.* An Israelite man brought a Midianite woman home to his family. He did this where Moses and all the leaders could see. Moses and the leaders were very sad. ⁷Phinehas was the son of Eleazar and the grandson of Aaron the priest. Phinehas saw this man bring the woman into camp. So Phinehas left the meeting and got his spear. ⁸He followed the Israelite man into his tent. Then he killed the Israelite man and the Midianite woman with the spear. He put the spear through both of their bodies. At that time, there was a great sickness among the Israelite people. But

when Phinehas killed these two people, the sickness stopped. ⁹A total of 24,000 people died from that sickness.

¹⁰The Lord said to Moses, "I have strong feelings for my people—I want them to belong only to me! Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saved the people of Israel from my anger. He did this by showing those feelings for my people. So I will not kill the people like I wanted to. ¹²Tell Phinehas that I am making a peace agreement with him. ¹³This is the agreement: He and all of his family that live after him will always be priests. Why? Because he had strong feelings for his God. And he did the things that made the people of Israel pure.*"

¹⁴The Israelite man that was killed with the Midianite woman was named Zimri son of Salu. He was the leader of a family in Simeon's family group. ¹⁵And the name of the Midianite woman that was killed was Cozbi.* She was the daughter of Zur. Zur was the head of a family and leader of a Midianite family group.

¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, ¹⁷"The Midianite people are your enemies. You must kill them. ¹⁸They have already made you their enemies. They tricked you at Peor. And they tricked you with the woman named Cozbi.* She was the daughter of a Midianite leader. But she was killed when the sickness came to the Israelite people. That sickness was caused because the people were tricked into worshiping the false god Baal of Peor."

The People Are Counted

26 After the great sickness, the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest. ²He said, "Count the people of Israel. Count all the men that are 20 years old or older and list them by families. These are the men that are able to serve in the army of Israel."

³At this time the people were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the

sexual sins Sexual sin was often part of the worship of false gods. So this can mean that the men were unfaithful to their wives and also that they were unfaithful to God by worshiping false gods.

so that ... see Literally, "before the sun."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

made ... pure Or, "atoned." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Cozbi This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "my lie."

Jordan River, across from Jericho. So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke to the people. They said, "You must count every man that is 20 years old or older. The Lord gave Moses this command." Here is the list of the people of Israel that came out of Egypt:

⁷These are the people from Reuben's family. (Reuben was the firstborn* son of Israel (Jacob).) The families were:

Hanoch—the Hanochite family.

Pallu—the Palluite family.

⁸Hezron—the Hezronite family.

Carmi—the Carmite family.

⁹Those were the families in Reuben's family group. There was a total of 43,730 men.

⁹Pallu's son was Eliab. ⁹Eliab had three sons—Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. Remember, Dathan and Abiram were the two leaders that turned against Moses and Aaron. They followed Korah when Korah turned against the Lord. ¹⁰That was the time when the earth opened and swallowed Korah and all of his followers. And 250 men died! That was a warning to all the people of Israel. ¹¹But the other people that were from the family of Korah did not die.

¹²These are the families from Simeon's family group:

Nemuel—the Nemuelite family.

Jamin—the Jaminite family.

Jakin—the Jakinite family.

¹³Zerah—the Zerahite family.

Shaul—the Shaulite family.

¹⁴Those were the families in Simeon's family group. There was a total of 22,200 men.

¹⁵These are the families in Gad's family group:

Zephon—the Zephonite family.

Haggi—the Haggite family.

Shuni—the Shunite family.

¹⁶Ozni—the Oznite family.

Eri—the Erite family.

¹⁷Arodi—the Arodite family.

Areli—the Arelite family.

¹⁸Those were the families in Gad's family group. There was a total of 40,500 men.

¹⁹⁻²⁰These are the families in Judah's family group:

Shelah—the Shelanite family.

Perez—the Perezite family.

Zerah—the Zerahite family.

(Two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan, died in Canaan.)

²¹These are the families from Perez:

Hezron—the Hezronite family.

Hamul—the Hamulite family.

²²Those were the families from Judah's family group. The total number of men was 76,500.

²³The families in Issachar's family group were:

Tola—the Tolaite family.

Puah—the Puite family.

²⁴Jashub—the Jashubite family.

Shimron—the Shimronite family.

²⁵Those were the families from Issachar's family group. The total number of men was 64,300.

²⁶The families in Zebulun's family group were:

Sered—the Seredite family.

Elon—the Elonite family.

Jahleel—the Jahleelite family.

²⁷Those were the families from Zebulun's family group. The total number of men was 60,500.

²⁸Joseph's two sons were Manasseh and Ephraim. Each son became a family group with its own families. ²⁹Manasseh's families were:

Makir—the Makirite family. (Makir was the father of Gilead.)

Gilead—the Gileadite family.

³⁰The families from Gilead were:

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

Iezer—the Iezerite family.

Helek—the Helekite family.

³¹ Asriel—the Asrielite family.

Shechem—the Shechemite family.

³² Shemida—the Shemidaite family.

Hepher—the Hephertite family.

³³ Zelophehad was the son of Hepher.

But he had no sons—only daughters. His daughters' names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

³⁴ Those are all the families in Manasseh's family group. The total number of men was 52,700.

³⁵ The families in Ephraim's family group were:

Shuthelah—the Shuthelahite family.

Beker—the Bekerite family.

Tahan—the Tahanite family.

³⁶ Eran was from Shuthelah's family.

Eran's family was the Eranite family.

³⁷ Those were the families in Ephraim's family group. The total number of men was 32,500. Those are all the people that came from Joseph's family groups.

³⁸ The families in Benjamin's family group were:

Bela—the Belaite family.

Ashbel—the Ashbelite family.

Ahiram—the Ahiramite family.

³⁹ Shupham—the Shuphamite family.

Hupham—the Huphamite family.

⁴⁰ The families from Bela were:

Ard—the Ardite family.

Naaman—the Naamanite family.

⁴¹ Those were all the families in Benjamin's family group. The total number of men was 45,600.

⁴² The families in Dan's family group were:

Shuham—the Shuhamite family group.

That was the family group from Dan's family group. ⁴³ There were many families in the Shuhamite family group. The total number

of men was 64,400.

⁴⁴ The families in Asher's family group were:

Imnah—the Imnite family.

Ishvi—the Ishvite family.

Beriah—the Beriite family.

⁴⁵ The families from Beriah were:

Heber—the Heberite family.

Malkiel—the Malkielite family.

⁴⁶ (Asher also had a daughter named Serah.)

⁴⁷ Those were the families in Asher's family group. The total number of men was 53,400.

⁴⁸ The families from Naphtali's family group were:

Jahzeel—the Jahzeelite family.

Guni—the Gunitite family.

⁴⁹ Jezer—the Jezerite family.

Shillem—the Shillemite family.

⁵⁰ Those were the families from Naphtali's family group. The total number of men was 45,400.

⁵¹ So the total number of men of Israel was 601,730.

⁵² The Lord said to Moses, ⁵³ "The land will be divided and given to these people. Each family group will get enough land for all of the people that were counted. ⁵⁴ A large family will get much land, and a small family will get less land. The land that they get will be equal to the number of people that were counted. ⁵⁵ But you must use lots* to decide which family gets which part of the land. Each family group will get its share of the land. And that land will be given the name of that family group. ⁵⁶ Land will be given to each family—large and small. And you will throw lots to make the decisions."

⁵⁷ They also counted Levi's family group. These are the families from Levi's family group:

Gershon—the Gershonite family.

Kohath—the Kohathite family.

^{*}lots Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Merari—the Merarite family.

²These were also families from Levi's family group:

The Libnite family.
The Hebronite family.
The Mahlite family.
The Mushite family.
The Korahite family.

Amram was from the Kohath family group.

³Amram's wife was named Jochebed. She was also from Levi's family group. She was born in Egypt. Amram and Jochebed has two sons, Aaron and Moses. They also had a daughter, Miriam.

⁴Aaron was the father of Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ⁵But Nadab and Abihu died. They died because they made an offering to the Lord with fire that was not allowed.

⁶The total number of men from Levi's family group was 23,000. But these men were not counted with the other people of Israel. They did not get a share of the land that the Lord gave to the other people.

⁷Moses and Eleazar the priest counted all these people. They counted the people of Israel while they were in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho. ⁸Many years before, in the Sinai desert, Moses and Aaron the priest counted the people of Israel. But all those people were dead. None of those people were still alive. ⁹Why? Because the Lord told those people of Israel that they would all die in the desert. The only two men that were left alive were Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

27 Zelophehad was the son of Hephher. Hephher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir. Makir was the son of Manasseh. Manasseh was the son of Joseph. Zelophehad had five daughters. Their names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. ²These five women went to the Meeting Tent* and stood before Moses, Eleazar the Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

priest, the leaders, and all the people of Israel.

The five daughters said, ³"Our father died while we were traveling through the desert. Our father died a natural death. He was not one of the men that joined Korah's group. (Korah was the man that turned against the Lord.) But our father had no sons. ⁴This means that our father's name will not continue. It is not fair that our father's name will not continue. His name will end because he had no sons. So we ask you to give us some of the land that our father's brothers will get."

⁵So Moses asked the Lord what he should do. ⁶The Lord said to him, ⁷"The daughters of Zelophehad are right. They should share the land with their father's brothers. So give them the land that you would have given to their father.

⁸"So make this law to the people of Israel, ⁹'If a man has no son, and he dies, then everything he owns should be given to his daughter. ¹⁰'If he has no daughter, then everything he owns should be given to his brothers. ¹¹'If he has no brothers, then everything he owns should be given to his father's brothers. ¹²'If his father had no brothers, then everything he owns should be given to the closest relative in his family. This should be a law among the people of Israel. The Lord gives this command to Moses."

Joshua Is the New Leader

¹Then the Lord said to Moses, ²"Go up on one of mountains in the desert east of the Jordan River. There you will see the land that I am giving to the people of Israel. ³After you have seen this land, then you will die like your brother Aaron. ⁴Remember when the people became angry at the water in the desert of Zin. Both you and Aaron refused to obey my command. You did not honor me and show the people that I am holy." (This was at the water of Meribah near Kadesh in the desert of Zin.)

⁵Moses said to the Lord, ⁶"The Lord is the God who knows what people are thinking. Lord, I pray that you will choose a leader for

these people.*¹⁷ I pray that the Lord will choose a leader that will lead them out of this land and bring them into the new land. Then the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

¹⁸So the Lord said to Moses, "Joshua son of Nun will be the new leader. He is very wise.* Make him the new leader. ¹⁹Tell him to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the people. Then make him the new leader.

²⁰"Show the people that you are making him leader,* then all the people will obey him. ²¹If Joshua needs to make a decision, then he will go to Eleazar the priest. Eleazar will use the Urim* to learn the Lord's answer. Then Joshua and all the people of Israel will do the things God says. If he says, 'go to war,' then they will go to war. And if he says, 'go home,' then they will go home."

²²Moses obeyed the Lord. Moses told Joshua to stand before Eleazar the priest, and all the people of Israel. ²³Then Moses put his hands on him to show that he was the new leader. He did this the way the Lord had told him.

Daily Offerings

28 Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ¹"Give this command to the people of Israel. Tell them to be sure to give the grain offerings and sacrifices to me at the right time. Those are the offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. ²These are the offerings made by fire that they must give to the Lord. Every day they must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³Offer one of the lambs in the morning, and offer the other lamb at twilight.* ⁴Also give a grain offering of 8 cups*

of fine flour mixed with 1 quart* of olive oil." ⁵(They started giving the daily offerings at Mount Sinai. They were offerings made by fire. Their smell pleased the Lord.) ⁶The people must also give the drink offerings that go with the offerings made by fire. They must give 1 quart* of wine with every lamb. Pour that drink offering, on the altar, in the Holy Place. This is a gift to the Lord. ⁷Offer the second lamb at twilight.* Offer it just like the morning offering. Also give the drink offering that goes with it. This will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord."

Sabbath Offerings

⁸"On the Sabbath,* you must give 2 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. You must also give a grain offering of 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil, and a drink offering. ⁹This is a special offering for the day of rest. This offering is in addition to the regular daily offering and drink offering."

Monthly Meetings

¹⁰"On the first day of each month you will offer a special burnt offering to the Lord. This offering will be 2 male bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹¹You must give a grain offering of 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each bull. Also you must give a grain offering of 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with the ram. ¹²Also give a grain offering of 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each lamb. This will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. ¹³The drink offering will be 2 quarts* of wine with each bull, 1 1/4 quarts* of wine with the ram, and 1 quart* of wine with each lamb. That is the burnt offering that must be offered

The ... people Literally, "May the Lord, the God of the spirits of all people, appoint a man for this community."

Joshua ... wise Literally, "Take Joshua son of Nun. He is a man with a spirit in him." This might mean that Joshua was very wise, or it might mean that God's Spirit was with him.

Show ... leader Literally, "Give him some of your glory."

Urim Used together with the Thummim to learn God's answer to questions. They were probably like lots-stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

twilight The time after the sun goes down, but before dark.

8 cups Literally, "1/10 of an ephah."

1 quart Literally, "1/4 hin."

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

16 cups Literally, "2/10 of an ephah."

24 cups Literally, "3/10 of an ephah."

2 quarts Literally, "1/2 hin."

1 1/4 quarts Literally, "1/5 hin."

each and every month of the year. ¹⁵In addition to the regular daily burnt offering and drink offering, you must also give 1 male goat to the Lord. That goat will be a sin offering.

Passover

¹⁶“Passover will be on the 14th day of the first month. ¹⁷The Festival of Unleavened Bread begins on the 15th day of that month. This holiday lasts for seven days. The only bread you can eat is bread made without yeast. ¹⁸You must have a special meeting on the first day of this holiday. You will not do any work on that day. ¹⁹You will give burnt offerings to the Lord. The burnt offerings will be 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁰You must also give a grain offering of 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with each bull, and 16 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with the ram, and 8 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil for each lamb. ²¹You must also give 1 male goat. That goat will be a sin offering to make you pure.* ²²You must give those offerings in addition to the morning burnt offerings that you give every day.

²³In the same way, each day for seven days, you must give the offerings made by fire to the Lord and the drink offerings that go with them. The smell of these offerings will please the Lord. The offerings will be food for the people. You must give these offerings in addition to the burnt offerings that you give every day.

²⁴Then, on the seventh day of this holiday, you will have another special meeting. You will not do any work on that day.

Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)

²⁵“At the Festival of Firstfruits* (the Festival of Weeks) use the new crops to give a grain offering to the Lord. At that time, you must also call a special meeting. You must not do any work on that day. ²⁶You must offer a burnt offering. It will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. You must offer 2 bulls, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁷You must also give 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with each bull and 16 cups* with each ram, ²⁸and 8 cups* with each lamb. ²⁹You must also sacrifice 1 male goat to make you pure.* ³⁰You must give those offerings in addition to the daily burnt offerings and the grain offering you give with them. Be sure there is nothing wrong with the animals or the drink offerings that you give with them.

Festival of Trumpets

29 “There will be a special meeting on the first day of the seventh month. You will not do any work on that day. That is the day for blowing the trumpet.* ²You will offer burnt offerings. They will be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. You will offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³You will also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with the bull, 16 cups* with the ram, ⁴and 8 cups* with each of the 7 lambs. ⁵Also, offer 1 male goat for a sin offering to make you pure.* ⁶Those offerings are in addition to the New Moon* sacrifice and its grain offering. And they are in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings. Those must be done according to the rules. They must be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord.

24 cups Literally, “²/₃ of an ephah.”

16 cups Literally, “¹/₂ of an ephah.”

8 cups Literally, “¹/₃ of an ephah.”

make ... pure Or, “make atonement.” The Hebrew word means “to cover,” “to hide,” or “to erase sins.”

Firstfruits Grain, such as wheat, and other crops that began to ripen around May and June. The first crops harvested were given to God.

blowing the trumpet Or, “shouting.” This might mean that this is a day for shouting and being happy.

New Moon The first day of the Jewish month. This was a special day of worship.

The Day of Atonement

⁷"There will be a special meeting on the tenth day of the seventh month. During that day you must not eat any food.* And you must not do any work. ⁸You will offer burnt offerings. They will be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ⁹You must also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with olive oil with the bull, 16 cups* with the ram, ¹⁰and 8 cups* with each of the 7 lambs. ¹¹You will also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This will be in addition to the sin offering for the Day of Atonement.* This will also be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

Festival of Shelters

¹²"There will be a special meeting on the 15th day of the seventh month. (This will be the Festival of Shelters.)* You must not do any work on that day. You must celebrate a special holiday for the Lord for seven days. ¹³You will offer burnt offerings. They will be offerings made by fire. Their smell will please the Lord. You will offer 13 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁴You must also offer 24 cups* of fine flour mixed with oil with each of the 13 bulls, 16 cups* with each of the 2 rams, ¹⁵and 8 cups* with each of the 14 lambs. ¹⁶You must also offer 1 male goat. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

During ... food Literally, "You will humble your souls."

24 cups Literally, "2/10 of an ephah."

16 cups Literally, "2/10 of an ephah."

8 cups Literally, "2/10 of an ephah."

Day of Atonement Also called "Yom Kippur"—a very important holiday for the Jews. On this day, the high priest went into the Most Holy Place and did the ceremony that atoned (covered or erased) the sins of the people.

Festival of Shelters Also called "Succoth" or "Feast of Tabernacles." At this time in ancient Israel, Jewish people traveled to Jerusalem and camped out in tents and temporary shelters to help them remember their time in the Sinai desert.

¹⁷"On the second day of this holiday, you must offer 12 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ¹⁸You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ¹⁹You must also offer 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁰"On the third day of this holiday, you must offer 11 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²¹You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²²You must also give 1 goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²³"On the fourth day of this holiday, you must offer 10 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁴You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²⁵You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁶"On the fifth day of this holiday, you must offer 9 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ²⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ²⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

²⁹"On the sixth day of this holiday, you must offer 8 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³⁰You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs. ³¹You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³²"On the seventh day of this holiday, you must offer 7 bulls, 2 rams, and 14 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong

with them. ³³You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bulls, rams, and lambs. ³⁴You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³⁵"The eighth day, of this holiday, is a very special meeting for you. You must not do any work on that day. ³⁶You must offer a burnt offering. It will be an offering made by fire. Its smell will please the Lord. You must offer 1 bull, 1 ram, and 7 lambs that are one year old. There must be nothing wrong with them. ³⁷You must also give the right amount of grain and drink offerings with the bull, ram, and lambs. ³⁸You must also give 1 male goat as a sin offering. This must be in addition to the daily sacrifice and its grain offerings and drink offerings.

³⁹"At the special holidays you must bring your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, and fellowship offerings. You must give those offerings to the Lord. Those offerings are in addition to any special gift you might want to give to the Lord and any offering that is part of any special promise you make.

⁴⁰"Moses told the people of Israel about all of the things that the Lord had commanded him.

Special Promises

30 Moses spoke with all the leaders of the Israelite family groups. Moses told them about these commands from the Lord:

¹If a person wants to make a special promise to God, or if that person promises to give something special to God, then let him do that thing. But that person must do exactly what he promises!

²A young woman might still be living in her father's house. And that young woman might make a special promise to give something to the Lord. ³If her father hears about the promise and agrees, then the young woman must do the thing she promised. ⁴But if her father hears about the promise and does not agree, then she is free from her promise. She does not have to do the thing she promised. Her father stopped her, so the Lord will forgive her.

⁵Also, a man's wife might make a special promise to give something to the Lord. ⁶If the husband hears about the promise and agrees, then the woman must do the thing she promised. ⁷But if the husband hears about the promise and does not agree, then the wife does not have to do the thing she promised. Her husband broke the promise—he did not let her do the thing she said. So the Lord will forgive her.

⁸A widow* or a divorced woman might make a special promise. If she does, then she must do exactly what she promised. ⁹A married woman might make a promise to give something to the Lord. ¹⁰If her husband hears about the promise and lets her keep her promise, then she must do exactly what she promised. She must give everything she promised. ¹¹But if her husband hears about the promise and refuses to let her keep the promise, then she does not have to do what she promised. It does not matter what she promised, her husband can break the promise. If her husband breaks the promise, then the Lord will forgive her. ¹²A married woman might promise to give something to the Lord, or she might promise to do without something,* or she might make some other special promise to God. The husband can stop any of those promises, and the husband can let her keep any of those promises. ¹³How does the husband let his wife keep her promises? If he hears about the promises and does not stop them, then the woman must do exactly what she promised. ¹⁴But if the husband hears about the promises and stops them, then he is responsible for breaking her promises.*

¹⁵Those are the commands that the Lord gave to Moses. Those are the commands about a man and his wife, and about a father and his daughter that is still young and living at home in her father's house.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

do without something Literally, "humble her soul." Usually this means to make the body suffer in some way, such as by not eating food.

he is ... promises Literally, "he carries her guilt."

Israel Fights Back Against the Midianites

31 The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, ¹"I will help the people of Israel get even with the Midianites. After that, Moses, you will die.*

²So Moses spoke to the people. He said, "Choose some of your men to be soldiers. The Lord will use those men to get even with the Midianites. 'Choose 1,000 men from each of the family groups of Israel. 'There will be a total of 12,000 soldiers from the family groups of Israel."

³Moses sent those 12,000 men to war. He sent Eleazar the priest with them. Eleazar took the holy things and the horns and trumpets with him. ⁴The people of Israel fought the Midianites like the Lord had commanded. They killed all of the Midianite men. ⁵Among the people that they killed were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with a sword.

⁶The people of Israel took the Midianite women and children as prisoners. They also took all their sheep, cows, and other things. ⁷Then they burned all their towns and villages. ⁸They took all the people and animals ⁹and brought them to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the other people of Israel. They brought all of the things they took in war to the camp of Israel. The people of Israel were camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was on the east side of the Jordan River across from Jericho. ¹⁰Then Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people went out of the camp to meet with the soldiers.

¹¹Moses was very angry against the leaders of the army. He was angry against the commanders of 1,000 men and against the commanders of 100 men that came back from the war. ¹²Moses said to them, "Why did you let the women live? ¹³These women will be bad for the men of Israel. The people will turn away from the Lord. It will be like the time of Balaam. It will be like at Peor. The disease will again come to the Lord's people. ¹⁴Now, kill all

the Midianite boys. And kill all the Midianite women that had lived with a man. Kill all the Midianite women that had sexual relations with any man. ¹⁵You can let all the young girls live—but only if they never had sexual relations with any man. ¹⁶And then, all of you men that killed other people must stay outside the camp for seven days. You must stay outside the camp even if you just touched a dead body. On the third day, you and your prisoners must make yourselves pure. You must do the same thing again on the seventh day. ¹⁷You must wash all of your clothes. You must wash anything made with leather, wool, or wood. You must become pure."

¹⁸Then Eleazar the priest spoke to the soldiers. He said, "Those are the rules that the Lord gave to Moses. Those rules are about soldiers coming back from war. ¹⁹But the rules for things that can be put in the fire are different. You must put gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, or lead into the fire. And then wash those things with water and they will be pure. If things cannot be put in fire, then you must still wash them with water. ²⁰On the seventh day you must wash all of your clothes. Then you will become pure. After that you can come into camp."

²¹Then the Lord said to Moses, ²²"You, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders should count all of the prisoners, animals, and all of the things that the soldiers took in war. ²³Then divide those things between the soldiers that went to war and the rest of the people of Israel. ²⁴Take part of those things from the soldiers that went to war. That part will belong to the Lord. The Lord's share is one thing for every 500 things. This includes people, cows, donkeys, and sheep. ²⁵Take those things from the soldiers' half of the things they took in war. Then give those things to Eleazar the priest. That part will belong to the Lord. ²⁶And then, from the people's half, take one thing for every 50 things. This includes people, cows, donkeys, sheep, or any other animal. Give that share to the Levites. Why? Because the Levites take care of the Lord's Holy Tent."

you will die Literally, "you will be gathered to your people."

³¹So Moses and Eleazar did what the Lord commanded Moses. ³²The soldiers had taken 675,000 sheep, ³³72,000 cows, ³⁴61,000 donkeys, ³⁵and 32,000 women. (Those are only the women that had not had sexual relations with any man.) ³⁶The soldiers that went to war got 337,500 sheep. ³⁷They gave 675 sheep to the Lord. ³⁸The soldiers got 36,000 cows. They gave 72 cows to the Lord. ³⁹The soldiers got 30,500 donkeys. They gave 61 donkeys to the Lord. ⁴⁰The soldiers got 16,000 women. They gave 32 women to the Lord. ⁴¹Moses gave all of those gifts for the Lord to Eleazar the priest, like the Lord had commanded him.

⁴²Then Moses counted the people's half. This was their share that Moses had taken from the soldiers that had gone to war. ⁴³The people got 337,500 sheep, ⁴⁴36,000 cows, ⁴⁵30,500 donkeys, ⁴⁶and 16,000 women. ⁴⁷For every 50 things, Moses took one thing for the Lord. This included the animals and the people. Then he gave those things to the Levites. Why? Because they took care of the Lord's Holy Tent. Moses did this like the Lord commanded.

⁴⁸Then the leaders of the army (the leaders over 1,000 men and the leaders over 100 men) came to Moses. ⁴⁹They told Moses, "We, your servants, have counted our soldiers. We have not missed any of them. ⁵⁰So we are bringing the Lord's gift from every soldier. We are bringing things that are made of gold—arm bands, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces. This gift to the Lord is to make us pure."

⁵¹So Moses took all of those things made from gold and gave them to Eleazar the priest. ⁵²The gold that the leaders of 1,000 men and the leaders of 100 men gave to the Lord weighed about 420 pounds.* ⁵³The soldiers kept the rest of their share of the things they took in war. ⁵⁴Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold from the leaders of 1,000 men and the leaders of 100 men. Then they put that gold in the

Meeting Tent.* This present was a memorial* before the Lord for the people of Israel.

The Family Groups East of the Jordan River

32 The family groups of Reuben and Gad had many, many cows. Those people looked at the land near Jazer and Gilead. They saw that this land was good for their cows. ³So the people from the family groups of Reuben and Gad came to Moses. They spoke to Moses, Eleazar the priest, and the leaders of the people. ⁴They said, "We, your servants, have many, many cows. And the land that we have fought against is a good land for cows. This land includes the area around Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sibmah,* Nebo, and Beon. ⁵If it pleases you, we would like this land to be given to us. Don't take us to the other side of the Jordan River."

⁶Moses told the people from the family groups of Reuben and Gad, "Will you let your brothers go and fight while you settle here? ⁷Why are you trying to discourage the people of Israel? You will make them not want to cross the river and take the land that the Lord has given to them! ⁸Your fathers did the same thing to me. In Kadesh Barnea I sent spies to look at the land. ⁹Those men went as far as Eshcol Valley. They saw the land. And those men discouraged the people of Israel. Those men made the people of Israel not want to go into the land that the Lord had given to them. ¹⁰The Lord became very angry at the people. The Lord made this promise: ¹¹'None of the people that came from Egypt and that are 20 years old or older will be allowed to see this land. I made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give this land to these people. But they have not truly followed me. So they will not get this land.' ¹²Only Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun truly followed the Lord!"

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel came to meet with God.

memorial Something that helps people remember things that happened in the past.

Sibmah Or, "Sebam."

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

420 pounds Literally, "16,750 shekels."

¹¹"The Lord was very angry against the people of Israel. So the Lord made the people stay in the desert for 40 years. The Lord made them stay there until all the people that had sinned against the Lord were dead. ¹²"And now you are doing the same thing that your fathers did. You sinful people, do you want the Lord to be even more angry against his people? ¹³"If you quit following the Lord, then the Lord will make Israel stay even longer in the desert. Then you will destroy all of these people!"

¹⁴"But the people from Reuben's and Gad's family groups, went to Moses. They said, "We will build cities for our children and barns for our animals here. ¹⁵"Then our children can be safe from the other people that live in this land. But we will gladly come and help the other people of Israel. We will bring them to their land. ¹⁶"We will not come back home until everyone in Israel has taken his part of the land. ¹⁷"We won't take any of the land west of the Jordan River. No! Our part of the land is east of the Jordan River."

¹⁸"So Moses told them, "If you do all of these things, then this land will belong to you. But your soldiers must go before the Lord into battle. ¹⁹"Your soldiers must cross the Jordan River and force the enemy to leave the country. ²⁰"After the Lord helps us all take the land, then you can go back home. Then the Lord and Israel will not think that you are guilty. Then the Lord will let you have this land. ²¹"But if you don't do these things, then you will be sinning against the Lord. And know for sure that you will be punished for your sin. ²²"Build cities for your children and barns for your animals. But then, you must do what you promised."

²³"Then the people from the family groups of Gad and Reuben said to Moses, "We are your servants. You are our master. So we will do what you say. ²⁴"Our wives, children, and all our animals will stay in the Gilead cities. ²⁵"But we, your servants, will cross the Jordan River. We will march before the Lord into battle, like our master says."

²⁶"So Moses, Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and all the leaders of the family groups of Israel heard them make that promise. ²⁷"Moses

said to them, "The people of Gad and Reuben will cross the Jordan River. They will march before the Lord into battle. They will help you take the land. And you will give the land of Gilead as their part of the country. ²⁸"They promise to help you take the land of Canaan."

²⁹"The people of Gad and Reuben answered, "We promise to do what the Lord commanded. ³⁰"We will cross the Jordan River, and march before the Lord into the land of Canaan. And our part of the country is the land east of the Jordan River."

³¹"So Moses gave that land to the people of Gad, to the people of Reuben, and to half of Manasseh's family group. (Manasseh was Joseph's son.) That land included the kingdom of Sihon the Amorite and the kingdom of Og, king of Bashan. That land included all the cities around that area.

³²"The people of Gad built the cities of Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, ³³"Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, ³⁴"Beth Nimrah, and Beth Haran. They built cities with strong walls, and they built barns for their animals.

³⁵"The people of Reuben built Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, ³⁶"Nebo, Baal Meon, and Sibmah. They used the names of the cities that they built again. But they changed the names of Nebo and Baal Meon.

³⁷"People from Makir's family group, went to Gilead. (Makir was Manasseh's son.) They defeated the city. They defeated the Amorites that lived there. ³⁸"So Moses gave Gilead to Makir from Manasseh's family group. So his family settled there. ³⁹"Jair, from the family of Manasseh, defeated the small towns there. Then he called them Towns of Jair. ⁴⁰"Nobah defeated Kenath and the small towns near it. Then he called that place by his own name.

Israel's Journey from Egypt

33 Moses and Aaron led the people of Israel out of Egypt in groups.* Here are the places they traveled. ²Moses wrote about the places they traveled. Moses wrote the

groups Or, "divisions." This is a military term that shows Israel was organized like an army."

things that the Lord wanted. Here are the places they traveled and when they left:

³On the 15th day of the first month, they left Rameses. That morning after Passover, the people of Israel marched out of Egypt with their arms raised in victory. All the people of Egypt saw them. "The Egyptians were burying all of the people that the Lord killed. They were burying all of their firstborn* sons. The Lord had shown his judgment against the gods* of Egypt."

⁴The people of Israel left Rameses and traveled to Succoth. "From Succoth they traveled to Etham. The people camped there at the edge of the desert. They left Etham and went to Pi Hahiroth. This was near Baal Zaphon. The people camped near Migdol."

⁵The people left Pi Hahiroth and walked through the middle of the sea. They went toward the desert. Then they traveled for three days through the Etham desert. The people camped at Marah.

⁶The people left Marah and went to Elim and camped there. There were 12 springs of water and 70 palm trees there.

⁷The people left Elim and camped near the Red Sea.*

⁸The people left the Red Sea* and camped in the Zin desert.

⁹The people left the Zin desert and camped at Dophkah.

¹⁰The people left Dophkah and camped at Alush.

¹¹The people left Alush and camped at Rephidim. At that place, there was no water for the people to drink.

¹²The people left Rephidim and camped in the Sinai desert.

¹³The people left the Sinai desert and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.

¹⁴The people left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.

¹⁵The people left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.

¹⁶The people left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.

¹⁷The people left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.

¹⁸The people left Libnah and camped at Rissah.

¹⁹The people left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.

²⁰The people left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.

²¹The people left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.

²²The people left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.

²³The people left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.

²⁴The people left Tahath and camped at Terah.

²⁵The people left Terah and camped at Mithcah.

²⁶The people left Mithcah and camped at Hashmonah.

²⁷The people left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.

²⁸The people left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.

²⁹The people left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.

³⁰The people left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

³¹The people left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.

³²The people left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.

³³The people left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the Zin desert.

³⁴The people left Kadesh and camped at Hor. This was the mountain at the border of the country Edom. "Aaron the priest obeyed the Lord and went up Mount Hor. Aaron died at that place. Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month. That was the 40th year after the people of Israel had left Egypt. "Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor."

³⁵Arad was a town in the Negev,* in the

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

gods This might be the false gods of Egypt or here it might mean the king and other powerful leaders in Egypt.

Red Sea Or "Reed Sea." See 1 Kings 9:26.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

land of Canaan. The Canaanite king in that place heard that the people of Israel were coming. "The people left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.

"The people left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.

"The people left Punon and camped at Oboth.

"The people left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim. This was at the border of the country Moab.

"The people left Iyim (*Iye Abarim*) and camped at Dibon Gad.

"The people left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.

"The people left Almon Diblathaim and camped on the mountains of Abarim near Nebo.

"The people left the mountains of Abarim and camped in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was near the Jordan River across from Jericho.

"They camped by the Jordan River in the Jordan Valley in Moab. Their camp went from Beth Jeshimoth to Acacia Field.

"At that place, the Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Speak to the people of Israel. Tell them these things: You will cross the Jordan River. You will go into the land of Canaan. "You will take the land from the people you find there. You must destroy all of their carved statues and idols. You must destroy all of their high places.* "You will take the land and you will settle there. Why? Because I am giving this land to you. It will belong to your families. "Each of your families will get part of the land. You will throw lots* to decide which family gets each part of the country. Large families will get large parts of the land. Small families will get small parts of the land. The lots will show which family gets which part of the land. Each family group will get its part of the land.

"You must force those other people to leave the country. If you let those people stay in your country, then they will bring many troubles to

you. They will be like stickers in your eyes and they will be like thorns in your side. They will bring many troubles to the country where you will be living. "I showed you what I would do—and I will do that to you if you let those people stay in your country."

The Borders of Canaan

34 The Lord spoke to Moses. He said, "Give this command to the people of Israel: You are coming to the land of Canaan. You will defeat this country. You will take the whole land of Canaan. "On the south, you will get part of the Zin desert near Edom. Your southern border will start at the southern end of the Dead Sea. "It will cross south of Scorpion Pass. It will go through the Zin desert to Kadesh Barnea, and then to Hazar Addar and then it will pass through Azmon. "From Azmon, the border will go to the River of Egypt, and it will end at the Mediterranean Sea. "Your western border will be the Mediterranean Sea. "Your northern border will begin at the Mediterranean Sea and go to Mount Hor (*in Lebanon*). "From Mount Hor, it will go to Lebo-Hamath, and then to Zedad. "Then that border will go to Ziphron and it will end at Hazar Enan. So that will be your northern border. "Your eastern border will begin at Enan and it will go to Shepham. "From Shepham, the border will go east of Ain to Riblah. The border will continue along the hills by Lake Galilee.* "Then the border will continue along the Jordan River. It will end at the Dead Sea. Those are the borders around your country."

"So Moses gave this command to the people of Israel: That is the land that you will get. You will throw lots* to divide the land among the ten family groups and half of Manasseh's family group. "Reuben's and Gad's family groups, and half of Manasseh's family group have already taken their land. "Those two and a half family groups took the land near Jericho—they took the land east of the Jordan River."

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Lake Galilee Literally, "Kinnereth Lake."

¹⁶Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said,
¹⁷"These are the men that will help you divide
 the land: Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun,
¹⁸and the leaders of all the family groups. There
 will be one leader from each family group.
 Those men will divide the land. ¹⁹These are the
 names of the leaders:

- from Judah's family group—Caleb son of
Jephunneh;
- ²⁰ from Simeon's family group—Shemuel
son of Ammihud;
- ²¹ from Benjamin's family group—Elidad
son of Kislon;
- ²² from Dan's family group—Bukki son of
Jogli;
- ²³ from Manasseh's family group—Hanniel
son of Ephod;
(Mannasseh was one of Joseph's sons.)
- ²⁴ from Ephraim's family group—Kemuel
son of Shiptan;
(Ephraim was one of Joseph's sons.)
- ²⁵ from Zebulun's family group—Elizaphan
son of Parnach;
- ²⁶ from Issachar's family group—Paltiel son
of Azzan;
- ²⁷ from Asher's family group—Ahihud son
of Shelomi;
- ²⁸ from Naphtali's family group—Pedahel
son of Ammihud."

²⁹The Lord chose those men to divide the
 land of Canaan among the people of Israel.

The Levites' Towns

35 The Lord spoke to Moses. This was in
 the Jordan Valley in Moab, near the
 Jordan River, across from Jericho. The Lord
 said, ¹"Tell the people of Israel that they should
 give some of the cities in their part of the land
 to the Levites. The people of Israel should give
 those cities and the pastures around them to the
 Levites. ²The Levites will be able to live in
 those cities. And all the cows and other animals
 that belong to the Levites will be able to eat
 from the pastures around those cities. ³How
 much of your land should you give to the
 Levites? From the walls of the cities, go out

1,500 feet*—all of that land will belong to the
 Levites. ⁴Also, all of the land 3,000 feet* east
 of the city, and 3,000 feet south of the city, and
 3,000 feet west of the city, and 3,000 feet north
 of the city will belong to the Levites. (The city
 will be in the middle of all that land.) ⁵Six of
 those cities will be cities of safety. If a person
 accidentally kills someone, then that person
 can run to those towns for safety. In addition to
 those six cities, you will also give 42 more
 cities to the Levites. ⁶So you will give a total of
 48 cities to the Levites. You will also give them
 the land around those cities. ⁷The large families
 of Israel will get large pieces of land. The small
 families of Israel will get small pieces of land.
 But all of the family groups, must give some
 of the cities in their part of the country to the
 Levites."

⁸Then the Lord spoke to Moses. He said,
⁹"Tell the people these things: You people will
 cross the Jordan River and go into the land of
 Canaan. ¹⁰You must choose towns to be cities
 of safety. If a person accidentally kills another
 person, then that person can run to one of those
 cities for safety. ¹¹That person will be safe from
 anyone from the dead man's family that wants
 to get even. That person will be safe until he is
 judged in court. ¹²There will be six cities of
 safety. ¹³Three of those cities will be east of the
 Jordan River. And three of those cities will be
 in the land of Canaan, west of the Jordan
 River. ¹⁴Those cities will be places of safety
 for citizens of Israel, and for foreigners and
 travelers. Any of those people will be able to
 run to one of those cities if he accidentally kills
 someone.

¹⁵"If a person uses an iron weapon* to kill
 someone, then that person must die. ¹⁶And if a
 person takes a rock and kills someone, then that
 person must die. (But the rock must be the size
 of rock that would normally be used for killing
 people.) ¹⁷And if a person uses a piece of wood

1,500 feet Literally, "1,000 cubits." The people probably let
 their sheep and cows use this land.

3,000 feet Literally, "2,000 cubits." The Levites probably
 used this land for gardens and vineyards.

iron weapon This shows the murderer chose a weapon he
 knew could kill the other person.

and kills someone, then that person must die. (The piece of wood must be a weapon that people normally use for killing people.) "A member of the dead man's family* can chase that murderer and kill him.

^{20,21}"A person might hit someone with his hand and kill him. Or a person might push someone and kill him. Or a person might throw something at someone and kill him. If the killer did that from hate, then he is a murderer. That person must be killed. A member of the dead man's family* can chase that murderer and kill him.

²²"But a person might accidentally kill someone. That person didn't hate the person he killed—it was only an accident. Or a person might throw something and accidentally kill someone—he didn't plan to kill anyone. ²³Or a person might throw a rock. And that rock might fall on someone that person didn't see and the rock might kill that person. That person didn't plan to kill anyone. That person didn't hate the person he killed—it was only an accident. ²⁴If that happens, then the community must decide what to do. The community's court must decide if a member of the dead man's family* can kill that person. ²⁵If the court decides to let the killer live, then that person must go to his city of safety. He must stay there until the high priest dies—this must be the high priest that was anointed* with the holy oil.

^{26,27}"That man must never go outside the limits of his city of safety. If he goes outside those limits, and if a member of the dead man's family* catches him and kills him, then that member won't be guilty of murder. ²⁸The person that accidentally killed someone must stay in his city of safety until the high priest dies. After the high priest dies, that person can go back to his own land. ²⁹Those rules will be the law forever in all of the towns of your people.

³⁰"A killer should be put to death as a murderer only if there are witnesses. No person can be put to death if there is only one witness.

³¹"If a person is a murderer, then he must be put to death. Don't take money and change his punishment. That murderer must be killed.

³²"If a person killed someone and then ran to one of the cities of safety, then don't take money to let him go home. That person must stay in that city until the high priest dies.

³³"Don't let your land be ruined with innocent blood. If a person murders someone, then the only payment for that crime is that the murderer must be killed! There is no other payment that will free the land from that crime.

³⁴"I am the Lord! I will be living in your country with the people of Israel. I will be living there, so don't make it unclean* with the blood of innocent people."

The Land of Zelophehad's Daughters

36 Manasseh was Joseph's son. Makir was Manasseh's son.* Gilead was Makir's son. The leaders of Gilead's family went to talk to Moses and the leaders of Israel's family groups. ²They said, "Sir, the Lord commanded us to get our land by throwing lots.* And sir, the Lord commanded Zelophehad's land be given to his daughters. Zelophehad was our brother. ³Maybe a man from one of the other family groups will marry one of Zelophehad's daughters. Will that land leave our family? Will the people of that other family group get that land? Will we lose the land that we got by throwing lots? ⁴People might sell their land. But, in the Jubilee year,* all of the land is returned to the family group that really owns it. At that time, who will get

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

Makir ... son Or, "Makir was from Manasseh's family group."

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Jubilee year See Lev. 25 for the rules the Jews were to follow during this special time.

member ... family Literally, "the blood avenger."

Usually, this was a friend or family member that would chase a dead man's murderer and kill him.

anoint Here, this means to pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be the priest on duty.

the land that belongs to Zelophehad's daughters? If that happens, then our family will lose that land forever."

"Moses gave this command to the people of Israel. This command was from the Lord. "These men from Joseph's family group are right! 'This is the Lord's command to Zelophehad's daughters: If you want to marry someone, then you must marry someone from your own family group.' In this way, land will not be passed from family group to family group among the people of Israel. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to his own ancestors.* 'And if some woman gets her father's land, then she must marry someone from her own family group. In this way, each

person will keep the land that belonged to his ancestors. "So, the land must not be passed: from family group to family group among the people of Israel. Each Israelite will keep the land that belonged to his own ancestors."

"Zelophehad's daughters obeyed the Lord's command to Moses. "So Zelophehad's daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah—married their cousins. "Their husbands were from Manasseh's family group, so their land continued to belong to their father's family and family group.

"So those were the laws and commands that the Lord gave to Moses in the Jordan Valley in Moab. This was by the Jordan River, across from Jericho.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Deuteronomy

Moses Talks to the People of Israel

1 This is the message that Moses gave the people of Israel. He told them these things when they were in the Jordan Valley, in the desert east of the Jordan River. This was across from Suph, between the desert of Paran and the cities Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

²The trip from Mount Horeb (*Sinai*) through the Seir mountains to Kadesh Barnea takes only eleven days. ³But it was 40 years from the time the people of Israel left Egypt until the time they came to this place. On the first day of the eleventh month of the 40th year, Moses spoke to the people. Moses told them all the things the Lord commanded. ⁴This was after the Lord defeated Sihon and Og. (Sihon was the king of the Amorite people. Sihon lived in Heshbon. Og was the king of Bashan. Og lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei.) ⁵The people of Israel were on the east side of the Jordan River in the land of Moab, and Moses began to explain the things that God commanded. Moses said:

⁶“At Mount Horeb (*Sinai*) the Lord our God spoke to us. He said, ‘You have stayed at this mountain long enough. ⁷Go to the hill country where the Amorite people live. Go to all the places around there. Go to the Jordan Valley, the hill country, the western slopes, the Negev,* and the seacoast. Go to the land of Canaan. And go to Lebanon. Go as far as the great river, the Euphrates. ⁸Look, I am giving you that land. Go and take it. I promised to give

that land to your ancestors*—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I promised to give that land to them and to their descendants.*⁹”

Moses Chooses Leaders

¹⁰Moses said, “At that time I told you: I can’t take care of you by myself. ¹¹And now, there are even more of you! The Lord your God has added more and more people, so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky! ¹²May the Lord, the God of your ancestors,* make you 1,000 times more than you are now! May he bless you like he promised! ¹³But I couldn’t take care of you and solve all your arguments by myself. ¹⁴So I told you: ‘Choose some men from each family group, and I will make them leaders over you. Choose wise men that have understanding and experience.’

¹⁵“And you said, ‘That is a good thing to do.’

¹⁶“So I took the wise and experienced men you chose from your family groups, and I made them your leaders. In this way, I gave you leaders over 1,000 people, leaders over 100 people, leaders over 50 people, leaders over 10 people, and I gave you officers for your family groups.

¹⁷“At that time, I told the judges, ‘Listen to the arguments between your people. Be fair when you judge each case. It does not matter if the problem is between two Israelite people or

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

between an Israelite and a foreigner. You must judge each case fairly. ¹⁷When you judge, you must not think that one person is more important than another person. You must judge every person the same. Don't be afraid of anyone, because your decision is from God. But if there is a case too hard for you to judge, then bring it to me and I will judge it. ¹⁸At that same time, I also told you all the other things you must do.

The Spies Go to Canaan

¹⁹"Then we obeyed the Lord our God. We left Mount Horeb (*Sinai*) and traveled toward the hill country of the Amorite people. We went through that big and terrible desert that you saw. We came to Kadesh Barnea. ²⁰Then I said to you, 'You have now come to the hill country of the Amorites. The Lord our God will give us this country. ²¹Look, there it is! Go up and take the land for your own! The Lord, the God of your ancestors,* told you to do this. So don't be afraid. Don't worry about anything!'

²²"But you all came to me and said, 'Let's send some men to look at the land first. They can look for all the strong and weak places there. Then they can come back and tell us the way we should go. They can also tell us about the cities we will come to.'

²³"I thought that was a good idea. So I chose twelve men from among you, one man from each family group. ²⁴Then those men left and went up to the hill country. They came to the Valley of Eshcol and explored it. ²⁵They took some of the fruit from that land and brought it back to us. They told us about the land. They said, 'The Lord our God is giving us a good land!'

²⁶"But you refused to go into the land. You refused to obey the Lord your God. ²⁷You went to your tents and began to complain. You said, 'The Lord hates us! He brought us out of the land of Egypt just to let the Amorite people destroy us! ²⁸Where can we go now? Our brothers (*the twelve spies*) have made us afraid

with their report. They said: The people there are bigger and taller than we are! The cities are big and have walls as high as the sky! And we saw giants* there!'

²⁹"So I said to you, 'Don't be upset! Don't be afraid of those people! ³⁰The Lord your God will go before you and fight for you. He will do this the same as he did in Egypt. You saw him go before you there ³¹and in the desert. You saw how the Lord your God carried you, like a man carries his son. The Lord brought you safely all the way to this place.'

³²"But you still did not trust the Lord your God! ³³When you were traveling, he went before you to find a place for you to put your camp. He went before you in a fire by night and in a cloud by day to show you which way you should go.

People Not Allowed to Enter Canaan

³⁴"The Lord heard what you said, and he became angry. He made a strong promise. He said, ³⁵"None of you evil people that are living now will go into the good land that I promised to your ancestors.* ³⁶Only Caleb son of Jephunneh will see that land. I will give Caleb the land he walked on. And I will give that land to Caleb's descendants.* Why? Because Caleb did all that I commanded.'

People Not Allowed to Enter Canaan

³⁷"The Lord was also angry with me because of you. He said to me, 'Moses, you can't enter the land, either. ³⁸But your helper, Joshua son of Nun will go into the land. Encourage Joshua, because he will lead the people of Israel to take the land for their own.'

³⁹"And the Lord said to us, 'You said your little children would be taken by your enemies. But those children will go into the land. I don't blame your children for your mistake, because, they are still too young to know if something is

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

giants Literally, "Anakites," descendants of Anak. They were a family famous for tall and powerful fighting men. See Numbers 13:33.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

right or wrong. So I will give the land to them. Your children will take the land for their own.

⁴⁰But you—you must turn around and go back to the desert on the road that leads to the Red Sea.'

⁴¹"Then you said, 'Moses, we have sinned against the Lord. But now we will go and fight, like the Lord our God commanded us before.' Then each of you put on your weapons. You thought it would be easy to go and take the hill country.

⁴²"But the Lord said to me, 'Tell the people not to go up there and fight. Why? Because I will not be with them, and their enemies will defeat them!'

⁴³"I spoke to you, but you did not listen. You refused to obey the Lord's command. You thought you could use your own power. So you went up into the hill country. "But the Amorite people that live there came out to fight against you. They were like a swarm of bees chasing you. They chased you all the way from Seir to Hormah. "Then you came back and cried to the Lord for help. But the Lord refused to listen to you. "So you stayed at Kadesh a long time.

Israel Wanders through the Desert

2 "Then we went back into the desert on the road that leads to the Red Sea. That is what the Lord told me to do. We traveled around the Seir* mountains for a long time. "Then the Lord said to me, "You have traveled around these mountains long enough. Turn north. 'Tell these things to the people: You will pass through the land of Seir. This land belongs to your relatives, the descendants* of Esau. They will be afraid of you. Be very careful. 'Don't fight them. I will not give you any of their land—not even a foot of it. Why? Because I gave the hill country of Seir to Esau to keep as his own. "You must pay the people of Esau for any food you eat or water you drink there. 'Remember that the Lord your God has blessed you in everything you have done. He knows

about your walking through this great desert. The Lord your God has been with you these 40 years. You have always had everything you needed.'

⁴⁴"So we passed by our relatives, the people of Esau that live there in Seir. We left the road that leads from the Jordan Valley to the towns of Elath and Ezion-geber. We turned and went on the road that goes to the desert in Moab.

The Land of Ar

⁴⁵"The Lord said to me, 'Don't bother the people of Moab. Don't start a war against them. I will not give you any of their land. They are the descendants of Lot,* and I gave them the city of Ar.'

⁴⁶(In the past, the Emite people lived in Ar. They were strong people, and there were many of them. They were very tall, like the Anakite* people. "The Anakites were part of the Rephaite people. People thought the Emites were also Rephaites. But the people of Moab called them Emite. "The Horite people also lived in Seir before, but Esau's people took their land. Esau's people destroyed the Horites and settled on their land. That is the same thing the people of Israel did to the people in the land that the Lord gave them for their own.)

⁴⁷"The Lord told me, 'Now, go to the other side of Zered Valley.' So we crossed Zered Valley. "It was 38 years from the time we left Kadesh Bamea until the time we crossed Zered Valley. All the fighting men of that generation died. The Lord said this would happen. "The Lord continued to be against those men until they were all gone.

⁴⁸"When all the fighting men were dead and gone, "the Lord said to me, "Today you must cross the border at Ar and go into Moab. "You will go near the Ammonite people. Don't bother them. Don't fight with them, because I will not give you their land. Why? Because they are descendants* of Lot, and I have given that land to them."

Seir Another name for Edom.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

descendants of Lot Lot's sons were Moab and Ammon. See Gen. 19:30-38.

Anakite(s) Descendants of Anak, a family famous for tall and powerful fighting men. See Num. 13:33.

²⁰(That country is also known as the Land of Rephaim. The Rephaite people lived there in the past. The people of Ammon called them the Zamzummites. ²¹There were many Zamzummites, and they were very strong. They were tall, like the Anakite* people. But the Lord helped the Ammonite people destroy the Zamzummites. The Ammonite people took that land and live there now. ²²God did the same thing for Esau's people. In the past, the Horite people lived in Seir (*Edom*). But Esau's people destroyed the Horites, and now Esau's descendants live there even today. ²³God did the same thing for some people from Crete. The Avvite people lived in the towns around Gaza. But some people came from Crete and destroyed the Avvites. Those people from Crete took that land and live there now.)

Fighting the Amorite People

¹"The Lord told me, 'Get ready to travel. Go across Amon Valley. I will let you defeat Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon. I will let you take his country. So fight against him and take his land. ²Today I will make all people everywhere afraid of you. They will hear the news about you, and they will be upset and shake with fear.'

³"From the desert of Kedemoth I sent messengers to Sihon, king of Heshbon. The messengers offered peace to Sihon. They said, ⁴'Let us go through your land. We will stay on the road. We will not turn off the road to the right or to the left. ⁵We will pay you in silver for any food we eat or any water we drink. We only want to march through your country. ⁶Let us go through your land until we go across the Jordan River into the land that the Lord our God is giving us. Other people have let us go through their land—the people of Esau that live in Seir and the Moabite people that live in Ar.'

⁷"But Sihon, king of Heshbon, would not let us pass through his country. The Lord your God had made him very stubborn. The Lord did this so he could let you defeat King Sihon. And today, we know that really happened!

Anakite(s) Descendants of Anak, a family famous for tall and powerful fighting men. See Num. 13:33.

⁸"The Lord said to me, 'I am giving King Sihon and his country to you. Now, go take his land!'

⁹"Then King Sihon and all his people came out to fight against us at Jahaz. ¹⁰But the Lord our God gave him to us. We defeated King Sihon, his sons, and all his people. ¹¹We captured all the cities that belonged to King Sihon at that time. We fully destroyed the people in every city—the men, women, and children. We did not leave anyone alive! ¹²We took only the cows and the valuable things from those cities. ¹³We defeated the town of Aroer on the edge of the Amon Valley and the other town in the middle of that valley. The Lord let us defeat all the cities between the Amon Valley and Gilead. No city was too strong for us. ¹⁴But you did not go near the land that belongs to the people of Ammon. You did not go near the shores of the Jabbok River or the cities of the hill country. You did not go near any place that the Lord our God would not let us have.

Fighting the People of Bashan

3 "We turned and went on the road to Bashan. Og, the king of Bashan, and all his men came out to fight against us at Edrei. ²The Lord said to me, 'Don't be afraid of Og. I have decided to give him to you. I will give you all his men and his land. You will defeat him the same as you did Sihon the Amorite king that ruled in Heshbon.'

³"So the Lord our God let us defeat Og, king of Bashan. We destroyed him and all his men. None of them were left. ⁴Then we took all the cities that belonged to Og at that time. We took all the cities from Og's people—60 cities in the area of Argob, Og's kingdom in Bashan. ⁵All these cities were very strong. They had high walls, gates, and strong bars on the gates. There were also many towns that did not have walls. ⁶We destroyed them the same as we destroyed the cities of Sihon king of Heshbon. We fully destroyed every city and all the people in them, even the women and the babies. ⁷But we kept all the cows and the valuable things from the cities for ourselves.

¹⁰"That is the way we took the land from the two Amorite kings. We took the land that is on the east side of the Jordan River. This land is from the Arnon Valley to Mount Hermon. ¹¹(The people from Sidon call Mount Hermon Sirion. But the Amorites called it Senir.) ¹²We took all the cities in the high plain and all of Gilead. We took all of Bashan, all the way to Salecah and Edrei. Salecah and Edrei were cities of Og's kingdom of Bashan."

¹³(Og was the king of Bashan. Og was one of the few Rephaite people that still lived. Og's bed was made from iron. It was over 13 feet long and 6 feet wide.* The bed is still in the city of Rabbah, where the Ammonite people live.)

The Land East of the Jordan River

¹⁴"So, at that time, we took this land to be ours. I gave part of this land to the families groups of Reuben and Gad. I gave them the land from Aroer in the Arnon Valley to the hill country of Gilead with the cities in it. They got half of the hill country of Gilead. ¹⁵I gave the other half of Gilead and the whole area of Bashan to half of the family group of Manasseh."

(Bashan was Og's kingdom. Part of Bashan was called Argob. It was also called the Land of Rephaim. ¹⁶Jair, from the family group of Manasseh, took the whole area of Argob (*Bashan*). That area went all the way to the border of the Geshurite people and the Maacathite people. That area was named for Jair. So even today, people call Bashan the Towns of Jair.)

¹⁷"I gave Gilead to Makir. ¹⁸And to the Reuben family group and the Gad family group, I gave the land that begins at Gilead. This land goes from the Arnon Valley to the Jabbok River. The middle of the valley is one border. The Jabbok River is the border for the Ammonite people. ¹⁹The Jordan River near the desert is their western border. Lake Galilee* is

north of this area and the Dead Sea* (the Salt Sea) is to the south. It is at the bottom of the cliffs of Pisgah. They are to the east.

²⁰"At that time I gave those family groups this command: 'The Lord your God has given you the land on this side of the Jordan River to live in. But now your fighting men must take their weapons and lead the other Israelite family groups across the river. ²¹Your wives, your little children, and your cows (I know you have many cows) will stay here in the cities I have given you. ²²But you must help your Israelite relatives until they take the land that the Lord is giving them on the other side of the Jordan River. Help them until the Lord gives them peace there, the same as you have peace here. Then you may come back to this land that I have given you.'

²³"Then I told Joshua, 'You have seen all the things the Lord your God has done to these two kings. The Lord will do the same thing to all the kingdoms you will enter. ²⁴Don't fear the kings of these lands, because the Lord your God will fight for you.'

Moses Can't Enter Canaan

²⁵"I begged the Lord at that time. I said, ²⁶"Lord my Master, I am your servant. I know that you have shown me only a small part of the wonderful and powerful things you will do. There is no god in heaven or on earth that can do the great and powerful things you have done! ²⁷I ask you to let me go across the Jordan River and see the good land that is on the other side. Let me see the beautiful hill country and Lebanon.'

²⁸"But the Lord was angry at me because of you. He refused to listen to me. The Lord said to me, 'That's enough! Don't talk to me any more about this. ²⁹Go up to the top of Mount Pisgah. Look to the west, to the north, to the south, and to the east. You may see these things with your eyes, but you can never go across the Jordan River. ³⁰You must give instructions to Joshua. Encourage and give him strength. Why? Because Joshua must lead the people

13 ... wide Literally, "9 cubits long and 4 cubits wide, following the measure of a man's cubit."

Lake Galilee Literally, "Kinnereth Lake."

Dead Sea Literally, "Arabah Sea."

across the Jordan River. Joshua must lead them to take the land and live in it. This is the land that you will see."

²⁰"So we stayed in the valley on the other side of Beth Peor.

Moses Tells the People to Obey God's Laws

4 "Now, Israel, listen to the laws and to the commands that I teach you. Obey them and you will live. Then you can go in and take the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors,* is giving you. ²You must not add to the things that I command you. And you must not take anything away. You must obey the commands of the Lord your God that I have given you.

³"You have seen what the Lord did at Baal Peor. The Lord your God destroyed all your people that followed the false god Baal* at that place. 'But all of you that stayed with the Lord your God are alive today.

⁴"Look, I taught you the laws and rules that the Lord my God commanded me. I taught you these laws so that you can obey them in the land you are ready to enter and take for your own. 'Obey these laws carefully. This will show the people of the other nations that you have wisdom and understanding. When the people of those nations hear all these laws, they will say, 'Truly, the people of this great nation (*Israel*) are wise and understanding.'

⁵"The Lord our God is near when we ask him to help us. No other nation has a god like that! ⁶And no other nation is great enough to have laws and rules as good as the teachings I give you today. ⁷But you must be careful! Be sure that as long as you live you never forget the things you have seen. You must teach those things to your children and grandchildren.

⁸Remember the day you stood before the Lord your God at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*). The Lord said to me, 'Bring together the people to listen to the things I say. Then they will learn to respect me all the time they live on earth. And

they will teach these things to their children.' ⁹You came near and stood at the bottom of the mountain. The mountain burned with fire that reached up to the sky. There were thick black clouds and darkness. ¹⁰Then the Lord spoke to you from the fire. You heard the sound of someone speaking, but you did not see any form. There was only a voice. ¹¹The Lord told you his Agreement. He told you the Ten Commandments and commanded you to follow them. The Lord wrote those laws of the Agreement on two stone tablets. ¹²At that time, the Lord also commanded me to teach you laws and rules. Those are the laws you must follow in the land you are going to take and live in.

¹³"On the day the Lord spoke to you from the fire at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*), you did not see him—there was no shape for God. ¹⁴So be careful! Don't sin and destroy yourselves by making a false god or a statue in the shape of any living thing. Don't make an idol that looks like a man or a woman. ¹⁵Don't make an idol that looks like an animal on the earth or like a bird that flies in the sky. ¹⁶And don't make an idol that looks like anything that crawls on the ground or like a fish in the sea. ¹⁷And be careful when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon, and the stars—all the many things in the sky. Be careful that you are not tempted to worship and serve those things. The Lord your God let the other people in the world do those things. ¹⁸But the Lord brought you out of Egypt. Egypt made life hard for you—Egypt was like a furnace for melting iron. But the Lord brought you out of Egypt to make you his own people. And you are his people!

¹⁹"The Lord became angry at me because of you. He made a special promise. The Lord said that I could not go across the Jordan River. He told me that I could not go into the good land that the Lord your God is giving you. ²⁰So I must die here in this land. I can't go across the Jordan River. But you will soon go across and take that good land to live in. ²¹In that new land, you must be careful that you don't forget the Agreement the Lord your God made with you. You must obey the Lord's command. Don't make any idols in any form! ²²Why?

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Baal A false god that the Canaanite people worshiped.

Because the Lord your God hates his people worshipping other gods. And the Lord can be like a fire that destroys!

²⁵"You will live in the country a long time. You will have children and grandchildren there. You will grow old there. Don't make any idols! If you do that, then you will make God very angry! ²⁶I am warning you now. Heaven and earth are my witnesses! If you do that evil thing, then you will quickly be destroyed! You are crossing the Jordan River now to take that land. But if you make any idols, then will not live there very long. No, you will be fully destroyed! ²⁷The Lord will scatter you among the nations. And only a few of you will be left alive to go to the countries where the Lord will send you. ²⁸There you will serve gods made by men—things made of wood and stone that can't see, or hear, or eat, or smell! ²⁹But there in these other lands you will look for the Lord your God. If you look for him with all your heart and soul, then you will find him. ³⁰When you are in trouble—when all those things happen to you—then you will come back to the Lord your God and obey him. ³¹The Lord your God is a merciful God! He will not fail you. He will not destroy you completely. He will not forget the Agreement that he made with your ancestors.*

Think About the Great Things God Did

³²"Has anything this great ever happened before? Never! Look at the past. Think about all the things that happened before you were born. Go all the way back to the time God made people on the earth. Look at all the things that have ever happened anywhere in the world. Has anyone ever heard about anything as great as this? No! ³³You people heard God speaking to you from a fire, and you are still alive! Has that ever happened to anyone else? No! ³⁴And has any other god ever tried to go and take a people for himself from inside another nation? No! But you yourselves have seen the Lord your God do all these wonderful things! He

showed you his power and strength. You saw the troubles that tested the people. You saw miracles and wonders. You saw war and the terrible things that happened. ³⁵The Lord showed you these things so that you would know that he is God. There is no other god like him! ³⁶The Lord let you hear his voice from heaven so that he could teach you a lesson. On earth he let you see his great fire, and he spoke to you from it.

³⁷"The Lord loved your ancestors.* That is why he chose you, their descendants.* And that is why the Lord brought you out of Egypt. He was with you and brought you out with his great power. ³⁸When you moved forward, the Lord forced out nations before you. These nations were greater and more powerful than you. But the Lord brought you into their land. He gave you their land to live in. And this land is still yours today.

³⁹"So today you must remember and accept that the Lord is God. He is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other God! ⁴⁰And you must obey his laws and commands that I give you today. Then everything will go well with you and with your children that live after you. And you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you—it will be yours forever!"

Moses Chooses the Cities of Safety

⁴¹Then Moses chose three cities on the east side of the Jordan River. ⁴²If a person killed another person accidentally, he could run away to one of those three cities and be safe. If he did not hate the person he killed and did not want to kill him, then he could go to one of these cities and not be punished by death. ⁴³The three cities that Moses chose were: Bezer in the high plains for Reuben's family group; Ramoth in Gilead for Gad's family group; and Golan in Bashan for Manasseh's family group.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Introduction to the Law of Moses

"Moses gave God's law to the people of Israel. "Moses gave these teachings, laws, and rules to the people after they came out from Egypt. "Moses gave them these laws while they were on the east side of the Jordan River, in the valley across from Beth Peor. They were in the land of Sihon, the Amorite king that lived at Heshbon. (Moses and the people of Israel had defeated Sihon when they came out of Egypt. "They took Sihon's land to keep. They also took the land of Og, king of Bashan. These two Amorite kings lived on the east side of the Jordan River. "This land goes from Aroer on the edge of the Arnon Valley all the way to Mount Sirion* (Mount Hermon). "This land also included all the Jordan Valley on the east side of the Jordan River. To the south, this land reached to the Dead Sea.* To the east, it reached to the foot of Mount Pisgah.)

The Ten Commandments

5 Moses called together all the people of Israel and said to them, "People of Israel, listen to the laws and rules that I tell you today! Learn these laws, and be sure to obey them. "The Lord our God made an agreement with us at Mount Horeb (Sinai). "The Lord did not make this agreement with our ancestors,* but with us—yes, with all of us that are here alive today. "The Lord spoke with you face to face at that mountain. He spoke to you from the fire. "But you were afraid of the fire. And you did not go up the mountain. So I stood between the Lord and you to tell you what the Lord said. The Lord said: "I am the Lord your God. I led you out of Egypt where you were slaves. So you must obey these commands:,"

¹"You must not worship any other gods except me.

"You must not make any idols.* Don't make any statues or pictures of anything up in the sky or of anything on the earth or of anything down in the water. "Don't worship or serve idols of any kind. Why? Because I am the Lord your God. I hate my people worshipping other gods.* People that sin against me become my enemies. And I will punish those people. And I will punish their children, their grandchildren, and even their great-grandchildren. "But I will be very kind to people that love me and obey my commands. I will be kind to their families for thousands of generations!*

"You must not use the name of the Lord your God in a wrong way. If a person uses the Lord's name in a wrong way, then that person is guilty. And the Lord will not make him innocent.

"You must keep the Sabbath* a special day like the Lord your God commanded. "Work at your job six days a week. "But the seventh day is a day of rest in honor of the Lord your God. So on that day no person should work—not you, your sons and daughters, or your men and women slaves. Even your cows, donkeys, and other animals, and the foreigners living in your cities must not work! Your slaves should be able to rest the same as you. "Don't forget that you were slaves in the land of Egypt. The Lord your God brought you out from Egypt with his great power. He made you free. That is why the Lord your God commands you to always make the Sabbath* a special day.

"You must honor (*respect*) your father and your mother. The Lord your God has commanded you to do this. If you follow this command, then you will live a long

Sirion Or "Siyon."

Dead Sea Literally, "Arabah Sea."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshipped.

I hate ... gods Or, "I am El Kanah—the Jealous God."

But ... generations Or, "I will show mercy to thousands of people that love me and obey my commandments."

Sabbath Saturday, a day of rest and worship for the Jews.

time, and everything will go well for you in the land that the Lord your God gives you.

¹⁷“You must not murder anyone.

¹⁸“You must not do the sin of adultery.*

¹⁹“You must not steal anything.

²⁰“You must not tell lies about other people.*

²¹“You must not want another man’s wife. You must not want his house, his fields, his men and women servants, his cows, or his donkeys. You must not want to take anything that belongs to another person!”

The People Are Afraid

²²Moses said, “The Lord gave these commands to all of you when you were together there at the mountain. The Lord spoke with a loud voice that came from the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness. After he gave us these commands, he didn’t say any more. He wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

²³“You heard the voice from the darkness while the mountain was burning with fire. Then all the elders* and the other leaders of your family groups came to me. ²⁴They said, ‘The Lord our God has shown us his Glory and his greatness! We heard him speak from the fire! We have seen today that it is possible for a person to continue living even after God speaks to him. ²⁵But if we hear the Lord our God speak to us again, surely we will die! That terrible fire will destroy us! But we don’t want to die! No person has ever heard the living God speak from the fire like we have and still lived! ²⁶Moses, you go near and hear all the things the Lord our God says. Then tell us all the things the Lord tells you. We will listen to you, and we will do everything you say.’

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by doing sexual sin. You ... people Or, “You must not be a false witness against your neighbor.”

elders Older men that were city leaders; they helped make decisions for the people.

The Lord Speaks to Moses

²⁷“The Lord heard the things you said. Then the Lord said to me, ‘I heard the things these people said. Everything they said is good. ²⁸I only wish that in their hearts they would always respect me and obey all my commands! Then everything would be fine with them and with their descendants* forever.

²⁹“Go and tell the people to go back to their tents. ³⁰But you, Moses, stand here near me. I will tell you all the commands, laws, and rules that you must teach them. They must do these things in the land that I am giving them to live in.’

³¹“So, you people must be careful to do all the things the Lord commanded you. Don’t stop following God! ³²You must live the way the Lord your God commanded you. Then you will continue to live, and everything will be fine with you. You will live a long life in the land that will belong to you.

Remember to Love and Obey God

6 “These are the commands, the laws, and the rules that the Lord your God told me to teach you. Obey these laws in the land that you are entering to live in. ²You and your descendants* must respect the Lord your God as long as you live. You must obey all his laws and commands that I give you. If you do this, then you will have a long life in that new land. ³People of Israel, listen carefully and obey these laws. Then everything will be fine with you. You will have many children, and you will get the land filled with many good things*—just like the Lord, the God of your ancestors,* promised.

⁴“Listen, people of Israel! The Lord is our God. The Lord is one! ⁵You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶Always remember these commands that I give you today. ⁷Be sure

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

filled ... things Literally, “flowing with milk and honey.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

to teach them to your children. Talk about these commands when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road. Talk about them when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Write these commands and, tie them on your hands and wear them on your foreheads to help you remember *my teachings*. ⁹Write them on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates.

¹⁰"The Lord your God made a promise to your ancestors,* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord promised to give you this land. The Lord will give you that land! And he will give you great and rich cities that you did not build. ¹¹The Lord will give you houses full of good things that you did not put there. The Lord will give you wells that you did not dig. The Lord will give you fields of grapes and olive trees that you did not plant. You will have plenty to eat.

¹²"But be careful! Don't forget the Lord. You were slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought you out of the land of Egypt. ¹³Respect the Lord your God and serve only him. And you must use only his name to make promises. *Don't use the names of false gods!* ¹⁴You must not follow other gods. You must not follow the gods of the people that live around you. ¹⁵The Lord your God is always with you. And the Lord hates his people worshiping other gods! So if you follow those other gods, the Lord will become very angry at you. He will destroy you from the face of the earth.

¹⁶"You must not test the Lord your God like you tested him at Massah. ¹⁷You must be sure to obey the commands of the Lord your God. You must follow all the teachings and laws he has given you. ¹⁸You must do the things that are right and good—things that please the Lord. Then everything will go well for you, and you can go in and take the good land that the Lord promised your ancestors.* ¹⁹And you will force out all your enemies, just like the Lord said.

Teach Your Children the Things God Did

²⁰"In the future, your son might ask you, 'The Lord our God gave you teachings, laws, and rules. What do they mean?' ²¹Then you will say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his great power. ²²The Lord did great and amazing things. We saw him do these things to the Egyptian people, to Pharaoh, and to the people in Pharaoh's house. ²³And the Lord brought us out from Egypt so that he could give us the land that he promised our ancestors.* ²⁴The Lord commanded us to follow all these teachings. We must respect the Lord our God. Then the Lord will always keep us alive and doing well, as we are today. ²⁵If we follow all this law carefully, then the Lord our God will see us and agree that we have done a very good thing.'

Israel, God's Special People

7 "The Lord your God will bring you into the land that you are entering to take for your own. The Lord will force out many nations for you—the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites—seven nations greater and more powerful than you. ²The Lord your God will put these nations under your power. And you will defeat them. You must destroy them completely. Don't make an agreement with them. Don't show them mercy. ³Don't marry any of those people, and don't let your sons or daughters marry any of the people from those other nations. ⁴Why? Because those people will turn your children away from following me. Then your children will serve other gods. And the Lord will become very angry at you. He will quickly destroy you.

Destroy False Gods

⁵"This is what you must do to those nations: You must smash their altars* and break their

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

memorial stones* into pieces. Cut down their Asherah poles* and burn their statues! "Why? Because you are the Lord's own people. From all the people on earth, the Lord your God chose you to be his special people—people that belong only to him. "Why did the Lord love and choose you? It was not because you are such a large nation. You had the fewest of all people! "But the Lord brought you out of Egypt with great power. He made you free from slavery. He freed you from the control of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Why? Because the Lord loves you and because he wanted to keep the promise he made to your ancestors.*

"So remember that the Lord your God is the only God, and he is faithful. He keeps his Agreement. He shows his love and kindness to all people that love him and obey his commands. He continues to show his love and kindness through a thousand generations. "But the Lord punishes people that hate him. He will destroy them. He will not be slow to punish people that hate him. "So you must be careful to obey the commands, laws, and rules that I give you today.

"If you listen to these laws, and if you are careful to obey them, then the Lord your God will keep his Agreement of love with you. He promised this to your ancestors.* "He will love you and bless you. He will make your nation grow. He will bless your children. He will bless your fields with good crops. He will give you grain, new wine, and oil. He will bless your cows with baby calves and your sheep with lambs. You will have all these blessings in the land that he promised your ancestors* to give you.

"You will be blessed more than all people. Every husband and wife will be able to have children. Your cows will be able to have calves. "And the Lord will take away all sickness from you. The Lord will not let you

catch any of the terrible diseases that you had in Egypt. But the Lord will make your enemies catch those diseases. "You must destroy all the people that the Lord your God helps you defeat. Don't feel sorry for them. Don't worship their gods! Why? Because they are a trap—they will ruin your life.,

The Lord Promises to Help His People

"Don't say in your heart, 'These nations are stronger than we are. How can we force them out?' "You must not be afraid of them. You must remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all the people of Egypt. "You saw the great troubles he gave them. You saw the amazing things he did. You saw the Lord use his great power and strength to bring you out of Egypt. The Lord your God will use that same power against all the people you fear.

"The Lord your God will even send the hornet* to find all the people that escape from you and hide themselves. He will destroy all those people. "Don't be afraid of those people. Why? Because the Lord your God is with you. He is a great and awesome God. "The Lord your God will force those nations to leave your country little by little. You will not destroy them all at once. If you did, then the wild animals would grow to be too many for you. "But the Lord your God will let you defeat those nations. The Lord will confuse them in battle, until they are destroyed. "The Lord will help you defeat their kings. You will kill them, and the world will forget they ever lived. No man will be able to stop you. You will destroy them all!

"You must throw the statues of their gods into the fire and burn them. You must not want to keep the silver or the gold that is on those statues. You must not take that silver or gold for yourselves. It will be like a trap to you—it will ruin your life., Why? Because the Lord your God hates those idols. "And you must not bring any of those terrible idols into your homes. You must hate those terrible things! You must destroy those idols!

hornet A stinging insect, like a large wasp or bee. Here, it might mean God's anger or his great power.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember the false gods they worshiped.

Asherah poles Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Remember the Lord

8 "You must obey all the commands that I give you today. Why? Because then you will live and grow to become a great nation. You will get the land that the Lord promised to your ancestors.* ²And you must remember the whole trip that the Lord your God has led you through these 40 years in the desert. The Lord was testing you. He wanted to make you humble. He wanted to know the things in your heart. He wanted to know if you would obey his commands. ³The Lord humbled you and let you be hungry. Then he fed you with manna*—something you did not know about before, something your ancestors* had never seen. Why did the Lord do these things? Because he wanted you to know that it is not just bread that keeps people alive. People's lives depend on what the Lord says. ⁴These past 40 years, your clothes did not wear out, and your feet did not swell. Why? Because the Lord protected you! ⁵You must remember that the Lord your God did all those things for you. God was like a father teaching and correcting his son.

⁶"You must obey the commands of the Lord your God. Follow him and respect him. ⁷The Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with rivers and pools of water. Water flows out of the ground in the valleys and hills. ⁸It is a land with wheat and barley, grape vines, fig trees, and pomegranates.* It is a land with olive oil and honey. ⁹There you will have plenty of food. You will have everything you need. It is a land where the rocks are iron. You can dig copper out of the hills. ¹⁰You will have all you want to eat. Then you will praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

manna The special food God sent to the people of Israel while they wandered through the desert for 40 years.

pomegranate A red fruit with many small seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Don't Forget What the Lord Did

¹¹"Be careful. Don't forget the Lord your God! Be careful to obey the commands, laws, and rules that I give you today. ¹²Then you will have plenty to eat, and you will build good houses and live in them. ¹³Your cows, sheep, and goats will grow large. You will get plenty of gold and silver. You will have plenty of everything! ¹⁴When that happens, you must be careful not to become proud. You must not forget the Lord your God. You were slaves in Egypt. But the Lord made you free and brought you out of that land. ¹⁵The Lord led you through that great and terrible desert. Poisonous snakes and scorpions* were in that desert! The ground was dry, and there was no water anywhere. But the Lord gave you water out of the rock. ¹⁶In the desert, the Lord fed you manna*—something your ancestors* had never seen. The Lord tested you. Why? Because the Lord made you humble so that things would go well for you in the end. ¹⁷Don't ever say to yourself, 'I got all this wealth by my own power and ability.' ¹⁸Remember the Lord your God. Remember that he is the One who gives you power to do those things! Why does the Lord do this? Because he wants to keep the Agreement that he made with your ancestors*—just like he is doing today!

¹⁹"Don't ever forget the Lord your God. Don't ever follow other gods! Don't worship and serve them. If you do that, then I warn you today: You will surely be destroyed! ²⁰The Lord is destroying other nations for you. But if you follow those other gods, then you will be destroyed just like them! Why? Because you stopped listening to the Lord your God!

The Lord Will Be with Israel

9 "Listen, you people of Israel! You will go across the Jordan River today. You will go into that land to force out nations greater and stronger than you. Their cities are big and have walls as high as the sky! ²The people there are

scorpions Insects with stingers in their tails that cause pain.

tall and strong. They are the Anakites.* people. You know about those people. You heard our spies say, 'No person can win against the Anakites.' 'But you can be sure that it is the Lord your God who goes across the river before you—and God is like a fire that destroys! The Lord will destroy those nations. He will make them fall before you. You will force those nations out. You will quickly destroy them. The Lord has promised you that this will happen.

"The Lord your God will force those nations out for you. But don't say to yourselves, 'The Lord brought us to live in this land because we are such good people!' [That is not the reason!], The Lord forced those nations out because they were evil—not because you were good. 'You are going in to take their land, but not because you are good and live right. You are going in, and the Lord your God is forcing those people out because of the evil way they lived. And the Lord wants to keep the promise he made to your ancestors*—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 'The Lord your God is giving you that good land to live in, but you should know that it is not because you are good. The truth is that you are very stubborn people!

Remember the Lord's Anger

"Don't forget that you made the Lord your God angry in the desert! You have refused to obey the Lord from the day you left the land of Egypt to the day you came to this place. 'You made the Lord angry at Mount Horeb (Sinai). The Lord was angry enough to destroy you! 'I went up the mountain to get the flat stones. The Agreement that the Lord made with you was written on those stones. I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights. I did not eat any food or drink any water. 'The Lord gave me the flat stones. God wrote his commands on the stones with his finger. God wrote everything he said to you from the fire when you were gathered together at the mountain.

Anakites Descendants of Anak, a family famous for tall and powerful fighting men. See Num. 13:33.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

"So, at the end of 40 days and 40 nights, the Lord gave me two flat stones—the stones of the Agreement. 'Then the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go down quickly from here. The people you brought out from Egypt have ruined themselves. They stopped obeying my commands so quickly! They melted gold and made an idol for themselves.'

"The Lord also said to me, 'I have watched these people. They are very stubborn! 'Let me destroy these people completely—no one will ever remember their names! Then I will make another nation from you that is stronger and greater than these people.'

The Golden Calf

"Then I turned and came down from the mountain. The mountain was burning with fire. And the two flat stones of the Agreement were in my hands. 'I looked and I saw you had sinned against the Lord your God. I saw the calf you made from melted gold! You stopped obeying the Lord so quickly! 'So I took the two flat stones and threw them down. There before your eyes I broke the stones to pieces. 'Then I bowed down before the Lord with my face to the ground for 40 days and 40 nights, like I did before. I did not eat any food or drink any water. I did this because you had sinned so badly. You did the thing that is evil to the Lord, and you made him angry. 'I was afraid of the Lord's terrible anger. He was angry enough to destroy you. But the Lord listened to me again. 'The Lord was very angry with Aaron—enough to destroy him! So I also prayed for Aaron at that time. 'I took that terrible thing—the calf you made—and burned it in the fire. I broke it into small pieces. And I crushed the pieces until they were dust. Then I threw the dust into the river that came down from the mountain.

Moses Asks God to Forgive Israel

"Also, at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth Hattaavah you made the Lord angry. 'And you did not obey when the Lord told you to leave Kadesh Barnea. He said, 'Go up and take the land I am giving you.' But you refused to obey

the Lord your God. You did not trust him. You did not listen to his command. ²All the time that I have known you, you have refused to obey the Lord.

³"So I bowed down before the Lord 40 days and 40 nights. Why? Because the Lord said he would destroy you. ⁴I prayed to the Lord. I said: Lord my Master, don't destroy your people. They belong to you. You freed them and brought them out of Egypt with your great power and strength. ⁵Remember your promise to, your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Forget how stubborn these people are. Don't look at their evil ways or their sins. ⁶If you punish your people, the Egyptians might say, 'The Lord was not able to take his people into the land he promised them. And he hated them. So he took them into the desert to kill them.' ⁷But they are your people, Lord. They belong to you. You brought them out of Egypt with your great power and strength.

New Stone Tablets

10 "At that time, the Lord said to me, 'You must cut out two flat stones like the first two stones. Then you must come up to me on the mountain. Also make a wooden box. ²I will write on the flat stones the same words that were on the first stones—the stones you broke. Then you must put these new stones in the Box.'

³"So I made a box from acacia wood. I cut two flat stones like the first two stones. Then I went up on the mountain. I had the two flat stones in my hand. ⁴And the Lord wrote on the stones the same words he had written before—the Ten Commandments he spoke to you from the fire, when you were gathered together at the mountain. Then the Lord gave the two flat stones to me. ⁵I came back down from the mountain. I put the stones in the Box I had made. The Lord commanded me to put them there. And the stones are still there in that Box."

⁶The people of Israel traveled from the wells of the people of Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried. Aaron's son Eleazar served in Aaron's place as priest. ⁷Then

the people of Israel went from Moserah to Gudgodah. And they went from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of rivers. ⁸At that time the Lord separated the family group of Levi from the other family groups for his special work. They had the work of carrying the Lord's Box of the Agreement. ⁹They also served as priests before the Lord. And they had the work of blessing people in the Lord's name. They still do this special work today. ¹⁰That is why the Levites* did not get any share of land like the other family groups did. The Levites have the Lord for their share. That is what the Lord your God promised them.)

¹¹"I stayed on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights, like the first time. The Lord also listened to me at that time. The Lord decided not to destroy you. ¹²The Lord said to me, 'Go and lead the people on their trip. They will go in and live in the land that I promised their ancestors* to give them.'

What the Lord Really Wants

¹"Now, people of Israel, listen! What does the Lord your God really want from you? The Lord wants you to respect him and do what he says. God wants you to love him and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ²So obey the laws and commands of the Lord that I am giving you today. These laws and commands are for your own good.

³"Everything belongs to the Lord your God. The heavens, even the highest heavens, belong to the Lord. The earth and everything on it belong to the Lord your God. ⁴The Lord loved your ancestors* very much. He loved them so much that he chose you, their descendants,* to be his people. He chose you instead of any

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

other nation. And you are still his chosen people today.

¹⁴"Stop being stubborn. Give your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁵"Why? Because the Lord is your God. He is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. He is the great God. He is the amazing and powerful fighter. To the Lord every person is the same. The Lord does not accept money to change his mind. ¹⁶"He helps children that have no parents. He helps widows.* He loves even the strangers in our country. He gives them food and clothes. ¹⁷"So you must also love those strangers. Why? Because you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt.

¹⁸"You must respect the Lord your God and worship only him. Never leave him. When you make promises, you must use only his name. ¹⁹"The Lord is the one you should praise. He is your God. He has done great and amazing things for you. You have seen those things with your own eyes. ²⁰"When your ancestors* went down into Egypt, there were only 70 people. Now the Lord your God has made you many, many people—as many as the stars in the sky.

Remember the Lord

11 "So you must love the Lord your God. You must do the things he tells you to do. You must always obey his laws, rules, and commands. ²"Remember today all the great things the Lord your God has done to teach you. It was you, not your children, that saw those things happen and lived through them. You saw how great the Lord is. You saw how strong he is, and you saw the powerful things he does. ³You, not your children, saw the miracles he did. You saw the things he did in Egypt to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and to his whole country. ⁴You, not your children, saw the things the Lord did to the Egyptian army—to their horses and chariots.* They were chasing after you, but you saw the Lord cover them with the waters of the Red Sea. You saw the

Lord completely destroy them. ⁵It was you, not your children, that saw all the things the Lord your God did for you in the desert until you came to this place. ⁶You saw what the Lord did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab from Reuben's family. All the people of Israel watched as the ground opened up like a mouth and swallowed those men. And it swallowed their families, their tents, and all of their servants and animals. ⁷It was you, not your children, that saw all those great things the Lord did.

⁸"So you must obey every command I tell you today. Then you will be strong. And you will be able to go across the Jordan River and take the land that you are ready to enter. ⁹Then you will live a long life in that country. The Lord promised to give that land to your ancestors* and all their descendants.* It is a land filled with many good things.* ¹⁰The land that you will get is not like the land of Egypt that you came from. In Egypt, you planted your seeds, and then you used your feet to pump water from the canals, to water your plants. ¹¹You watered your fields, the same way you water a vegetable garden. ¹²But the land that you will soon get is not like that. In Israel there are mountains and valleys. And the land gets its water from the rain that falls from the sky. ¹³The Lord your God cares for that land! The Lord your God watches over that land, from the beginning to the end of the year.

¹⁴"The Lord says, 'You must listen carefully to the commands I give you today: You must love the Lord your God, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul. If you do that, then ¹⁵I will send rain for your land at the right time. I will send the autumn rain and the spring rain. Then you can gather your grain, your new wine, and your oil. ¹⁶And I will make grass grow in your fields for your cows. You will have plenty to eat.'

¹⁷"But be careful! Don't be fooled. Don't turn away to serve and worship other gods. ¹⁸If you do that, then the Lord will become very

widows Women whose husbands have died.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

angry at you. He will shut the skies, and there will be no rain. The land will not make a harvest. And you will soon die in the good land that the Lord is giving you.

¹¹“Remember these commands I give you. Keep them in your hearts. Write these commands and, tie them on your hands and wear them on your foreheads for a way to help you remember my laws.” ¹²Teach these laws to your children. Talk about these things when you sit in your houses, when you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. ¹³Write these commands on the doorposts of your houses and on your gates. ¹⁴Then both you and your children will live a long time in the land that the Lord promised to give to your ancestors.* You will live there as long as the skies are above the earth.

²¹“Be careful to obey every command I have told you to follow: Love the Lord your God, follow all his ways, and be faithful to him. ²²Then, when you go into the land, the Lord will force all those other nations out. You will take the land from nations that are larger and more powerful than you. ²³All the land you walk on will be yours. Your land will reach from the desert in the south, all the way to Lebanon in the north. It will reach from the Euphrates River in the east, all the way to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁴No person will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God will make the people fear you wherever you go in that land. That is what the Lord promised you before.

Israel's Choice: Blessings or Curses

²⁵“Today I am giving you a choice. You may choose the blessing or the curse. ²⁶You will get the blessing if you listen and obey the commands of the Lord your God that I have told you today. ²⁷But you will get the curse if you refuse to listen and obey the commands of the Lord your God. So don't stop living the way I command you today. And don't follow other gods. You know me, but, you don't know those gods.

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

²⁸“The Lord your God will lead you to your land. You will soon go in and take that land. At that time, you must go to the top of Mount Gerizim and read the blessings to the people from there. And then, you must go to the top of Mount Ebal and read the curses to the people from there. ²⁹These mountains are on the other side of the Jordan River in the land of the Canaanite people that live in the Jordan Valley. These mountains are toward the west, not far from the oak trees of Moreh near the town of Gilgal. ³⁰You will go across the Jordan River. You will take the land that the Lord your God is giving you. This land will belong to you. When you are living in this land, ³¹you must carefully obey all the laws and rules I give you today.

The Place for Worshiping God

12 “These are the laws and rules that you must obey in your new land. You must carefully obey these laws as long as you live in this land. The Lord is the God of your ancestors.* And the Lord is giving this land to you. ²You will take that land from the nations that live there now. You must completely destroy all the places where the people of these nations worship their gods. These places are on high mountains, on hills, and under green trees. ³You must smash their altars* and break their stone memorials* into pieces. You must burn their Asherah poles* and cut down the statues of their gods.

⁴“You must not worship the Lord your God in the same way that those people worship their gods. ⁵The Lord your God will choose a special place among your family groups. The Lord will put his name there. That will be his special house. You must go to that place to worship him. ⁶There you must bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, one tenth of your crops and animals,* your special gifts, any gifts

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

memorial(s) Stones that were set up to help people remember the false gods they worshiped.

Asherah poles Poles used to honor the goddess Asherah. People thought she could help them have many children.

one tenth ... animals Or, “tithes.” See Deut. 14:22-29.

you promised to the Lord, any special gift you want to give, and the first animals born in your herds and flocks. ⁷You and your families will eat together at that place, and the Lord your God will be there with you. At that place, you will enjoy sharing the things you worked for. You will remember that the Lord your God blessed you and gave you those good things.

⁸"You must not continue to worship the way we have been worshiping. Until now, each of us has been worshiping God any way we wanted. ⁹Why? Because we have not yet entered the peaceful land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹⁰But you will go across the Jordan River and live in that land. The Lord is giving that land to you. And the Lord will give you rest from all your enemies. You will be safe. ¹¹Then the Lord will choose a place to be his special house. The Lord will put his name there. And you must bring all the things I command you to that place. Bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, one tenth of your crops and animals,* your special gifts, any gifts you promised to the Lord, and the first animals born in your herd and flock. ¹²Come to that place with all your people—your children, all your servants, and the Levites* that live in your towns. (These Levites will not have a share of the land for their own.) Enjoy yourselves together there with the Lord your God. ¹³Be sure you don't offer your burnt offerings in just any place you see. ¹⁴The Lord will choose his special place among your family groups. Offer your burnt offerings and do all the other things I told you only in that place.

¹⁵"Wherever you live you may kill and eat any good animals, like gazelles and deer. You may eat as much of the meat as you want, as much as the Lord your God gives to you. Any person may eat this meat—people that are clean* and people that are unclean.* ¹⁶But you must not eat the blood. You must pour the blood on the ground like water.

¹⁷"There are some things you must not eat in the places where you live. These things are: the part of your grain that belongs to God, the part of your new wine and oil that belongs to God, the first animals born in your herd or flock, any gift that you promised to God, any special gifts you want to give, or any other gifts for God. ¹⁸You must eat those offerings only at the place where the Lord your God will be together with you—the special place that the Lord your God will choose. You must go there and eat together with your sons, your daughters, all your servants, and the Levites* that live in your towns. Enjoy yourselves there with the Lord your God. Enjoy the things you have worked for. ¹⁹But be sure that you always share these meals with the Levites. Do this as long as you live in your land.

²⁰"The Lord your God promised to make your country larger. When the Lord does this, you might live too far from the place he chooses to be his special house. If it is too far, and you are hungry for meat, then you may eat any meat you have. You may kill any animal from the herd or flock that the Lord has given you. Do this the way I have commanded you. You may eat this meat there where you live any time you want. ²¹You may eat this meat the same as you would eat gazelle or deer meat. Any person can do this—people that are clean* and people that are unclean.* ²²But be sure not to eat the blood. Why? Because the life is in the blood. And you must not eat meat that still has life in it. ²³Don't eat the blood. You must pour the blood onto the ground like water. ²⁴So don't eat blood. You must do everything that the Lord says is right. Then good things will happen to you and to your descendants.*

²⁵"If you decide to give something special to God, then you must go to the special place that the Lord your God will choose. And if you make a special promise, then you must go to that place to give that gift to God. ²⁶You must offer your burnt offerings in that place. Offer the meat and the blood of your burnt offerings

one tenth ... animals Or, "tithes." See Deut. 14:22-29.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

on the altar* of the Lord your God. For your other sacrifices, you must pour the blood on the altar of the Lord your God. Then you may eat the meat. ²Be careful to obey all the commands that I give you. When you do the things that are good and right—the things that please the Lord your God—then everything will go well for you and for your descendants* forever.

³“You are going to take your land from other people. The Lord your God will destroy those people for you. You will force those people out of that land, and you will live there. ⁴After that happens, be careful! You will destroy those people. So don’t fall into the trap of worshiping their false gods. Be careful! Don’t go to those false gods for help. Don’t say, ‘Those people worshiped these gods, so I will worship that way too!’ ⁵Don’t do that to the Lord your God! Don’t worship God like that! Why? Because those people do all kinds of bad things that the Lord hates. They even burn their children as sacrifices to their gods!

⁶“You must be careful to do everything I command you. Don’t add anything to the things I tell you, and don’t take anything away.

False Prophets

13 “A prophet or a person that explains dreams might come to you. He might tell you that he will show you a sign or a miracle. ²And the sign or miracle he told you about might come true. Then he might ask you to follow other gods (gods you don’t know). He might say to you, ‘Let’s serve those gods!’ ³Don’t listen to that person. Why? Because the Lord your God is testing you. The Lord wants to know if you love him with all your heart and all your soul. ⁴You must follow the Lord your God! Respect him. Obey the Lord’s commands, and do what he tells you. Serve the Lord, and never leave him! ⁵Also, you must kill that prophet or person that explains dreams. Why? Because he told you to turn against the Lord your God. And it was the Lord who brought

you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves. That person tried to pull you away from the life the Lord your God commanded you to live. So you must kill that person to remove that evil from your people.

⁶“Someone close to you might secretly persuade you to worship other gods. It might be your own brother, your son, your daughter, the wife you love, or your closest friend. That person might say, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods.’ (These are gods that you and your ancestors never knew. ⁷They are the gods of the people that live in the other lands around you, some near and some far away.) ⁸You must not agree with that person. Don’t listen to him. Don’t feel sorry for him. Don’t let him go free. And don’t protect him. ⁹“No! You must kill that person! You must kill him with stones. You be the first person to pick up stones and throw at him. Then all the people must throw stones to kill him. Why? Because that person tried to pull you away from the Lord your God. And it was the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, where you were slaves. ¹⁰Then all the people of Israel will hear and be afraid. And they will not do those evil things any more.

Cities that Must Be Destroyed

¹²“The Lord your God has given you cities to live in. Sometimes you might hear some bad news about one of these cities. You might hear that ¹³some bad people in your own nation are persuading the people of their city to do bad things. They might say to the people of their city, ‘Let’s go and serve other gods.’ (These gods would be gods that you never knew before.) ¹⁴If you hear this kind of news, you must do all you can to learn if it is true. If you learn that it is true—if you prove that such a terrible thing really did happen—¹⁵then you must punish the people of that city. You must kill them all. And kill all their animals, too. You must destroy that city completely. ¹⁶Then you must gather all the valuable things and take them to the center of the city and burn the city and everything in it. It will be a burnt offering to the Lord your God. The city must become an

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

empty pile of rocks forever. That city must never be built again. "Everything in that city must be given to God to be destroyed. So you must not keep any of the things for yourselves. If you follow this command, then the Lord will stop being so angry at you. The Lord will be kind to you. He will feel sorry for you. He will let your nation grow larger, like he promised your ancestors.* "This will happen if you listen to the Lord your God—if you obey all his commands that I give you today. You must do the things that the Lord your God says are right.

Israel, God's Special People

14 "You are the children of the Lord your God. When someone dies, you must not cut yourselves or shave your heads to show your sadness. "Why? Because you are different from other people. You are the Lord's special people. From all the people in the world, the Lord your God chose you to be his own special people.

Food the Israelites Are Allowed to Eat

"Don't eat anything that the Lord hates. "You may eat these animals: cows, sheep, goats, "deer, gazelles, roe deer, wild sheep, wild goats, antelopes, and mountain sheep. "You may eat any animal that has hooves* divided into two parts and that chews the cud.* "But don't eat camels, rabbits, or badgers. These animals chew the cud, but their hooves are not divided. So those animals are not a clean* food for you. "And you must not eat pigs. Their hooves are divided, but they don't chew the cud. So pigs are not a clean food for you. Don't eat any meat from pigs. Don't even touch a pig's dead body.

"You may eat any kind of fish that has fins and scales. "But don't eat anything living in

the water that does not have fins and scales. It is not a clean* food for you.

"You may eat any clean* bird. "But don't eat any of these birds: eagles, vultures, buzzards, "red kites, falcons, any kind of kite, "any kind of raven, "horned owls, screech owls, seagulls, any kind of hawk, "little owls, great owls, white owls, "desert owls, ospreys, cormorants, "storks, any kind of heron, hoopoes, or bats.

"All insects with wings are unclean.* You must not eat them. "But you may eat any clean* bird.

"Don't eat any animal that has died by itself. You may give the dead animal to the foreigner in your town, and he can eat it. Or you may sell the dead animal to a foreigner. But you yourselves must not eat the dead animal. Why? Because you belong to the Lord your God. You are his special people.

"Don't cook a baby goat in its mother's milk.

Giving One Tenth

"Every year you must be sure to save one tenth of all the crops that grow in your fields. "Then you must go to the place the Lord chooses to be his special house. You will go there to be with the Lord your God. At that place you will eat the tenth of your crops—one tenth of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first animals born in your herds and flock. In this way, you will always remember to respect the Lord your God. "But that place might be too far for you to travel to. Maybe you will not be able to carry one tenth of all the crops that the Lord has blessed you with. If that happens, then "sell that part of your crops. Take the money with you and go to the special place that the Lord chose. "Use the money to buy anything you want—cows, sheep, wine or beer, or any other thing you want to eat. Then you and your family should eat and enjoy yourselves there in that place with the Lord

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

hooves The hard part of the foot of certain animals.

cud The food that is brought up from the stomach of some animals (like cows) and chewed again.

clean Pure or acceptable for eating or for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable for eating or for worship.

your God. ²⁷But don't forget the Levites* that live in your town. (Share your food with them,) because they don't have a share of the land like you have.

²⁸"At the end of every three years, you must gather one tenth of your harvest for that year. Store this food in your towns (where other people can use it). ²⁹This food is for the Levites,* because they don't have any land of their own. This food is also for other people in your towns that need it. That food is for foreigners, widows, and children that have no parents. If you do this, then the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do.

The Special Year of Cancelling Debts

15 "At the end of every seven years, you must cancel debts. ²This is the way you must do this: Every person that has lent money to another Israelite must cancel that debt. He should not ask a brother (an Israelite) to pay back that debt. Why? Because the Lord said to cancel debts during that year. ³You may require a foreigner to pay you back. But you must cancel any debt another Israelite owes you. ⁴There should not be any poor people in your country. Why? Because the Lord is giving you this land. And the Lord will greatly bless you. ⁵But this will happen only if you obey the Lord your God. You must be careful to obey every command that I have told you today. ⁶Then the Lord your God will bless you, like he promised. And you will have enough money to make loans to many nations. But you will not need to borrow from anyone. You will rule over many nations. But none of those nations will rule over you.

⁷"When you are living in the land the Lord your God is giving you, there might be a poor person among your people. You must not be selfish. You must not refuse to give help to that poor person. ⁸No, you must be willing to share with him. You must be willing to give that person all that he needs. ⁹Don't ever refuse to help someone because the seventh year, the

year for cancelling debts, is near. Don't let an evil thought like that enter your mind. You must never have bad thoughts about a person that needs help. You must not refuse to help him. If you don't help that poor person, then he will complain to the Lord against you. And the Lord will find you guilty of sin. ¹⁰Give the poor person all that you can. Don't feel bad about giving to him. Why? Because the Lord your God will bless you for doing this good thing. He will bless you in all your work and in everything you do. ¹¹There will always be poor people in the land. That is why I command you to be ready to help your brother. Give to the poor people in your land that need help.

Letting Slaves Go Free

¹²"You might buy a Hebrew man or woman to serve you as a slave. You may keep that person as a slave for six years. But in the seventh year, you must let that person go free. ¹³But when you let your slave go free, don't send him away with nothing. ¹⁴You must give that person some of your animals, grain, and wine. The Lord your God blessed you and gave you plenty of good things. In the same way, you must give plenty of good things to your slave. ¹⁵Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. And the Lord your God let you go free. So that is why I am giving you this command today.

¹⁶"But one of your slaves might say to you, 'I will not leave you.' He might say this because he loves you and your family and because he has a good life with you. ¹⁷Make this servant put his ear against your door, and use a sharp tool to make a hole in his ear. This will show that he is your slave forever. You must do this even to the women slaves that want to stay with you.

¹⁸"Don't feel bad about letting your slave go free. Remember, he served you six years at only half the money you would have paid a hired person. The Lord your God will bless you in everything you do.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

Rules About Firstborn Animals

¹⁹“All the first male animals born in your herd and flock are special. You must give them to the Lord. Don’t use any of those animals for your work. And don’t cut wool from any of those sheep. ²⁰Every year you must take those animals to the place the Lord your God will choose. There with the Lord, you and your family will eat those animals.

²¹“But if an animal has something wrong with it—if it is crippled, or blind, or has something else wrong with it—then you must not sacrifice that animal to the Lord your God. ²²But you may eat the meat from that animal at home. Any person may eat it—people that are clean* and people that are unclean.* This meat is the same as gazelle or deer meat. ²³But you must not eat the blood from the animal. You must pour the blood out on the ground like water.

Passover

16 “Remember the month of Abib.* At that time, you must celebrate Passover* to honor the Lord your God. Why? Because in that month the Lord your God brought you out from Egypt by night. ²You must go to the place the Lord will choose to be his special house. There you must offer the Passover sacrifice to honor the Lord. You must offer the cows and goats. ³Don’t eat bread that has yeast in it with this sacrifice. You must eat unleavened bread* seven days. This bread is called the Bread of Trouble. It will help you remember the troubles you had in the Egypt. Remember how quickly you had to leave that country! You must remember that day as long as you live. ⁴There must be no yeast in anyone’s house anywhere in the country for

seven days. Also, all the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day must be eaten before morning.

⁵“You must not sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns that the Lord your God gives you. ⁶You must sacrifice the Passover animal only at the place that the Lord your God will choose to be his special house. There you must sacrifice the Passover animal in the evening when the sun goes down. Why? Because that was the time of year that you came out from Egypt. ⁷And you must cook the Passover meat and eat it at the place the Lord your God will choose. Then, in the morning, you may go back home. ⁸You must eat unleavened bread* six days. On the seventh day you must not do any work. On this day, the people will come together for a special meeting to honor the Lord your God.

Festival of Weeks

⁹“You must count seven weeks from the time you began to harvest the grain. ¹⁰Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks for the Lord your God. Do this by bringing him some special gift you want to bring. Decide how much to give by thinking about how much the Lord your God has blessed you. ¹¹Go to the place the Lord will choose to be his special house. You and your people should enjoy yourselves together there with the Lord your God. Take all your people with you—your sons, your daughters, and all your servants. Also, take the Levites,* foreigners, orphans,* and widows* that live in your towns. ¹²Remember, you were slaves in Egypt. So be sure to obey these laws.

Festival of Shelters

¹³“Seven days after you have gathered your

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

Abib This name means “young heads of grain.” This is the first month of the Jewish calendar, also called Nisan. It was about the same time as March and April.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every spring to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

orphans Children whose parents have died.

widows Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

harvest in from your threshing floor* and from your winepress,* you should celebrate the Festival of Shelters. ¹⁴Enjoy yourselves at this festival—you, your sons, your daughters, all your servants, and the Levites,* foreigners, orphans,* and widows* that live in your towns. ¹⁵Celebrate this festival for seven days at the special place the Lord will choose. Do this to honor the Lord your God. The Lord your God blessed your harvest and all the work you did. So be very happy!

¹⁶“Three times a year all your men must come to meet with the Lord your God at the special place he will choose. They must come for the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters. Every person that comes to meet with the Lord must bring a gift. ¹⁷Each man should give as much as he can. He should decide how much to give by thinking about how much the Lord has given him.

Judges and Officers for the People

¹⁸“Choose men to be judges and officers in every town that the Lord your God gives you. Every family group must do this. And these men must be fair in judging the people. ¹⁹You must always be fair. You must not favor some people over other people. You must not take money to change your mind in judgment. Money blinds the eyes of wise people and changes what a good person will say. ²⁰Fairness! You must try very hard to be fair all the time! Then you will live and keep the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

God Hates Idols

²¹“When you set up an altar* for the Lord

your God, you must not place beside the altar any of the wooden poles that honor the goddess Asherah.* ²²And you must not set up special stones for worshiping false gods. The Lord your God hates those things.

Use Only Good Animals for Sacrifices

17 “You must not sacrifice to the Lord your God a cow or sheep if there is anything wrong with it. Why? Because the Lord your God hates it!

Punishment for Worshiping Idols

²³“You might hear about an evil thing that happens in one of the cities that the Lord your God is giving you. You might hear that a man or woman in your group has sinned against the Lord. You might hear that they have broken the Agreement of the Lord—²⁴that they have worshiped other gods. Or maybe that they have worshiped the sun, the moon, or the stars. That is against the Lord’s command that I gave you. ²⁵If you hear bad news like this, then you must check it carefully. You must learn if it is true that this terrible thing has really happened in Israel. If you prove that it is true, ²⁶then you must punish the person that did that evil thing. You must take that man or woman out to a public place near the city gates and kill them with stones. ²⁷But a person should not be punished with death if only one witness says that person did the evil thing. But if two or three witnesses say it is true, then the person must be killed. ²⁸The witnesses must throw the first stones to kill that person. Then the other people should throw stones to finish killing him. In this way, you will remove that evil from your group.

Difficult Court Decisions

²⁹“There might be some problems that are too hard for your courts to judge. It might be a murder case or an argument between two

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

winepress A place where people pressed grapes to make wine. This was often a shallow hole carved in rock.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

orphans Children whose parents have died.

widows Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Asherah A goddess that the Assyrians and Canaanites worshiped. They thought she could help them have many children.

people. Or it might be a fight in which someone was hurt. When these cases are argued in your towns, your judges there might not be able to decide what is right. Then you must go to the special place that the Lord your God will choose. ⁵The priests are from the Levi family group. You must go to those priests and to the judge on duty at that time. Those men will decide what to do about that problem. ¹⁰There at the Lord's special place they will tell you their decision. You must do whatever they say. Be sure to do all the things they tell you to do. ¹¹You must accept their decision and follow their instructions exactly. You must do exactly what they tell you to do – don't change anything!

¹²"You must punish any person that refuses to obey the judge or the priest that is there at that time serving the Lord your God. That person must die. You must remove that evil person from Israel. ¹³All the people will hear about this punishment and be afraid. And they will not be stubborn any more.

How to Choose a King

¹⁴"You will enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You will take that land and live in it. Then you will say, 'We will put a king over us, like all the nations around us.' ¹⁵When that happens, then you must be sure to choose the king that the Lord chooses. The king over you must be one of your own people. You must not make a foreigner your king. ¹⁶The king must not get more and more horses for himself. And he must not send people to Egypt to get more horses. Why? Because the Lord has told you, 'You must never go back that way.' ¹⁷Also, the king must not have too many wives. Why? Because that will make him turn away from the Lord. And the king must not make himself rich with silver and gold.

¹⁸"And when the king begins to rule, he must write a copy of the law for himself in a book. He must make that copy from the books that the priests and Levites* keep. ¹⁹The king

must keep that book with him. He must read from that book all his life. Why? Because the king must learn to respect the Lord his God. And the king must learn to fully obey everything the law commands. ²⁰Then the king will not think that he is better than any of his own people. And he will not turn away from the law, but he will follow it exactly. Then that king and his descendants* will rule the kingdom of Israel a long time.

Supporting the Priests and Levites

18 "The family group of Levi will not get any share of land in Israel. Those people will serve as priests. They will live by eating the sacrifices that are cooked on the fire and offered to the Lord. That is the share for the people from the Levi family group. ²Those Levites* will not get any share of land like the other family groups. The Levites' share is the Lord himself, just like the Lord said to them.

³"When you kill a cow or a sheep for a sacrifice, you must give the priests these parts: the shoulder, both cheeks, and the stomach. ⁴You must give the priests the first part of your harvest. You must give them the first part of your grain, your new wine, and your oil. You must give the Levites* the first wool cut from your sheep. ⁵Why? Because the Lord your God looked at all your family groups and chose Levi and his descendants* to serve him as priests forever.

⁶"Every Levite* man has a special time to work at the temple. But if he wants to work there some other time too, then he may work anytime he wants. Any Levite that lives in any town anywhere in Israel may leave his home and come to the Lord's special place. He may do this any time he wants. ⁷And this Levite may serve in the name of the Lord his God, the same as all his brother Levites that are on duty before the Lord. ⁸And that Levite will get an equal share with the other Levites, in addition

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Levite(s) People from the family group of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

to the share his family normally gets.

Israel Must Not Copy the Other Nations

⁹“When you come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you, don’t learn to do the terrible things the people of the other nations there do. ¹⁰Don’t sacrifice your sons or daughters in the fires on your altars.* Don’t try to learn what will happen in the future by talking to a fortune teller or by going to a magician, a witch, or a sorcerer. ¹¹Don’t let anyone try to put magic spells on other people. Don’t let any of your people become a medium* or a wizard.* And no person should try to talk with someone that has died. ¹²The Lord your God hates people doing those things. That is why he is forcing those other nations out of this country for you. ¹³You must be faithful to the Lord your God.

The Lord’s Special Prophet

¹⁴“You must force those other nations out of your land. The people of those nations listen to people that use magic and try to tell the future. But the Lord your God will not let you do those things. ¹⁵The Lord your God will send to you a prophet.* This prophet will come from among your own people. He will be like me. You must listen to this prophet. ¹⁶God will send you this prophet because that is what you asked him to do. When you were gathered together at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*), you were afraid of God’s voice and the great fire you saw on the mountain. So, you said, ‘Don’t let us hear the voice of the Lord our God again! Don’t let us see that great fire or we will die!’

¹⁷“The Lord said to me, ‘The thing they ask for is good. ¹⁸I will send them a prophet* like you. This prophet will be one of their own people. I will tell him the things he must say.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

medium A person that tries to talk with the spirits of dead people.

wizard A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

And he will tell the people everything I command. ¹⁹This prophet will speak for me. And when he speaks, if any person refuses to listen to my commands, then I will punish that person.’

How to Know False Prophets

²⁰“But a prophet* might say something that I did not tell him to say. And he might tell people that he is speaking for me. If this happens, then that prophet must be killed. Also, a prophet might come that speaks for other gods. That prophet must also be killed. ²¹You might be thinking, ‘How can we know if something a prophet says is not from the Lord?’ ²²If a prophet says he is speaking for the Lord, but the thing does not happen, then you will know that the Lord did not say it. You will know that this prophet was speaking his own ideas. You don’t need to be afraid of him.

Cities of Safety

19 “The Lord your God is giving you land that belongs to other nations. The Lord will destroy those nations. You will live where those people lived. You will take their cities and their houses. When that happens, ²³you must divide the land into three parts. Then in each part you must choose a city close to everyone in that area. And you must prepare roads to those cities. Then any person that kills another person may run to that city for safety.

²⁴“This is the rule for the person that kills someone and runs away to one of those three cities to be safe: It must be a person that killed the other person accidentally. It must be a person that did not hate the person he killed. ²⁵Here is an example: A man goes into the forest with another person to cut wood. The man swings his axe to cut down a tree, but the head of the axe separates from the handle. The axe head hits the other person and kills him. The man that swung the axe may then run to one of those three cities and be safe. ²⁶But if the city is too far away, he might not be able to run there fast enough. A close relative* of the person he killed, **close relative** Literally, “avenger of blood.” When a person was killed, his relative had to be sure the killer was punished.

killed might run after him and catch him before he reaches the city. The close relative might be very angry and kill the man. But the man did not deserve death. He did not hate the person he killed. ¹The cities must be close to everyone. That is why I command you to choose three special cities.

²"The Lord your God promised your fathers that he would make your land larger. He will give you all the land that he promised to give to your ancestors.* ³He will do this if you fully obey his commands that I give you today—if you love the Lord your God and always live the way he wants. Then, when the Lord makes your land larger, you should choose three more cities for safety. They should be added to the first three cities. ⁴Then innocent people will not be killed in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. And you will not be guilty for any deaths.

⁵"But a man might hate another person. That man might hide, waiting to kill the person he hates. He might kill that person and run away into one of those cities of safety. ⁶If that happens, then the elders (*leaders*) in that man's home town must send someone to get him and take him away from the city of safety. Those leaders must give that man to the close relative.* The murderer must die. ⁷You must not feel sorry for him. He was guilty of killing an innocent person. You must remove that guilt from Israel. Then everything will go well for you.

Property Lines

⁸"You must not move the stones that mark your neighbor's property. People put those stones there in the past to mark each person's property. Those stones mark the land that the Lord your God gave you.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

close relative Literally, "avenger of blood." When a person was killed, his relative had to be sure the killer was punished.

Witnesses

⁹"If a person is accused of doing something against the law, one witness is not enough to prove that the person is guilty. There must be two or three witnesses to prove that the person really did wrong.

¹⁰"A witness might try to hurt another person by lying and saying that this person did wrong. ¹¹If that happens, then both of those people must go to the Lord's special house and be judged by the priests and judges that are on duty at that time. ¹²The judges must ask careful questions. They might find that the witness lied against the other person. If the witness lied, ¹³then you must punish him. You must do to him the same thing he wanted to do to the other person. In this way, you will remove that evil from your group. ¹⁴Other people will hear about this and be afraid. And those people will not do evil things like that again.

¹⁵"Punishment must be as severe as the crime. ¹⁶Don't feel sorry about punishing a person that does wrong. If a person takes a life, then he must pay with his own life. The rule is: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot.

Rules for War

20 "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and you see horses, chariots,* and many more people than you have, you must not be afraid of them. Why? Because the Lord your God is with you—and the Lord brought you out of Egypt.

²"When you go to the battle, the priest must go to the soldiers and speak to them. ³The priest will say, 'Men of Israel, listen to me! Today you are going against your enemies in battle. Don't lose your courage! Don't be troubled or upset! Don't be afraid of the enemy! ⁴Why? Because the Lord your God is going with you. He will help you fight against your enemies. The Lord your God will help you win!'

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

¹⁴"Those Levite, officers will say to the soldiers, 'Is there any man here that has built a new house, but has not yet dedicated it? That man should go back home. He might be killed in the battle. And then another person will dedicate that man's house. 'Is there any man here that has planted a field of grapes, but has not yet gathered any of the grapes? That man should go back home. If that man dies in the battle, then another person will enjoy the fruit from his field. 'Is there any man here that is engaged to be married? That man should go back home. If he dies in the battle, then another man will marry the woman he is engaged to.'

¹⁵"Those Levite, officers must also say to the people, 'Is there any man here that has lost his courage and is afraid? He should go back home. Then he will not cause the other soldiers to lose their courage too.' ¹⁶Then, after the officers have finished speaking to the army, they must choose captains to lead the soldiers.

¹⁷"When you go to attack a city, you must first offer peace to the people there. ¹⁸If they accept your offer and open their gates, then all the people in that city will become your slaves and be forced to work for you. ¹⁹But if the city refuses to make peace with you and fights against you, then you should surround the city. ²⁰And when the Lord your God lets you take the city, you must kill all the men in it. ²¹But you may take for yourselves the women, the children, the cows, and everything else in the city. You may use all these things. The Lord your God has given these things to you. ²²That is what you must do to all the cities that are very far from you—the cities that are not in the land where you will live.

²³"But when you take cities in the land that the Lord your God is giving you, you must kill everyone. ²⁴You must fully destroy all the people—the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. The Lord your God has commanded you to do this. ²⁵Why? Because then they won't be able teach you to sin against the Lord your God. They will not be able to teach you to do any of the terrible things they do when they worship their gods.

²⁶"When you are making war against a city, you might surround that city for a long time. You must not cut down the fruit trees around that city. You may eat the fruit from these trees, but you must not cut them down. These trees are not the enemy, so don't make war against them! ²⁷But you may cut down the trees that you know are not fruit trees. You may use these trees to build weapons for making war against that city. You may use them until the city falls.

If a Person Is Found Murdered

21 "In the land that the Lord your God is giving you, a man might be found murdered in a field. But no one knows who killed him. ²Then your leaders and judges must come out and measure the distance to the towns around the person that was killed. ³When you learn which town is nearest to the dead man, the leaders of that town must take a cow from their herds. It must be a cow that never had a calf. And it must be a cow that has never been used for work. ⁴The leaders of that town must then bring the cow down to a valley with running water. It must be a valley that has never been plowed or had anything planted in it. Then the leaders must break the cow's neck there in that valley. ⁵The priests, the descendants* of Levi, must also go there. (The Lord your God has chosen these priests to serve him and to bless people in his name. The priests will decide who is right in every argument where a person is hurt.) ⁶All the leaders of the town nearest the murdered man must wash their hands over the cow that had its neck broken in the valley. ⁷These leaders must say, 'We did not kill this man. And we did not see it happen. 'Lord, you saved Israel. We are your people. Now make us pure.* Don't blame us for killing an innocent man.' In this way, those men will not be blamed for killing an innocent man. ⁸In this way, you will do the right thing. And you will remove that guilt from your group.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

Women Captured In War

¹⁰"You might fight against your enemies, and the Lord your God might let you defeat them. You might carry your enemies away as captives. ¹¹You might see a beautiful woman among the captives. And you might want her to be your wife. ¹²You must then bring her home to your house. She must shave her head and cut her nails. ¹³She must take off the clothes she was wearing. She must stay in your house and cry for her father and her mother a full month. After that, you may have sexual relations with her and become her husband. And she will become your wife. ¹⁴But if you are not pleased with her, then you must let her go any place she wants. You must not sell her. You must not treat her like a slave. Why? Because you had sexual relations with her.

The Oldest Son

¹⁵"A man might have two wives. And he might love one wife more than the other. Both wives might have children for him. And the first child might be the child of the wife he does not love. ¹⁶When the man divides his property among his children, he can't give the son of the wife he loves the things that belong to the firstborn* child. ¹⁷The man must accept the first child, the son of the wife he doesn't love. The man must give the first son a double share of all his things. Why? Because that child is his first child. The right of the firstborn* child belongs to that child.

Sons That Refuse to Obey

¹⁸"A man might have a son that is stubborn and refuses to obey. This son will not obey his father or mother. The parents punish the son, but the son still refuses to listen to them. ¹⁹His father and mother must then take him to the leaders of the town at the town meeting place. ²⁰They must say to the leaders of the town: 'Our son is stubborn and refuses to obey. He will not do anything we tell him to do. He eats

too much, and he drinks too much.' ²¹Then the men in the town must kill the son with stones. By doing this you will remove this evil from yourselves. All the people of Israel will hear about this and be afraid.

Criminals Killed and Hung on a Tree

²²"A person might be guilty of a sin that must be punished by death. After he is killed, people might hang his body on a tree. ²³You must not let that body stay on the tree all night. You must be sure to bury this man on the same day. Why? Because the person that hangs on a tree is cursed by God. You must not ruin the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Other Laws

22 "If you see that your neighbor's cow or sheep is loose, you must not ignore it. You must be sure to take it back to its owner. ²If the owner does not live near you, or if you don't know who it belongs to, then you may take the cow or sheep to your house. And you may keep it with you until the owner comes looking for it. Then you must give it back to him. ³You must do the same thing when you find your neighbor's donkey, your neighbor's clothes, or anything else your neighbor loses. You must help your neighbor.

⁴"If your neighbor's donkey or cow has fallen down on the road, you must not ignore it. You must help him lift it up again.

⁵"A woman must not wear men's clothes. And a man must not wear women's clothes. The Lord your God hates anyone that does these things.

⁶"You might be walking along a path and find a bird's nest in a tree or on the ground. If the mother bird is sitting with her baby birds or on the eggs, then you must not take the mother bird with the babies. ⁷You may take the babies for yourself. But you must let the mother go. If you obey these laws, then things will go well for you, and you will live a long time.

⁸"When you build a new house, you must

firstborn The first born child. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

build a wall around your roof.* Then you will not be guilty for the death of a person that falls from the house.

Things That Must Not Be Put Together

¹⁰"You must not plant seeds of grain in the same fields as your grapevines. Why? Because then they belong to God, and you can't use either the grapes or the grain that grows from the seeds you planted.

¹¹"You must not plow with a cow and a donkey together.

¹²"You must not wear cloth made by weaving together wool and linen.

¹³"Tie several pieces of thread together. Then put these tassels* on the four corners of the robes you wear.

Marriage Laws

¹⁴"A man might marry a girl and have sexual relations with her. Then he might decide that he does not like her. ¹⁵"He might lie and say, 'I married this woman, but when we had sexual relations, I found she was not a virgin.*' By saying this against her, people might think bad things about her. ¹⁶"If this happens, the girl's father and mother must bring the proof that the girl was a virgin to the town elders (*leaders*) at the meeting place of the town. ¹⁷"The girl's father must say to the leaders, 'I gave my daughter to this man to be his wife, but now he does not want her. ¹⁸"This man has told lies against my daughter. He said, 'I did not find the proof that your daughter is a virgin.' But here is the proof that my daughter was a virgin.' Then they should show the cloth* to the town leaders. ¹⁹"Then the leaders of that town must take that man and punish him. ²⁰"They must fine

him 40 ounces of silver.* They must give the money to the girl's father because her husband brought shame to an Israelite girl. And the girl must continue to be the man's wife. He can't divorce her all his life.

²¹"But the things that the husband said about his wife might be true. The wife's parents might not have the proof that she was a virgin.* If this happens, ²²then the town leaders must bring the girl to the door of her father's house. Then the men of the town must kill her with stones. Why? Because she has done a shameful thing in Israel. She has acted like a prostitute* in her father's house. You must remove that evil from your people.

Sexual Sins

²³"If a man is found having sexual relations with another man's wife, then both of them must die—the woman and the man that had sexual relations with her. You must remove that evil from Israel.

²⁴"A man might meet a virgin* girl engaged to another man. He might have sexual relations with her. If this happens in the city, ²⁵then you must bring them both out to the public place near the gate of that city, and you must kill them with stones. You must kill the man, because he used another man's wife for sexual sin. And you must kill the girl, because she was in the city but did not call for help. You must remove that evil from your people.

²⁶"But if a man finds an engaged girl out in the field and forces her to have sexual relations with him, then only the man must die. ²⁷"You must do nothing to the girl. She did nothing that deserves the punishment of death. This is like a person attacking his neighbor and killing him. ²⁸"The man found the engaged girl out in the field. He attacked her. And maybe she called for help, but there was no one to help her. (So she must not be punished.)

wall ... roof In ancient Israel the roofs of houses were flat, and people used them like an extra room. This law made the roof a safer place.

tassels These pieces of string were made from different materials, so they became holy. This helped the people remember God and his commands.

virgin A woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone.

cloth The blood-stained bed cover that the bride kept from her wedding night to prove she was a virgin when she married.

40 ... silver This is probably twice the amount of money that a man usually paid the father of the bride to seal the marriage agreement. See Deut. 22:29.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin.

²¹“A man might find a virgin* girl that is not engaged and force her to have sexual relations with him. If other people see this happen, ²²then he must pay the girl’s father 20 ounces of silver.* And the girl will become the man’s wife. Why? Because he used her for sexual sin. He can’t divorce her all his life.

²³“A man must not bring shame to his father by having sexual relations with his father’s wife.

People That Can Join in Worship

23 “A man with crushed testicles or part of his sex organs cut off may not join with the men of Israel to worship the Lord. ²If a man’s parents were not legally married, then that man may not join with the men of Israel to worship the Lord. And none of his descendants*—to the tenth generation—may join in that group!

³“An Ammonite or Moabite may not join with the men of Israel to worship the Lord. And none of their descendants*—to the tenth generation—may join in that group. ⁴Why? Because the Ammonites and Moabites refused to give you bread and water on your trip at the time you came from Egypt. They also tried to hire Balaam to curse you. (Balaam was the son of Beor from the city of Pethor in Mesopotamia.) ⁵But the Lord your God refused to listen to Balaam. The Lord changed the curse into a blessing for you. Why? Because the Lord your God loves you. ⁶You must never try to make peace with the Ammonite or Moabite people. As long as you live, don’t be friendly to them.

People the Israelites Must Accept

¹“You must not hate an Edomite. Why? Because he is your relative. You must not hate

virgin A woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone.

20 ... silver This money became the dowry, the money a man paid to a woman’s father to seal the marriage agreement. Often the father saved this money to take care of the woman if something happened to her husband.

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

an Egyptian. Why? Because you were a stranger in his land. ⁴The children of the third generation born to the Edomites and Egyptians may join with the men of Israel to worship the Lord.

Keeping the Army Camp Clean

¹“When your army goes to fight against your enemies, stay away from everything that would make you unclean.* ²If there is any man that is unclean because he had a wet dream during the night, then he must go out of the camp. He must stay away from the camp. ³Then, when evening comes, the man must bathe himself in water. And when the sun goes down, he may come into the camp again.

⁴“You also must have a place outside the camp where you can go to have a bowel movement. ⁵With your weapons, you must also carry a stick to dig with. Then, when you have a bowel movement, you must dig a hole and cover it up. ⁶Why? Because the Lord your God is there with you in your camp to save you and to help you defeat your enemies. So the camp must be holy. Then the Lord will not see any terrible thing among you and turn away from you.

Other Laws

¹“If a slave runs away from his master to you, you must not give this slave back to his master. ²This slave may live with you wherever he likes. He may live in whatever city he chooses. You must not trouble him.

³“An Israelite man or woman must never become a temple prostitute.* ⁴The money earned by a man* or woman prostitute must not be brought to the special house of the Lord your God. A person can’t use that money to pay for the things he promised to give to God. Why? Because the Lord your God hates people selling their bodies for sexual sin.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

temple prostitute The people that worshiped false gods in the land of Canaan had both men and women serving as priests by giving their bodies in sexual sin.

man Literally, “dog.” This probably means a man paid by other men that use him for sexual sin.

¹⁹"When you loan something to another Israelite, you must not charge interest. Don't charge interest on money, on food, or on anything that may earn interest. ²⁰You may charge interest to a foreigner. But you must not charge interest to another Israelite. If you follow these rules, then the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do in the land where you are going to live.

²¹"When you make a promise to the Lord your God, don't be slow to pay all that you promised. Why? Because the Lord your God will demand that you pay it. You will sin if you don't pay the things you promised. ²²If you don't make a promise, then you are not sinning. ²³But you must do the things you say you will do. If you make a special promise to God, then you chose to make that promise. God did not force you to make that promise. So you must do the thing you promised!

²⁴"When you go through another person's field of grapes, you may eat as many grapes as you want. But you can't put any of the grapes in your basket and take them with you.

²⁵When you go through another person's field of grain, you may eat all the grain you can pick with your hands. But you can't use a sickle to cut that person's grain and take it with you.

24 "A man might marry a woman, and then find some secret thing about her that he does not like. If that man is not pleased with her, he must write the divorce papers and give them to her. Then he must send her from his house. ²When she has left his house, she may go and become another man's wife. ³But suppose the new husband also does not like her and sends her away. If that man divorces her, then the first husband may not take her again to be his wife. Or if the new husband dies, then her first husband may not take her again to be his wife. She has become unclean* to him. If he married her again, he would be doing something the Lord hates. You must not sin like this in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

⁴"When a man is newly married, he must not be sent into the army. And he must not be given any other special work. For one year he must be free to stay home and make his new wife happy.

⁵"When you lend a person something, you must not take any part of the stones he uses to grind flour as security.* Why? Because that would be the same as taking away his food.

⁶"A person might kidnap another Israelite—one of his own people. And that kidnapper might sell that person as a slave. If that happens, then that kidnapper must be killed. You must remove that evil from your group.

⁷"When you have a disease like leprosy,* be very careful to follow all the things the Levite priests teach you. You must follow carefully the things I told the priests to do. ⁸Remember what the Lord your God did to Miriam* on your trip out of Egypt.

⁹"When you give a person any kind of loan, you must not go into his house to get security.* ¹⁰You must stand outside. Then the person that you gave the loan to will bring out the security to you. ¹¹If he is a poor man, (then he might give the clothes that keep him warm). You must not keep that security overnight. ¹²You must give back his security to him every evening. Then he will have clothes to sleep in. He will thank you, and the Lord your God will see that you did this good thing.

¹³"You must not cheat a hired servant that is poor and needy. It does not matter if he is an Israelite or if he is a foreigner living in one of your cities. ¹⁴Give him his pay every day before sunset. Why? Because he is poor and depends on the money. If you don't pay him, he will complain against you to the Lord. And you will be guilty of sin.

¹⁵"Parents must not be put to death for something their children did. And children must not be put to death for something their

security Anything a person gives to show he will pay his loan. If the person does not pay back his loan, then the lender can keep that thing.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

Miriam See Numbers 12:1-15.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

parents did. A person should be put to death only for a bad thing that he himself did.

¹¹"You must be sure that foreigners and orphans* are treated fairly. And you must never take clothes from a widow* for security.* ¹²Remember, you were poor slaves in Egypt. And the Lord your God took you from that place and set you free. That is why I tell you to do these things for poor people.

¹³"You might be gathering your harvest in the field, and you might forget and leave some grain there. You must not go back to get it. It will be for the foreigners, the orphans,* and the widows.* If you leave some grain for them, then the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do. ²When you beat your olive trees, you must not go back to check the branches. The olives you leave will be for the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows. ²¹When you gather the grapes from your vineyard, you must not go back to gather the grapes you left. Those grapes will be for the foreigners, the orphans, and the widows. ²²Remember you were poor slaves in Egypt. That is why I tell you to do these things for poor people.

25 "When two people have an argument, they should go to the court. The judges will decide which person is right and which person is wrong. ²If the judge decides a person must be beaten with a whip, then the judge must make that person lie face down. Someone will beat the guilty person while the judge watches. The number of times he must be hit depends on the crime. ³You must never hit a person more than 40 times. If you beat a person more than 40 times, then that shows that person's life is not important to you.

⁴"When an animal is being used to separate grain, you must not cover its mouth to stop it from eating.

orphans Children whose parents have died.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

security Anything a person gives to show he will pay his loan. If the person does not pay back his loan, then the lender can keep that thing.

¹⁴"If two brothers live together, and one of them dies and has no son, then the wife of the dead brother must not be married to a stranger outside the family. Her husband's brother must take her as a wife and have sexual relations with her. Her husband's brother must do the duty of a husband's brother for her. ⁴Then the first child that she gives birth to will take the place of the man's dead brother. Then the dead brother's name will not be taken out of Israel. ⁷If the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then the brother's wife must go to the leaders at the town meeting place. His brother's wife must say to the leaders, 'My husband's brother refuses to keep his brother's name alive in Israel. He will not do the duty of a husband's brother to me.' ⁸Then the leaders of the city must call the man and talk to him. If the man is stubborn and says, 'I don't want to take her,' ⁹then his brother's wife must come to him in front of the leaders. She must take his shoe off his foot. Then she must spit in his face. She must say, 'This is being done to the man that will not build up his brother's family!' ¹⁰Then that brother's family will be known in Israel as 'the family of the man that had his shoe taken off.'

¹¹"Two men might be fighting against each other. One man's wife might come to help her husband. But she must not grab the other man's private parts. ¹²If she does that, then cut off her hand. Don't feel sorry for her.

¹³"Don't carry trick weights for cheating people., Don't use weights that are too heavy or too light. ¹⁴Don't keep measures in your house that are too large or too small. ¹⁵You must use weights and measures that are correct and accurate. Then you will live a long time in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹⁶The Lord your God hates people that cheat with false weights and measures. Yes, he hates all people that do wrong.

The Amalekites Must Be Destroyed

¹⁷"Remember what the people of Amalek did to you when you were coming from Egypt. ¹⁸The Amalekites did not respect God. They attacked you when you were weak and tired.

They killed all your people that were slow and walking behind everyone else. "That is why you must destroy the memory of the Amalekites from the world. You will do this when you enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you. There he will give you rest from all the enemies around you. But don't forget to destroy the Amalekites!

The First Harvest

26 "You will soon enter the land that the Lord your God is giving you. You will take that land and live there. "You will gather the crops that grow in the land the Lord is giving you. You must take the first crops and put them in baskets. Then take that first part of your harvest to the place the Lord your God chooses to be his special house. "Go to the priest that is serving at that time. Tell him, 'The Lord promised our ancestors that he would give us some land. Today I come to announce to the Lord your God that I have come to that land!'

"Then the priest will take the basket from you. He will put it down in front of the altar* of the Lord your God. "Then there before the Lord your God you will say: 'My ancestor was a wandering Aramean.* He went down into Egypt and stayed there. When he went there, he had only a few people in his family. But in Egypt he became a great nation—a powerful nation with many people. 'The Egyptians treated us badly. They made us slaves. They hurt us and forced us to work very hard. "Then we prayed to the Lord, the God of our ancestors,* and complained about them. And the Lord heard us. He saw our trouble, our hard work, and our suffering. "Then the Lord brought us out from Egypt with his great power and strength. He used great miracles and wonders. He did amazing things. "So he brought us to this place. He gave us this land—a land filled with many good things.* "Now,

Lord, I bring you the first harvest from the land that you gave me.'

"Then you must put the harvest down before the Lord your God and bow down to worship him. "Then you must have a meal together and, enjoy all the good things that the Lord your God has given to you and your family. You must share those things with the Levites* and the foreigners that live among you.

"Every third year is the Year of Tithes. In that year, you must give one tenth of your harvest to the Levites,* to the foreigners living in your country, and to the widows* and orphans.* Then in every city those people will have plenty to eat. "You must say to the Lord your God, 'I have taken out of my house the holy part of my harvest. I have given it to the Levites,* to the foreigners, and to the orphans and widows. I have followed all the commands you gave me. I have not refused to obey any of your commands. I have not forgotten them. "I have not eaten this food when I was sad.* I was not unclean when I collected this food.* I have not offered any of this food for dead people. I have obeyed you, Lord my God. I have done all the things you commanded me. "Look down from your holy home, from heaven, and bless your people Israel. And bless the land that you gave us. You promised our ancestors* to give us this land—a land filled with many good things.*'

Obey the Lord's Commands

"Today the Lord your God commands you to obey all these laws and rules. Be careful to follow them with all your heart and soul. "Today you have said that the Lord is your God. You have promised to live the way he

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

widows Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

orphans Children whose parents have died.

I have ... sad People ate this food to be happy about the many things God gave them, so it could not be from food used during a time of sadness.

I was ... food This would mean other people could not eat this food during the celebration to honor the Lord.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Aramean A person from ancient Syria. Here this might be Abraham, Isaac, or probably Jacob (Israel).

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

wants. You promised to follow his teachings, and to obey his laws and commands. You said you will do everything he tells you to do. "And today the Lord has accepted you to be his own people. He has promised you this. The Lord also said that you must obey all his commands. "The Lord will make you greater than all the nations he made. He will give you praise, fame, and honor. And you will be his own special people—just like he promised."

Stones Memorials for the People

27 Moses and the elders (*leaders*) of Israel spoke to the people. Moses said, "Obey all the commands that I give you today. "You will soon go across the Jordan River into the land that the Lord your God is giving you. On that day, you must put up large stones. Cover those stones with plaster.* Then write on those stones all these commands and teachings. You must do this when you go across the Jordan River. Then you may go into the land that the Lord your God is giving you—a land filled with many good things* The Lord, the God of your ancestors,* promised to give you this land.

"After you go across the Jordan River, you must do the things I command you today. You must set up the stones on Mount Ebal. You must cover these stones with plaster.* Also, use some stones there to build an altar* to the Lord your God. Don't use iron tools to cut the stones. "You must not use cut stones to build the altar for the Lord your God. Offer burnt offerings on this altar to the Lord your God. "And you must sacrifice and eat fellowship offerings there. Eat and enjoy yourselves there together with the Lord your God. "You must write all of these teachings on the stones that you set up. Write clearly so they are easy to read."

plaster A type of mud or cement that people used to cover a wall and make it smooth.

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

The People Agree to the Curses of the Law

"Moses and the priests spoke to all the people of Israel. Moses said, "Be quiet and listen, Israel! Today you have become the people of the Lord your God. "So you must do everything that the Lord your God tells you. You must obey his commands and his laws that I am giving you today."

"The same day, Moses also told the people, "After you have gone across the Jordan River, these family groups will stand on Mount Gerizim to read the blessings to the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. "And these family groups will stand on Mount Ebal to read the curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

"And the Levites* will say to all the people of Israel with a loud voice: "Cursed is the person that makes a false god and puts it in its secret place. Those false gods are only statues that some worker makes from wood, stone, or metal. The Lord hates those things!"

"Then all the people will answer, 'Amen!'"

"The Levites will say, "Cursed is the person that does things that show he does not respect his father or his mother!"

"Then all the people will answer, 'Amen!'"

"The Levites will say, "Cursed is the person that moves his neighbor's landmark*!"

"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'"

"The Levites will say, "Cursed is the person that is mean to a blind man and tricks him into walking off the road!"

"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'"

"The Levites will say, "Cursed is the person that does not give fair judgment for the foreigners, orphans,* and widows*!"

"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'"

"The Levites will say, "Cursed is the person that has sexual relations with his

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

Amen This Hebrew word means "This is true," or "I agree."

landmark A stone or sign that showed where the limits of a person's property were.

orphans Children whose parents have died.

widows Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

father's wife.* Why? Because he brings shame to his father*!

¹"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

²"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that has sexual relations with any kind of animal!'

³"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

⁴"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that has sexual relations with his sister or half sister!'

⁵"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

⁶"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that has sexual relations with his mother-in-law!'

⁷"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

⁸"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that kills another person, even if he is not caught!'

⁹"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

¹⁰"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that takes money to kill an innocent person!'

¹¹"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

¹²"The Levites will say, 'Cursed is the person that does not support this law and agree to obey it.'

¹³"Then all the people will say, 'Amen!'

Blessings for Obeying the Law

28 "Now, if you will be careful to obey the Lord your God and follow all his commands that I tell you today, then the Lord your God will put you high above all the nations on earth. ²If you will obey the Lord your God, then all these blessings will come to you and be yours:

³ "The Lord will bless you in the city and in the field.

⁴ The Lord will bless you and give you many children. He will bless your land and give you good crops.

He will bless your animals and let them have many babies.

He will bless all your calves and lambs.

⁵ The Lord will bless your baskets and pans and fill them with food.

⁶ The Lord will bless you at all times in everything you do.

⁷"The Lord will help you defeat your enemies that come to fight against you. Your enemies will come against you one way, but they will run away from you seven different ways!

⁸"The Lord will bless you and fill your barns. He will bless everything you do. The Lord your God will bless you in the land that he is giving you. ⁹The Lord will make you his own special people, like he promised. The Lord will do this if you follow the Lord your God and obey his commands. ¹⁰Then all the people in that land will see that you are called by the name of the Lord. And they will be afraid of you.

¹¹"And the Lord will give you many good things. He will give you many children. He will give you cows many calves. He will give you a good harvest in the land that the Lord promised your ancestors* to give you. ¹²The Lord will open his storehouse where he keeps his rich blessings. The Lord will send rain at the right time for your land. The Lord will bless everything you do. You will have money to lend to many nations. And you will not need to borrow anything from them. ¹³The Lord will make you be like the head, not the tail. You will be on top, not on the bottom. This will happen if you listen to the commands of the Lord your God that I tell you today. You must carefully obey these commands. ¹⁴You must not turn away from any of the teachings that I give you today. You must not turn away to the right or to the left. You must not follow other gods to serve them.

father's wife Here this means the father's wife, even if she is not the mother of the son.

brings ... father Literally, "uncovers his father's nakedness."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Curses for Not Obeying the Law

¹⁵"But if you don't listen to things the Lord your God tells you—if you don't obey all his commands and laws that I tell you today—then all these bad things will happen to you:

- ¹⁶ "The Lord will curse you
in the city and in the field.
- ¹⁷ The Lord will curse your baskets
and your pans
and they will have no food in them.
- ¹⁸ The Lord will curse you,
and you will not have many children.
He will curse your land
and you will not get good crops.
He will curse your animals
and they will not have many babies.
He will curse all your calves and lambs.
- ¹⁹ The Lord will curse you at all times
in everything you do.

²⁰"If you do evil and turn away from the Lord, then he will make bad things happen to you. You will have frustration and trouble in everything you do. He will continue to do this until you are quickly and completely destroyed. He will do this because you turned away from him and left him. ²¹The Lord will cause you to have terrible diseases until you are finished—destroyed from the land you are going to take. ²²The Lord will punish you with diseases, fever, and swelling. The Lord will send you terrible heat and you will have no rain. Your crops will die from the heat and disease.* All these bad things will happen until you are destroyed! ²³There will be no clouds in the sky—the sky will look like polished brass. And the ground under you will be hard like iron. ²⁴The Lord will not send rain—only sand and dust will fall from the sky. It will come down on you until you are destroyed.

²⁵"The Lord will let your enemies defeat you. You will go to fight against your enemies one way, but you will run away from them seven different ways. The bad things that happen to you will make all the people on earth

afraid. ²⁶Your dead bodies will be food for the wild birds and animals. There will be no one to scare them away from your dead bodies.

²⁷"The Lord will punish you with boils, like those he sent on the Egyptians. He will punish you with tumors, sores that run, and an itch that can't be cured. ²⁸The Lord will punish you by making you crazy. He will make you blind and confused. ²⁹In daylight, you will have to feel your way like a blind man. You will fail in everything you do. Again and again people will hurt you and steal things from you. And there will not be anyone to save you.

³⁰"You will be engaged to a woman, but another man will have sexual relations with her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a field of grapes, but you will not gather anything from it. ³¹People will kill your cows in front of you. But you will not eat any of the meat. People will take your donkeys. And they will not give them back to you. Your enemies will get your sheep. And there will not be anyone to save you.

³²"Other people will take your sons and your daughters. Day after day, you will look for your children. You will look for them until you become weak—but you will not find them. And God will not help you.

³³"A nation that you don't know will take all your crops and all the things you worked for. People will treat you badly and abuse you. ³⁴You will go crazy because of the things your eyes will see. ³⁵The Lord will punish you with sore boils that can't be healed. These boils will be on your knees and legs. The boils will be on every part of your body—from the bottom of your feet to the top of your head.

³⁶"The Lord will send you and your king away to a nation you don't know. You and your ancestors* have never seen that nation. There you will serve false gods made of wood and stone. ³⁷In the countries where the Lord will send you, the people will be shocked at the bad things that happen to you. They will laugh at you and say bad things about you.

disease This might be mildew, a disease that turns the heads of grain yellow and stops them from growing seeds.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The Curse of Failure

³⁸"Your fields will produce plenty of grain. But your harvest will be small. Why? Because the locusts* will eat your harvest. ³⁹You will plant fields of grapes and work hard in them. But you will not gather the grapes or drink the wine from them. Why? Because the worms will eat them. ⁴⁰You will have olive trees everywhere on your land. But you will not have any of the oil to use. Why? Because the olives will drop to the ground and rot. ⁴¹You will have sons and daughters. But you will not be able to keep them. Why? Because they will be captured and taken away. ⁴²Locusts will destroy all your trees and the crops in your fields. ⁴³The foreigners that live among you will get more and more power. And you will lose the power you had. ⁴⁴The foreigners will have money to loan you. But you will not have any money to loan them. They will control you like the head controls the body. You will be like the tail.

⁴⁵"All these curses will come on you. They will keep chasing you and catching you, until you are destroyed. Why? Because you did not listen to the things the Lord your God told you. You did not obey the commands and laws that he gave you. ⁴⁶These curses will show people that God judged you and your descendants* forever. People will be amazed at the terrible things that happen to you.

⁴⁷"The Lord your God gave you many blessings. But you did not serve him with joy and a glad heart. ⁴⁸So you will serve the enemies that the Lord will send against you. You will be hungry, thirsty, naked, and poor. The Lord will put a load on you that can't be removed. You will carry that load until he destroys you.*

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. Locusts can destroy a large crop very quickly.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

The ... you Literally, "The Lord will put an iron yoke on your neck until he destroys you."

The Curse of an Enemy Nation

⁴⁹"The Lord will bring a nation from far away to fight you. You will not understand their language. They will come quickly, like an eagle coming down from the sky. ⁵⁰Those people will be cruel. They will not care about old people. They will not show mercy to young children. ⁵¹They will take your animals and the food you grow. They will take everything until they destroy you. They will not leave you any grain, wine, oil, cows, sheep, or goats. They will take everything, until they destroy you.

⁵²"That nation will surround and attack your cities. You think that the tall, strong walls around your cities will protect you. But those walls will fall down. The enemy will surround all your cities everywhere in the land the Lord your God is giving you. ⁵³You will suffer very much. The enemy will surround your cities. They will not let you have any food. You will become very hungry. You will be so hungry that you will eat your own sons and daughters—you will eat the bodies of the children that the Lord your God gave you.

⁵⁴"Even the most gentle and kind man among you will become cruel. He will be cruel to other people. He will be cruel to his wife that he loves so much. And he will be cruel to his children that are still alive. ⁵⁵He will have nothing left to eat, so he will eat his own children. And he will not share that meat with anyone—not even the other people in his own family! All those bad things will happen when your enemy comes to surround your cities and make you suffer.

⁵⁶"Even the most gentle and kind woman among you will become cruel. She might be a lady so gentle and delicate that she never put her feet on the ground to walk anywhere. But she will become cruel to her husband that she loves so much. And she will be cruel to her own son and daughter. ⁵⁷She will hide and give birth to a baby. And she will eat the baby and everything that comes out of her body with it. All those bad things will happen when your enemy comes to surround your cities and make you suffer.

³⁴"You must obey all the commands and teachings that are written in this book. And you must respect the wonderful and awesome name of the Lord your God. If you don't obey, then ³⁵"the Lord will give you and your descendants* many troubles. Your troubles and diseases will be terrible! ³⁶"You saw many troubles and diseases in Egypt, and they made you afraid. The Lord will bring all those bad things against you! ³⁷"The Lord will even bring troubles and diseases that are not written in this Book of Teachings. He will continue to do this until you are destroyed. ³⁸"You might have as many people as the stars in the sky. But only a few of you will be left. Why? Because you did not listen to the Lord your God.

³⁹"The Lord was happy to be good to you and to make your nation grow. In the same way, the Lord will be happy to ruin and destroy you. You are going to take that land to be yours. But people will take you out of that land! ⁴⁰"The Lord will scatter you among all the people in the world. The Lord will scatter you from one end of the earth to the other. There you will serve false gods made of wood and stone. They are false gods that you or your ancestors* never worshiped.

⁴¹"You will not have any peace among these nations. You will have no place to rest. The Lord will fill your mind with worry. Your eyes will feel tired. You will be very upset. ⁴²"You will live with danger and always be afraid. You will be afraid night and day. You will never feel sure about your life. ⁴³"In the morning you will say, 'I wish it were evening!' In the evening you will say, 'I wish it were morning!' Why? Because of the fear that will be in your heart, and because of the bad things you will see. ⁴⁴"The Lord will send you back to Egypt in ships. I said you would never have to go to that place again, but the Lord will send you there. In Egypt, you will try to sell yourselves as slaves to your enemies. But no person will buy you."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The Agreement in Moab

29 The Lord made an agreement with the people of Israel at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*). In addition to that agreement, the Lord also commanded Moses to make another agreement with them while they were in Moab. This is that agreement.

¹Moses called together all the Israelite people. He said to them, "You saw all the things the Lord did in the land of Egypt. You saw the things he did to Pharaoh, to Pharaoh's officers, and to his whole country. ²You saw the great troubles he gave them. You saw the miracles and amazing things he did. ³But even today you still don't understand what happened. The Lord has not let you really understand what you saw and heard. ⁴The Lord led you through the desert for 40 years. And during all that time your clothes and your shoes did not wear out. ⁵You did not have any food with you. You did not have any wine or anything else to drink. But the Lord took care of you. He did this so that you would understand that he is the Lord your God.

⁶"You came to this place, and King Sihon from Heshbon and King Og from Bashan came out to fight against us. But we defeated them. ⁷Then we took their land and gave it to the people in the family groups of Reuben and Gad, and to half the family group of Manasseh. ⁸If you obey all the commands in this agreement, then you will continue to succeed in everything you do.

⁹"Today all of you are standing here before the Lord your God. Your leaders, your officials, your elders (*leaders*), and all the other men are here. ¹⁰Your wives and children are here and also the foreigners that live among you—the people that cut your wood and bring you water. ¹¹You are all here to enter into an agreement with the Lord your God. The Lord is making this agreement with you today. ¹²With this agreement, the Lord is making you his own special people. And he himself will become your God. He told you this. He promised this to your ancestors*—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ¹³The Lord is making this agreement with its promises not only with you people. ¹⁴He is

making this agreement with all of us that stand here today before the Lord our God. But this agreement is also for our descendants* that are not here with us today. ¹⁶You remember how we lived in the land of Egypt. And you remember how we traveled through the countries that were on our way here. ¹⁷You saw their hated things—the idols* they had made from wood, stone, silver, and gold. ¹⁸Be sure that there is no man, woman, family, or family group here today that turns away from the Lord our God. No person should go and serve the gods of the other nations. People that do that are like a plant that grows bitter and poisonous fruit.

¹⁹“A person might hear these curses, but he might comfort himself and say, ‘I will continue doing what I want. Nothing bad will happen to me.’ That person might cause bad things to happen not only to himself but to everyone—even to the good people.* ²⁰“The Lord will not forgive that person. No, the Lord will be angry and upset at that person. The Lord will punish that person. The Lord will separate that person from all the family groups of Israel. The Lord will completely destroy him. All the bad things that are written in this book will happen to him. Those things are a part of the Agreement that is written in this Book of Teachings.

²¹“In the future your descendants* and foreigners from faraway countries will see how the land has been ruined. They will see the diseases that the Lord has brought to it. ²²All the land will be useless—destroyed by burning sulfur and covered with salt. The land will have nothing planted in it. Nothing will be growing—not even weeds. The land will be destroyed like Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, the cities the Lord destroyed when he was very angry.

²³“All the other nations will ask, ‘Why did the Lord do this to this land? Why was he so

angry?’ ²⁴The answer will be: ‘The Lord is angry because the people of Israel left the Agreement of the Lord, the God of their ancestors.* They stopped following the Agreement that the Lord made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. ²⁵The people of Israel started serving other gods—gods they never worshiped before. The Lord told his people not to worship those gods. ²⁶That is why the Lord became very angry against the people of this land. So he brought to them all the curses that are written in this book. ²⁷The Lord became very angry and upset at them. So he took them out of their land. He put them in another land, where they are today.’

²⁸“There are some things that the Lord our God has kept secret. Only he knows those things. But the Lord told us about these things! The Lord gave his teachings to us and our descendants.* He told us to obey them forever!

The Israelites Will Return to Their Land

30 “All these things I have said will happen to you. You will have good things from the blessings, and you will have bad things from the curses. The Lord your God will send you away to other nations. Then you will think about these things. ²At that time, you and your descendants* will return to the Lord your God. You will follow him with all your heart and fully obey all his commands that I have given you today. ³Then the Lord your God will be kind to you. The Lord will make you free again! He will bring you back from those nations where he sent you. ‘Even if you were sent to the farthest parts of the earth, the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back from there. ⁴The Lord will bring you into the land your ancestors* had, and the land will become yours. The Lord will do good to you, and you will have more than your ancestors had. You will have more people in your nation than they ever had. ⁵The Lord your God will

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

That ... people Literally, “thereby bringing to an end the soaked and the thirsty.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

make you and your descendants want to obey him.* Then you will love the Lord with all your heart. And you will live!

¹¹Then the Lord your God will make all those bad things happen to your enemies. Why? Because those people hate you and give you trouble. ¹²And you will again obey the Lord. You will obey all his commands that I give you today. ¹³The Lord your God will make you successful in everything you do. He will bless you with many children. He will bless your cows—they will have many baby calves. He will bless your fields—they will grow many good crops. The Lord will be good to you. The Lord will again enjoy doing good for you, the same as he enjoyed doing good for your ancestors.* ¹⁴But you must do the things that the Lord your God tells you to do. You must obey his commands and follow the rules that are written in this Book of Teachings. You must obey the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Then these good things will happen to you.

Life or Death

¹¹“This command that I give you today is not too hard for you. It is not far off. ¹²This command is not in heaven so that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and bring it to us, so that we can hear and do it?’ ¹³This command is not on the other side of the sea so that you should say, ‘Who will go across the sea for us and bring it to us, so that we can hear it and do it?’ ¹⁴No, the word is very near to you! It is in your mouth and in your heart. So you can obey it!

¹⁵“Today I have given you a choice between life and death, good and evil. ¹⁶I command you today to love the Lord your God. I command you to follow him and to obey his commands, laws, and rules. Then you will live, and your nation will grow larger. And the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering

to take for your own. ¹⁷But if you turn away from the Lord and refuse to listen—if you are led away to worship and serve other gods, ¹⁸then you will be destroyed. I am warning you! If you turn away from the Lord, you will not live long in that land across the Jordan River that you are ready to enter and take for your own.

¹⁹“Today I am giving you a choice of two ways. And I ask heaven and earth to be witnesses of your choice. You can choose life, or you can choose death. The first choice will bring a blessing. The other choice will bring a curse. So choose life! Then you and your children will live. ²⁰You must love the Lord your God and obey him. Never leave him! Why? Because the Lord is your life. And the Lord will give you a long life in the land that he promised to give to your ancestors*—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Joshua Will Be the New Leader

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all the people of Israel. ²Moses said to them, “I am now 120 years old. I can’t lead you any more. The Lord said to me: ‘You will not go across the Jordan River.’ ³But, the Lord your God will lead you people into that land! The Lord will destroy these nations for you. You will take their land away from them. But the Lord said that Joshua must lead you.

⁴“The Lord destroyed Sihon and Og. The Lord destroyed those Amorite kings. And the Lord will do the same thing for you again! ⁵The Lord will help you defeat these nations. But you must do to them everything I told you to do. ⁶Be strong and be brave. Don’t be afraid of those people! Why? Because the Lord your God is with you. He will not fail you or leave you.”

⁷Then Moses called Joshua. All the people of Israel watched while Moses said to Joshua, “Be strong and brave. You will lead these people into the land that the Lord promised to give to their ancestors.* You will help the people of Israel take this land to be their own. ⁸The Lord will lead you. He himself is with

make ... him Literally, “circumcise the hearts of you and your seed.”

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

you. He will not fail you or leave you. Don't worry. Don't be afraid!"

Moses Writes the Teachings

⁹Then Moses wrote the Teachings and gave them to the priests. The priests are from the family group of Levi. They have the work of carrying the Lord's Box of the Agreement.* Moses also gave the Teachings to all the elders (*leaders*) of Israel. ¹⁰Then Moses spoke to the leaders. He said, "At the end of every seven years, in the Year of Freedom, read these Teachings at the Festival of Shelters. ¹¹At that time, all the people of Israel must come to meet with the Lord your God at the special place he will choose. Then you must read the Teachings to the people so that they can hear them. ¹²Bring together all the people—the men, the women, the little children, and the foreigners that live in your cities. They will hear the Teachings, and they will learn to respect the Lord your God. Then they will be able to do all the things in the Teachings. ¹³If their descendants* don't know the Teachings, then they will hear them. And they will learn to respect the Lord your God. They will respect him as long as you live in your country. You will soon go across the Jordan River and take that land to be your own."

The Lord Calls Moses and Joshua

¹⁴The Lord said to Moses, "Now the time is near for you to die. Get Joshua and come to the Meeting Tent.* I will tell Joshua the things he must do." So Moses and Joshua went to the Meeting Tent.

¹⁵The Lord appeared at the Tent in a tall cloud. The tall cloud stood over the entrance of the Tent. ¹⁶The Lord said to Moses, "You will die soon. And after you have gone to be with

your ancestors,* these people will not continue to be faithful to me. They will break the Agreement I made with them. They will leave me and begin worshiping other gods—the false gods of the land where they are going. ¹⁷At that time, I will become very angry at them, and I will leave them. I will refuse to help them, and they will be destroyed. Terrible things will happen to them, and they will have many troubles. Then they will say, 'These bad things happened to us because our God is not with us.' ¹⁸And I will refuse to help them, because they have done evil and worshiped other gods.

¹⁹"So write down this song, and teach it to the people of Israel. Teach them to sing this song. Then this song will be a witness for me against the people of Israel. ²⁰I will take them into the land that I promised to give to their ancestors* —a land filled with many good things.* And they will have all they want to eat. They will have a rich life. But then they will turn to other gods and serve them. They will turn away from me and break my Agreement. ²¹Then many terrible things will happen to them. They will have many troubles. At that time, their people will still know this song, and it will show them how wrong they are. I have not yet taken them into the land I promised to give them. But I already know what they are planning to do there."

²²So that same day Moses wrote down the song. And he taught the song to the people of Israel.

²³Then the Lord spoke to Joshua son of Nun. The Lord said, "Be strong and brave. You will lead the people of Israel into the land I promised them. And I will be with you."

Moses Warns the People of Israel

²⁴Moses carefully wrote all these teachings in a book. When he finished, ²⁵he gave a command to the Levites.* (These men carry the Lord's Box of the Agreement.*) Moses said,

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

filled ... things Literally, "flowing with milk and honey."

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

²⁶“Take this Book of Teachings and put it by the side of the Box of the Agreement of the Lord your God. Then it will be a witness against you. ²⁷I know you are very stubborn. I know you want to live your own way. Look, you refused to obey the Lord while I was with you. So I know you will refuse to obey him after I die. ²⁸Bring together all the officers and leaders of your family groups. I will tell them these things. And I will call heaven and earth to be witnesses against them. ²⁹I know that after my death you will become evil. You will turn from the way I commanded you to follow. Bad things will happen to you in the future. Why? Because you want to do the things that the Lord says are evil. You will make him angry because of the bad things you do.”

The Song of Moses

³⁰All the people of Israel were gathered together. And Moses sang this song for them. Moses sang the whole song:

32 “Skies, listen and I will speak!
Earth, hear the words of my mouth!

- ² My teaching will come down
like the rain.
My words will flow like water
on the ground,
like gentle rain on the soft grass,
like rain on the green plants.

- ³ I will speak the Lord's name!
Praise God—God is great!

- ⁴ “The Rock (*the Lord*)—his work is perfect!
Why? Because all his ways are right!
God is true and faithful.
He is good and honest!

- ⁵ But you people have been bad
to the Lord.
You are like bad children
that don't obey.
You are crooked liars.

- ⁶ You should not treat the Lord that way!
You are stupid, foolish people.
The Lord is your Father.

He is your Creator.
He made you,
and he supports you.

- ⁷ “Remember the things that happened long ago.
Think about the things that happened many, many years ago.
Ask your father;
he will tell you.
Ask your leaders;
they will tell you.
⁸ God Most-High separated the people on earth.
He gave each nation its own land.
God set up borders for those people.
There were as many nations as people in Israel.
⁹ The Lord's share is his people;
Jacob (*Israel*) belongs to the Lord.

- ¹⁰ “The Lord found Jacob (*Israel*)
in a desert land.
It was an empty, windy land.
The Lord surrounded Jacob
to protect him.
He protected him like the pupil
of his eye.
¹¹ The Lord was like an eagle to Israel.
An eagle pushes her babies
from the nest
to teach them to fly.
She flies with her babies to protect them.
She spreads her wings to catch them
when they fall.
And she carries them on her wings
to a safe place.
The Lord is like that.

- ¹² “The Lord alone led Jacob (*Israel*).
No foreign gods helped him.
¹³ The Lord led Jacob to conquer
the hill country.
Jacob took the harvest in the fields.
The Lord gave Jacob honey from the rock;
he made olive oil flow from the hard rock.
¹⁴ The Lord gave Israel, butter

from the herd
and milk from the flock.
He gave Israel, fat lambs and goats,
the best rams from Bashan,
and the finest wheat.
You, people of Israel, drank wine
from the red juice of the grape.

- ¹⁵ "But Jeshurun* became fat and kicked
like a fat bull.
He became full and heavy.
He was well fed!
And he left the God who made him!
He did not accept the Rock (*the Lord*)
to be his Savior.
- ¹⁶ The Lord's people worshiped other gods
and made the Lord jealous.
The Lord hates idols.
But his people built idols
and made the Lord angry.
- ¹⁷ They sacrificed to demons that
are not really gods.
They sacrificed to gods they
did not know.
Those were new gods—
gods that your ancestors* never
worshiped.
- ¹⁸ You left the Rock (*God*) who made you;
you forgot the God who gave you life.
- ¹⁹ "The Lord saw this,
and he rejected his people.
Why? Because his children
made him angry.
- ²⁰ Then the Lord said,
'I will turn away from them;
I can see what their end will be.
They are very rebellious people.
They are like children that won't learn
their lessons!
- ²¹ They began worshiping idols
and made me jealous.
Those statues are not real gods!
They made me angry with

worthless idols.
So, I will use people that are not yet
a nation,
and I will make Israel jealous!
I will use a foolish nation to make
them angry.

- ²² My anger is like a burning fire.
It burns down to the deepest grave.
It burns the earth and the things
it produces.
It burns the foundations of the
mountains!
- ²³ "I will bring troubles to the Israelites.
I will shoot my arrows on them.
- ²⁴ They will become thin and weak
from hunger.
Terrible diseases will destroy them.
I will send wild animals against them.
Poisonous snakes and lizards
will bite them.
- ²⁵ Soldiers will kill them in the streets.
And they will be afraid in their houses.
The soldiers will kill young men
and women.
They will kill babies and old people.
- ²⁶ I wanted to destroy the Israelites,
so that people would forget them
completely!
- ²⁷ But I know what their enemy would say.
The enemy would not understand.
They would brag and say,
"The Lord did not destroy Israel.
We won with our own power!"
- ²⁸ "The people of Israel, are foolish.
They don't understand.
- ²⁹ If they were wise,
they would understand.
They would know what will happen
to them!
- ³⁰ Can one person chase away 1,000 men?
Can two men cause 10,000 men
to run away?
That will happen only if the Lord
gives them to their enemy!
That will happen only if their Rock* sells

Jeshurun Another name for Israel. This name means "good" or "honest."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

- them like slaves!
- ³¹ The 'rock' of our enemies is not strong
like our Rock (*the Lord*).
Our enemies themselves know that!
- ³² The vines and fields of those enemies
will be destroyed,
like Sodom and Gomorrah.*
Their grapes are like bitter poison.
³³ Their wine is like poison from snakes.
- ³⁴ "The Lord says, 'I am saving that
punishment.
I have it locked up in my storehouse!
³⁵ I am saving that punishment for the time
they slip and do bad things.
I will punish them because they did
things that were wrong.
Their time of trouble is near.
Their punishment will come quickly.'
- ³⁶ "The Lord will judge his people.
They are his servants,
and he will show them mercy.
He will see that their power is gone.
He will see that they are all helpless—
the slaves and free people, too.
- ³⁷ Then the Lord will say,
'Where are the false gods?
Where is the "rock" that you went to
for safety?
- ³⁸ Those false gods ate the fat
from your sacrifices.
And they drank the wine
of your offerings.
So let those gods get up and help you!
Let them protect you!
- ^{38a} 'Now, see that I and only I am God!
There is no other God!
I decide to kill people
or to let people live.
I can hurt people,
and I can make people well.
And no person can save another
person from my power!
- ⁴⁰ I raise my hand toward heaven

- and make this promise:
If it is true that I live forever,
then it is also true that these things
will happen:
- ⁴¹ I will sharpen my flashing sword.
I will use it to punish my enemies.
I will give them the punishment
they deserve.
- ⁴² My enemies will be killed
and taken as prisoners.
My arrows will be covered
with their blood.
My sword will cut off the heads
of their soldiers.'
- ⁴³ "The whole world should be happy
for God's people!
'Why? Because he helps them—
he punishes the people that kill
his servants.
He will give his enemies the punishment
they deserve.
And he will make his land and his
people pure.*"

Moses Teaches the People His Song

"Moses came and spoke all the words of this song for the people of Israel to hear. Joshua son of Nun was with Moses. "When Moses finished giving these teachings to the people, "he said to them, "You must be sure to pay attention to all the commands I tell you today. And you must tell your children to fully obey the commands in this Law. "Don't think these teachings are not important! They are your life! Through these teachings you will live a long time in the land across the Jordan River that you are ready to take."

Moses on Mount Nebo

"The Lord spoke to Moses that same day. The Lord said, "Go to the Abarim Mountains. Go up on Mount Nebo in the land of Moab across from the city of Jericho. Then you can look at the land of Canaan that I am giving to

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities God destroyed because the people were so evil. See Gen. 19.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement for ..." The Hebrew word means "to cover," "to hide," or "to erase sins."

the people of Israel to live in. *You will die on that mountain. You will go to be with your people, the same as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor. ²Why? Because you both sinned against me. You were at the waters of Meribah near Kadesh. That was in the desert of Zin. There, in front of the people of Israel, you did not honor me and show that I am holy. ³So now you may see the land that I am giving to the people of Israel. But you can't go into that land."

Moses Blesses the People

33 This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave the people of Israel before he died. ²Moses said:

"The Lord came from Sinai.

The Lord was like the light shining at dawn over Seir.

He was like a light shining from Mount Paran.

The Lord came with 10,000 holy ones.*

At his right hand were God's mighty soldiers.

³ Yes, the Lord loves his people.

All his holy people are in his hand.

They sit at his feet and learn his teachings!

⁴ Moses gave us the Law.

Those teaching belong to all of Jacob's people.

⁵ At that time, the people of Israel and their leaders met together.

And the Lord became the king of Jeshurun.*

Reuben's Blessing

⁶ "Let Reuben live, and not die!

But let there be only a few people in his family group!"

Judah's Blessing

⁷Moses said these things about the people of Judah:

"Lord, listen to the leader from Judah when he calls for help.

Bring him to his people.

Make him strong, and help him defeat his enemies!"

Levi's Blessing

⁸Moses said these things about the people of Levi:

"Levi is your true follower.

He keeps the Urim and Thummim.*

At Massah you tested the people of Levi.

At the waters of Meribah,* you proved that they are yours.

⁹ They cared more for you, Lord, than for their own families.,

They did not care about their father and mother.

They did not recognize their brothers.

They did not give attention to their own children.

But they obeyed your commands.

They kept your Agreement.

¹⁰ They will teach your rules to Jacob*

They will teach your Law to Israel.

They will burn incense* before you.

They will offer burnt offerings on your altar.*

¹¹ Lord, bless the things that belong to Levi.

Accept the things he does.

Destroy the men that attack him!

Defeat his enemies,

so that they will never attack him again."

Urim and Thummim Used by the priest to learn God's answer to questions. They were probably like lots-stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

Massah ... Meribah See Num. 20:1-13 for the story.

Jacob Another name for Israel.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a sacrifice to God.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

holy ones Or, "angels."

Jeshurun Another name for Israel. This name means "good" or "honest."

Benjamin's Blessing

¹²Moses said these things about the people of Benjamin:

"The Lord loves Benjamin.
Benjamin will live safely near him.
The Lord protects him all the time.
And the Lord will live in his land.*"

Joseph's Blessing

¹³Moses said these things about the people of Joseph:

"May the Lord bless Joseph's land.
Lord, send them rain from
the skies above
and water from the ground below.
¹⁴ Let the sun give them good fruit.
Let each month bring its best fruit.
¹⁵ Let the hills and ancient mountains
produce their best fruit.
¹⁶ Let the earth give its best to
the people of Joseph.
Joseph was separated from his brothers.
So may the Lord who was in the
burning bush
give his best to Joseph.
¹⁷ Joseph is like a powerful bull.
His two sons are like the
horns of a bull.
They will attack other people
and push them to the ends of the earth!
Yes, Manasseh has thousands of people,
and Ephraim has ten thousands."

Zebulun's and Issachar's Blessing

¹⁸Moses said these things about the people of Zebulun:

"Be happy, Zebulun, when you go out.
And be happy, Issachar, in your tents
at home.

¹⁹ They will call the people to their
mountain (*Carmel*).

And ... land Literally, "And he will dwell between his shoulders." This probably means that the Lord's temple will be in Jerusalem, at the border between Benjamin and Judah's land.

There they will offer good sacrifices.
They will take riches from the sea
and treasures from the shore."

Gad's Blessing

²⁰Moses said these things about the people of Gad:

"Praise God!
God gave Gad more land!
Gad is like a lion.
He lies down and waits.
Then he attacks and eats the whole
animal.

²¹ He chooses the best part for himself.
He takes the king's share.
The leaders of the people come to him.
He is good to the people of Israel.
He does what the Lord says is good."

Dan's Blessing

²²Moses said these things about the people of Dan:

"Dan is a lion's cub
that jumps out from Bashan."

Naphtali's Blessing

²³Moses said these things about the people of Naphtali:

"Naphtali, you will have plenty of good
things.
The Lord will truly bless you.
You will get the land near Lake Galilee."

Asher's Blessing

²⁴Moses said these things about the people of Asher:

"Asher is the most blessed of the sons.
Let him be the favorite of his brothers.
And let him wash his feet in oil.
²⁵ Your gates will have locks made
from iron and bronze.
And you will be strong all your life."

Moses Gives Praise to God

- ²⁶ "There is none like God, Jeshurun!
 God rides on the clouds in his glory
 through the skies to help you.
- ²⁷ God lives forever.
 He is your place of safety.
 God's power continues forever!
 He is protecting you.
 God will force your enemies
 to leave your land.
 He will say,
 'Destroy the enemy!'
- ²⁸ So Israel will live in safety,
 Jacob's well belongs to them.
 They will get a land of grain and wine.
 And that land will get plenty of rain.
- ²⁹ Israel, you are blessed.
 No other nation is like you.
 The Lord saved you.
 The Lord is like a strong shield protecting
 you.
 The Lord is like a powerful sword.
 Your enemies will be afraid of you.
 And you will walk on all their holy
 places!"

Moses Dies

34 Moses climbed Mount Nebo. Moses went from the Jordan Valley in Moab to the top of Mount Pisgah. This was across the Jordan River from Jericho. The Lord showed Moses all the land from Gilead to Dan. ²The Lord showed him all the land of Naphtali, Ephraim, and Manasseh. He showed him all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea. ³The Lord showed Moses the Negev* and the valley that goes from Zoar to Jericho, the city of palm trees. ⁴The Lord said to Moses, "This is the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I said to them, 'I will give this land to your descendants.*' I have let you see the land, but you cannot go there."

Jeshurun This is another name for Jacob. The name means "good" or "honest."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

⁵Then Moses, the Lord's servant, died there in the land of Moab. The Lord had told Moses this would happen. ⁶The Lord buried Moses in Moab. This was in the valley across from Beth Peor. But even today no person knows exactly where Moses' grave is. ⁷Moses was 120 years old when he died. He was as strong as ever, and his eyes were still good. ⁸The people of Israel cried for Moses for 30 days. They stayed in the Jordan Valley in Moab until the time of sadness was finished.

Joshua Becomes the New Leader

⁹Moses had put his hands on Joshua and appointed him to be the new leader. Then Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom. So the people of Israel began to obey Joshua. They did the things that the Lord had commanded Moses.

¹⁰Israel never had another prophet* like Moses: The Lord knew Moses face to face. ¹¹The Lord sent Moses to do powerful miracles in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh, all his officers, and all the people in Egypt saw those miracles. ¹²No other prophet ever did all the powerful and amazing things that Moses did. All the people of Israel saw the things he did.

prophet A person chosen by God to be a special servant.

Joshua

God Chooses Joshua to Lead Israel

1 Moses was the Lord's servant. Joshua son of Nun was Moses' helper. After Moses died, the Lord spoke to Joshua. The Lord said, "My servant Moses is dead. Now you and these people must go across the Jordan River. You must go into the land I am giving to you, the people of Israel. 'I promised Moses that I would give you this land. So, every place you go I will give you that land. 'All the land of the Hittite people, from the desert and Lebanon all the way to the Great River (that is, the Euphrates River) will be yours. And all the land from here to the Mediterranean Sea in the west (that is, the place where the sun sets) will be within your borders. 'I was with Moses. And I will be with you in the same way. No person will be able to stop you all your life. I will not abandon you. I will never leave you.

"Joshua, you must be strong and brave! You must lead these people so they can take their land. I promised their fathers I would give them this land. 'But you must also be strong and brave about another thing. You must be sure to obey the commands my servant Moses gave you. If you follow his teachings exactly, then you will be successful in everything you do. 'Always remember the things written in that book of law. Study that book day and night. Then you can be sure to obey the things that are written there. If you do this, then you will be wise and successful in everything you do. 'Remember, I commanded you to be strong and brave. So don't be scared, because the Lord your God will be with you every place you go."

Joshua Takes Command

"So Joshua gave orders to the leaders of the people. He said, "'Go through the camp and tell the people to get ready. Say to the people, 'Get some food ready. Three days from now we will go across the Jordan River. We will go and take the land that the Lord your God is giving you.'"

"Then Joshua spoke to the family groups of Reuben, Gad and half of the family group of Manasseh. Joshua said, "'Remember what Moses, the Lord's servant, told you. He said that the Lord your God would give you a place to rest. The Lord will give you this land. 'The Lord already gave you this land east of the Jordan River. Your wives, your children, and your animals can stay in this land. But your fighting men must cross the Jordan River with your brothers. You must dress for war and help your brothers take their land.' "The Lord gave you a place to rest. The Lord will do the same for your brothers. But you must help your brothers until they take the land the Lord their God is giving to them. Then you can go back to your own land east of the Jordan River. That is the land that Moses, the Lord's servant, gave to you.

"Then the people answered Joshua, "Anything that you command us to do, we will do. Any place you send us, we will go. "We fully obeyed Moses. In the same way, we will obey everything you say. We only ask one thing from the Lord. We ask that the Lord your God will be with you the same as he was with Moses. "Then, if any person refuses to obey

your commands or if any person turns against you, that person will be killed. Just be strong and brave!"

Spies In Jericho

2 Joshua son of Nun and all the people were camped at Acacia.* Joshua sent out two spies. No other people knew that Joshua sent out these men. Joshua said to the men, "Go and look at the land. Look closely at the city of Jericho."

So the men went to the city of Jericho. They went to the house of a prostitute and stayed there. This woman's name was Rahab.

¹Someone told the king of Jericho, "Last night some men from Israel came to look for weaknesses in our country."

²So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Don't hide those men that came and stayed in your house. Bring them out. They have come to spy on our country."

"The woman had hidden the two men. But the woman said, "Those two men did come here, but I didn't know where they came from. ³In the evening, when it was time to close the city gate, the men left. I don't know where they went. But if you go quickly, maybe you can catch them." ⁴(Rahab said those things, but really, she had taken the men up to the roof,* and she was hiding them in the hay* she had piled up there.)

⁵So the king's men went out of the city, and the people closed the city gates. The king's men went to look for the two men from Israel. They went to the Jordan River and looked at all the places where people cross the river.

"The two men were ready to sleep for the night. But Rahab went to the roof and talked to the men. ⁶Rahab said, "I know that the Lord has given this land to your people. You frighten us. All the people living in this country are afraid of you. ⁷We are afraid because we have heard about the ways that the Lord helped you. We

heard that he dried the water at the Red Sea when you came out of Egypt. We also heard what you did to the two Amorite kings, Sihon and Og. We heard how you destroyed those kings living east of the Jordan River. ⁸"We heard about those things and we became very afraid. And now, none of our men are brave enough to fight you. Why? Because the Lord your God rules the heavens above and the earth below! ⁹So now, I want you to make a promise with me. I was kind to you and helped you. So promise before the Lord that you will be kind to my family. Please tell me that you will do this. ¹⁰Tell me that you will allow my family to live—my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all of their families. Promise that you will save us from death."

"The men agreed. They said, "We will trade our lives for your lives. Don't tell anyone what we are doing. Then, when the Lord gives us our land, we will be kind to you. You can trust us."

"The woman's house was built into the city wall. It was part of the wall. So the woman used a rope to let the men down through a window. ¹¹Then the woman said to them, "Go west, into the hills so the king's men will not accidentally find you. Hide there for three days. After the king's men come back you can go on your way.

"The men said to her, "We made a promise to you. But you must do one thing or we will not be responsible for our promise. ¹²You are using this red rope to help us escape. We will come back to this land. At that time, you must tie this red rope in your window. You must bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your family into your house with you. ¹³We will protect every person who stays in this house. If anyone in your house is hurt, then we will be responsible. But if any person goes out of your house, then that person might be killed. We will not be responsible for that person. It will be his own fault. ¹⁴We are making this agreement with you. But if you tell anyone about what we are doing then we are free from this agreement."

¹⁵The woman answered, "I agree to this." The woman said good-bye, and the men left her

Acacia Or, Shittim. A town east of the Jordan River.

roof In Israel, the roofs were flat, and people used them to store things.

hay Literally, "flax," a plant used to make linen.

house. Then the woman tied the red rope in the window.

²²The men left her house and went into the hills. They stayed there for three days. The king's men looked all along the road. After three days, the king's men gave up and went back to the city. ²³Then the two men went back to Joshua. The men left the hills and crossed the river. They went to Joshua son of Nun. They told Joshua everything that they had learned. ²⁴They said to Joshua, "The Lord really has given us all of the land. All of the people in that country are afraid of us."

Miracle at the Jordan River

3 Early the next morning, Joshua and all the people of Israel got up and left Acacia.* They traveled to the Jordan River. They camped at the Jordan River before they went across. ²After three days, the leaders went through the camp. ³The leaders gave orders to the people. They said, "You will see the priests and Levites* carrying the Box of the Agreement* of the Lord your God. At that time, you must follow them. 'But don't follow too closely. Stay about 1,000 yards* behind them. You have not been here before. But if you follow them, you will know where to go.'"

⁴Then Joshua told the people, "Make yourselves pure. Tomorrow the Lord will use you to do amazing things."

⁵Then Joshua said to the priests, "Take the Box of the Agreement,* and go across the river in front of the people." So the priests lifted the Box and carried it in front of the people.

⁶Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to make you a great man for all the people of Israel to see. Then the people will know that I am with you the same as I was with Moses. ⁷The priest will carry the Box of the

Agreement.* Tell the priests this, 'Walk to the shore of the Jordan River and stop just before you step into the water.'"

⁸Then Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Come and listen to the words of the Lord your God. ⁹Here is proof that the living God is truly with you. Here is proof that he will truly defeat your enemies. He will defeat the Canaanite people, the Hittite people, the Hivite people, the Perizzite people, the Girgashite people, the Amorite people, and the Jebusite people, he will force them to leave that land. ¹⁰Here is the proof. The Box of the Agreement* of the Master of the whole world will go before you as you cross the Jordan River. ¹¹Now, choose twelve men. Choose one man from each of the twelve family groups of Israel. ¹²The priests will carry the Box of the Lord.* The Lord is the Master of the whole world. They will carry that Box in front of you into the Jordan River. When they enter the water, the water of the Jordan River will stop flowing. The water will stop and fill behind that place like a dam."

¹³The priests carried the Box of the Agreement* and the people left the place they had camped. The people started going across the Jordan River. ¹⁴(During harvest time the Jordan River overflows its banks. So the river was at its fullest.) The priests who were carrying the Box came to the shore of the river. They stepped into the water. ¹⁵And at that time, the water stopped flowing. The water filled behind that place like a dam. The water piled high a long way up the river—all the way to Adam (a town near Zarethan). The people crossed the river near Jericho. ¹⁶The ground at that place became dry, and the priests carried the Box of the Agreement* of the Lord to the middle of the river and stopped. The priests waited there while all the people of Israel walked across the Jordan River on dry land.

Rocks to Remind the People

4 All the people crossed the Jordan River. ²After that, the Lord said to Joshua, ³"Choose twelve men. Choose one man from

Acacia Or, Shittim. A town east of the Jordan River.

Levites People from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

1,000 yards Literally, "2,000 cubits."

Box of the Lord Also called the Box of the Agreement.

each family group. ²Tell them to look in the river where the priests were standing. Tell them to find twelve rocks in that place. Carry those twelve rocks with you. Put the twelve rocks in the place where you stay tonight."

³So Joshua chose one man from each family group. Then he called the twelve men together. ⁴Joshua said to the men, "Go out into the river where the Holy Box* of the Lord your God is. Each of you must find one rock. There will be one rock for each of the twelve family groups of Israel. Carry that rock on your shoulder. ⁵These rocks will be a sign for you. In the future, your children will ask you, 'What do these rocks mean?' ⁶You will tell the children that the Lord stopped the water from flowing in the Jordan River. When the Holy Box of the Lord's Agreement crossed the river, the water stopped flowing. Those rocks will help the people of Israel remember this thing forever."

⁷So the people of Israel obeyed Joshua. They carried twelve rocks from the middle of the Jordan River. There was one rock for each of the twelve family groups of Israel. They did this the way the Lord commanded Joshua. The men carried the rocks with them. Then they put the rocks at the place where they made their camp. ⁸(Joshua also put twelve rocks in the middle of the Jordan River. He put them at the place where the priests stood while carrying the Lord's Holy Box.* Those rocks are still at that place today.)

⁹The Lord had commanded Joshua to tell the people what to do. Those were the things Moses had said Joshua must do. So the priests carrying the Holy Box continued standing in the middle of the river until all those things were done. The people hurried across the river. ¹⁰The people finished crossing the river. After that, the priests carried the Box of the Lord to the front of the people.

¹¹The men from the family groups of Reuben, Gad and half of the family group of Manasseh obeyed Moses. These men crossed the river in front of the other people. These men were prepared for war. They were going to

help the rest of the people of Israel take the land God had promised to give them. ¹²About 40,000 soldiers, prepared for war, passed before the Lord. They were marching toward the plains of Jericho.

¹³That day the Lord made Joshua a great man to all the people of Israel. The people respected Joshua from that time on. They respected Joshua all his life, the same as they respected Moses.

¹⁴While the priests carrying the Box were still standing in the river, the Lord said to Joshua, ¹⁵"Command the priest to come out of the river."

¹⁶So Joshua commanded the priests. He said, "Come out of the Jordan River."

¹⁷The priests obeyed Joshua. They carried the Box with them and came out of the river. When the priests' feet touched the land on the other side of the river, the water in the river began flowing again. The water again overflowed its banks as it had before the people crossed.

¹⁸The people crossed the Jordan River on the tenth day of the first month. The people camped at Gilgal, east of Jericho. ¹⁹The people carried with them the twelve rocks that they had taken from the Jordan River. And Joshua set up those rocks at Gilgal. ²⁰Then Joshua told the people, "In the future, your children will ask their parents, 'What do these rocks mean?'"

²¹You will tell the children, "Those rocks help us remember the way the people of Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land. ²²The Lord your God caused the water in the Jordan River to stop flowing. The river was dry until the people finished crossing it, the same as at the Red Sea. Remember, the Lord stopped the water at the Red Sea so that the people could cross. ²³The Lord did this so that all the people in this country would know that the Lord is very powerful. Then those people will always be afraid of the Lord your God."

5 So the Lord made the Jordan River dry until the people of Israel finished crossing it. The kings of the Amorites living west of the Jordan River and the Canaanites living by the Mediterranean Sea heard about this, and they

became very scared. After that they were not brave enough to stand and fight against the people of Israel.

The Israelites Are Circumcised

²At that time, the Lord said to Joshua, "Make knives from flint rocks and circumcise* the men of Israel."

³So Joshua made knives from flint rocks. Then he circumcised* the people of Israel at Gibeath Haaraloth.*

⁴"This is why Joshua circumcised* the men: After the people of Israel left Egypt, all the men that were able to be in the army were circumcised. While in the desert, many of the fighting men did not listen to the Lord. So the Lord promised that those men would not see the "land where much food grows." The Lord promised our ancestors* to give us that land, but, because of those men, God forced the people to wander in the desert for 40 years—that way all those fighting men would die. All those fighting men died, and their sons took their place. But none of the boys that were born in the desert on the trip from Egypt had been circumcised. So Joshua circumcised them.

⁵Joshua finished circumcising all the men. The people camped at that place until all the men were healed.

First Passover In Canaan

¹At that time, the Lord said to Joshua, "When you were slaves in Egypt, you were ashamed. But today I have taken away that shame." So Joshua named that place Gilgal.* And that place is still named Gilgal today.

²While the people of Israel were still camped at Gilgal, on the plains of Jericho, they celebrated Passover. This was on the evening

of the 14th day of the month. "The day after the Passover, the people ate some food that grew in that land. They ate bread made without yeast and roasted grain. "After the people ate this food on that day, the special food from heaven stopped coming. After that the people of Israel did not get the special food from heaven. After that time they ate the food that grew in the land of Canaan.

³When Joshua was near Jericho he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him. The man had a sword in his hand. Joshua went to the man and asked, "Are you a friend to our people, or are you one of our enemies?"

⁴The man answered, "I am not an enemy. I am the commander of the Lord's army. I have just now come to you."

Then Joshua bowed his face to the ground. He did this to show respect. He asked, "I am your servant. Does my master have a command for me?"

⁵The commander of the Lord's army answered, "Take off your shoes. The place where you are standing now is holy." So Joshua obeyed him.

Jericho Captured

6 The city of Jericho was closed. The people in the city were afraid because the people of Israel were near. No one went in the city and no one came out of the city.

²Then the Lord* said to Joshua, "Look, I will let you defeat the city of Jericho. You will defeat the king and all the fighting men in the city. "March around the city with your army one time every day. Do this for six days. "Get seven priests to carry trumpets made from goats horns. "Carry the Holy Box.*, Tell the priests to march in front of the Holy Box. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. On the seventh day, tell the priest to blow the trumpets when they march. "The priest will make one loud noise from the trumpets. When

Lord Or, "YAHWEH."

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement—the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

circumcise(d) To cut off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

Gibeath Haaraloth This name means "Circumcision Hill."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Gilgal This name is like the Hebrew word meaning, "to roll away."

you hear that noise, tell all the people to begin shouting. When you do this, the walls of the city will fall. Then your people will go straight into the city."

⁶So Joshua son of Nun called the priests together. Joshua said to them, "Carry the Holy Box* of the Lord. And tell seven priests to carry trumpets. Those priests should walk in front of the Box."

⁷Then Joshua ordered the people, "Now go! March around the city. The soldiers with weapons should march in front of the Holy Box* of the Lord."

⁸After Joshua finished speaking to the people, the seven priests began marching before the Lord. They carried the seven trumpets. They blew the trumpets while they marched. The priests carrying the Lord's Holy Box followed them. ⁹The soldiers with weapons marched in front of the priests. And the men walking behind the Holy Box were marching and blowing their trumpets. ¹⁰Joshua had told the people not to give a war cry. He said, "Don't shout. Don't say a word until the day I tell you. Then you can shout!"

¹¹So Joshua made the priests carry the Holy Box of the Lord around the city one time. Then they went back to the camp and stayed the night there.

¹²Early the next morning, Joshua got up. The priests carried the Lord's Holy Box again.

¹³And the seven priests carried the seven trumpets. They walked in front of the Lord's Holy Box marching and blowing their trumpets. The soldiers with weapons marched in front of them. The priests walking behind the Lord's Holy Box were marching and blowing their trumpets.

¹⁴So on the second day, they all marched around the city one time. And then they went back to the camp. They continued to do this every day for six days.

¹⁵On the seventh day they got up at dawn. And they marched around the city seven times.

They marched in the same way they had marched on the days before, but on that day they marched around the city seven times.

¹⁶The seventh time they marched around the city, the priests blew their trumpets. At that time, Joshua gave the command: "Now, shout! The Lord is giving you this city!" The city and everything in it belongs to the Lord.* Only Rahab the prostitute and all the people in her house will remain alive. These people must not be killed because Rahab helped the two spies. ¹⁷Also remember that we must destroy everything else. Don't take those things. If you take those things and bring them into our camp then you yourselves will be destroyed. And you will also bring trouble to all the people of Israel. ¹⁸All the silver and gold and things made from bronze and iron belong to the Lord. Those things must be saved for him."

¹⁹The priests blew the trumpets. The people heard trumpets and began shouting. The walls fell and the people ran straight into the city. So the people of Israel defeated that city. ²⁰The people destroyed everything in the city. They destroyed everything that was living there. They killed the young men and old men, young women and old women, cattle, sheep, and donkeys.

²¹Joshua talked to the two spies. Joshua said, "Go into the prostitute's house. Bring her out. And bring all those people who are with her. Do this because of the promise you made to her."

²²So the two men went into the house and brought out Rahab. They also brought out her father, mother, brothers, all her family, and all the other people that were with her. They put all the people in a safe place outside the camp of Israel.

²³Then the people of Israel burned the whole city. They burned everything in the city except the things made from silver, gold, bronze, and iron. They saved those things for the Lord.

²⁴Joshua saved Rahab the prostitute, her family, and all the other people that were with her.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement—the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

belongs to the Lord This usually meant that these things were saved in the temple treasury or they were destroyed.

Joshua let them live because Rahab helped the spies that Joshua had sent out to Jericho. Rahab still lives among the people of Israel today.

²At that time, Joshua made this important promise. He said:

"Any person who tries to build this city,
Jericho, again
will be in danger from the Lord.
The man who lays the foundation of this
city,
will lose his oldest son.
The man who sets up the gates
will lose his youngest son."³

⁴So the Lord was with Joshua. And Joshua became famous all through that country.

Achan's Sin

7 But the people of Israel did not obey God. There was a man from the family group of Judah named Achan son of Carmi, grandson of Zimri. Achan kept some of the things that should have been destroyed. So the Lord became very angry at the people of Israel.

¹After they defeated Jericho, Joshua sent some men to Ai.* Ai was near Beth Aven, east of Bethel. Joshua told them, "Go to Ai and look for weaknesses in that area." So the men went to spy on that land.

²Later the men came back to Joshua. They said, "Ai is a weak area. We will not need all of our people to defeat that land. Send 2,000 or 3,000 men to fight there. There is no need to use the whole army. There are only a few men there to fight against us."

³So about 3,000 men went to Ai. But the people of Ai killed about 36 men of Israel. And the people of Israel ran away. The people of Ai chased them from the city gates all the way to the quarries.* So the people of Ai beat them badly.

When the people from Israel saw this, they became very frightened and lost their courage.

⁴When Joshua heard about this, he tore his clothes to show his sadness. He bowed down on the ground before the Holy Box. Joshua stayed there until evening. The leaders of Israel did the same thing. They also threw dirt on their heads to show their sadness.

⁵Joshua said, "Lord my Master! You brought our people across the Jordan River. Why did you bring us this far and then allow the Amorite people to destroy us? We should have been satisfied and stayed on the other side of the Jordan River! 'I promise by my life, Lord! There is nothing I can say now. Israel has surrendered to the enemy. 'The Canaanite people and all the other people in this country will hear about what happened. Then they will attack us and kill all of us! Then what will you do to protect your great name?'"

⁶The Lord said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why are you down on your face? ⁷The people of Israel sinned against me. They broke the Agreement that I commanded them to obey. They took some of the things that I commanded them to destroy. They have stolen from me. They have lied. They have taken those things for themselves. ⁸That is why the army of Israel turned away from the fight and ran. They did that because they have done wrong. They should be destroyed. I will not continue to help you. I will not continue to be with you unless you do this thing: You must destroy everything I commanded you to destroy.

⁹"Now go and make the people pure. Tell the people, 'Make yourselves pure. Prepare for tomorrow. The Lord, God of Israel, says that some people are keeping things that he commanded to be destroyed. You will never be able to defeat your enemies until you throw away those things.

¹⁰"Tomorrow morning you must all stand before the Lord. All of the family groups will stand before the Lord. The Lord will choose one family group. Then only that family group will stand before the Lord. Then the Lord will choose one clan* from that family group. Then only that clan must stand before the Lord. Then

The man ... son See 1 Kings 16:34.

Ai The name of this town means "the ruins."

quarries A place where people cut stones from the solid rock.

clan A group of families.

the Lord will look at each family in that clan. Then the Lord will choose one family. Then the Lord will look at each man in that family. ¹⁵The man who is keeping those things that we should have destroyed will be caught. Then that man will be destroyed by fire. And everything that he owns will be destroyed with him. That man broke the Agreement with the Lord. He has done a very bad thing to the people of Israel!"

¹⁶Early the next morning, Joshua led all the people of Israel before the Lord. All of the family groups stood before the Lord. The Lord chose the family group of Judah. ¹⁷So all the clans* of Judah stood before the Lord. The Lord chose the Zerah clan. Then all the families of the Zerah clan stood before the Lord. The family of Zimri was chosen. ¹⁸Then Joshua told all the men in that family to come before the Lord. The Lord chose Achan the son of Carmi. (Carmi was the son of Zimri. And Zimri was the son of Zerah.)

¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, "Son, say your prayers. You should confess and give praise to the Lord God of Israel. Tell me what you did. Don't try to hide anything from me."

²⁰Achan answered, "It is true! I sinned against the Lord God of Israel. This is what I did: ²¹We captured the city of Jericho and all the things in it. Among those things I saw a beautiful coat from Babylon; about 5 pounds* of silver; and more than 1 pound* of gold. I wanted these things very much for myself. So I took them. You will find those things buried in the ground under my tent. The silver is under the coat."

²²So Joshua sent some men to the tent. They ran to the tent and found those things hidden there in the tent. The silver was under the coat.

²³The men brought the things out of the tent. They took those things to Joshua and all the people of Israel. They threw them on the ground before the Lord.

²⁴Then Joshua and all the people led Achan son of Zerah to the valley of Achor. They also took the silver, the coat, the gold, Achan's sons

and daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and everything he owned. They took all these things to the Valley of Achor with Achan. ²⁵Then Joshua said, "I don't know why you caused so much trouble for us! But now the Lord will bring trouble to you!" Then all the people threw stones at Achan until he died. They also killed his family. Then the people burned them and everything he owned. ²⁶After they burned Achan, they put many rocks over his body. Those rocks are still there today. ²⁷So God brought trouble to Achan. That is why that place is called the Valley of Achor.* After this the Lord was not angry with the people.

Ai Destroyed

8 Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Don't be afraid. Don't give up. Lead all your fighting men to Ai.* I will help you defeat the king of Ai. I am giving you his people, his city, and his land. ²You will do to Ai and its king the same thing you did to Jericho and its king. Only this time you will take all the wealth and keep it for yourselves. You will share the wealth with your people. Now, tell some of your soldiers to hide behind the city."

³So Joshua led his whole army toward Ai.* Then Joshua chose 30,000 of his best fighting men. He sent these men out at night. ⁴Joshua gave them this command: "Listen carefully to what I tell you. You must hide in the area behind the city. Wait for the time to attack. Don't go far from the city. Continue to watch and be ready. ⁵I will lead the men with me to march toward the city. The men in the city will come out to fight against us. We will turn and run away from them, like we did before. ⁶Those men will chase us away from the city. Those men will think that we are running away from them like we did before. So we will run away. ⁷Then you should come out of your hiding place and take control of the city. The Lord your God will give you the power to win.

⁸You must do what the Lord says. After you take control of the city, then you must burn it.

clan A group of families.

5 pounds Literally, "200 shekels."

1 pound Literally, "50 shekels."

Achor This name means "trouble."

Ai See Josh. 7:2. The name of this town means "the ruins."

Watch me! I will give you the command to attack."

⁹Then Joshua sent those men to their hiding place and waited. They went to a place between Bethel and Ai. This was to the west of Ai. And Joshua stayed the night with his people.

¹⁰Early the next morning Joshua gathered the men together. Then Joshua and the leaders of Israel led the men to Ai. ¹¹All of the soldiers that were with Joshua marched to Ai. They topped in front of the city. The army made its camp north of the city. There was a valley between the army and Ai.

¹²Then Joshua chose about 5,000 men. Joshua sent these men to hide in the area west of the city, between Bethel and Ai. ¹³So Joshua had prepared his men for the fight. The main camp was north of the city. The other men were hiding to the west. That night Joshua went down into the valley.

¹⁴Later, the king of Ai saw the army of Israel. The king and his people got up and hurried out to fight the army of Israel. The king of Ai went out the east side of the city, so he did not see the soldiers hiding behind the city.

¹⁵Joshua and all the men of Israel let the army of Ai push them back. Joshua and his men began running east toward the desert. ¹⁶The people in the city began shouting and started chasing Joshua and his men. All the people left the city. ¹⁷All the people of Ai and Bethel chased the army of Israel. The city was left open—no one stayed to protect the city.

¹⁸Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Hold your spear toward the city of Ai. I will give you that city." So Joshua held his spear toward the city of Ai. ¹⁹The men of Israel that were hiding saw this. They quickly came out from their hiding place and hurried toward the city. They entered the city and took control of it. Then the soldiers started fires to burn the city.

²⁰The men from Ai looked back and saw their city burning. They saw the smoke rising into the sky. So they lost their strength and courage. They quit chasing the men of Israel. The men from Israel stopped running. They turned and went to fight against the men from Ai. There was no safe place for the men from

Ai to run to. ²¹Joshua and all his men saw that his army had taken control of the city. They saw the smoke rising from the city. This is when they stopped running. They turned and ran to fight against the men from Ai. ²²Then the men that were hiding came out of the city to help with the fight. The army of Israel was on both sides of the men of Ai—the men of Ai were trapped. Israel defeated them. They fought until none of the men from Ai were left alive—none of the enemy escaped. ²³But the king of Ai was left alive. Joshua's men brought him to Joshua.

A Review of the Fighting

²⁴During the fighting, the army of Israel chased the men from Ai into the fields and into the desert. So the army of Israel finished killing all the men from Ai. They finished killing the men in the fields and in the desert. Then all the men of Israel went back to Ai. Then they killed all the people that were left alive in that city. ²⁵All the people of Ai died that day. There were 12,000 men and women. ²⁶Joshua had held his spear toward Ai as a sign to his people to destroy the city. And Joshua did not stop until all the people in the city were destroyed. ²⁷The people of Israel kept for themselves the animals and the things the people of the city owned. This is the thing the Lord allowed them to do when he gave Joshua the commands.

²⁸Then Joshua burned the city of Ai.* That city became an empty pile of rocks. It is still like that today. ²⁹Joshua hung the king of Ai on a tree. He left him hanging in a tree until evening. At sunset, Joshua told his men to take the king's body down from the tree. They threw his body down at the city gate. Then they covered the body with many rocks. That pile of rocks is still there today.

Reading the Blessings and Curses

³⁰Then Joshua built an altar for the Lord, the God of Israel. He built the altar on Mount Ebal. ³¹The Lord's servant Moses told the people of Israel how to build altars. So Joshua built the

Ai The name of this town means "the ruins."

altar the way it was explained in the book of the Law of Moses. The altar was made from stones that were not cut. No tool had ever been used on those stones. They offered burnt offerings to the Lord on that altar. They also gave fellowship offerings.

²²In that place Joshua wrote the law of Moses on stones. He did this for all the people of Israel to see. ²³The elders (*leaders*), officers, judges, and all the people of Israel were standing around the Holy Box. They were standing in front of the Levite priests who carried the Holy Box for the Lord's Agreement. The people of Israel and the other people with them were all standing there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Ebal and the other half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim. The Lord's servant Moses had told the people to do this. Moses told them to do this for this blessing.

²⁴Then Joshua read all the words from the law. Joshua read the blessings and the curses. He read everything the way it was written in the Book of the Law. ²⁵All the people of Israel were gathered together there. All the women and children and all the foreigners that lived with the people of Israel were there. And Joshua read every command that Moses had given.

Gibeonites Trick Joshua

9 All the kings west of the Jordan River heard about these things. These were the kings of the Hittite people, the Amorite people, the Canaanite people, the Perizzite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people. They lived in the hill country and in the plains. They also lived along the sea coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon. ²All these kings came together. They made plans to fight against Joshua and the people of Israel.

³The people from the city of Gibeon heard about the way Joshua had defeated Jericho and Ai. ⁴So those people decided to try to fool the people of Israel. This was their plan: They gathered together old wineskins* that were

cracked and broken. They put these old wineskins on the backs of their animals. They put old sacks on their animals to look like they had traveled from far away. ⁵The men put old shoes on their feet. The men wore old clothes. The men found some old bread that was dry and moldy. So the men looked like they had traveled from a faraway place. ⁶Then the men went to the camp of the people of Israel. This camp was near Gilgal.

The men went to Joshua and said to him, ⁷"We have traveled from a faraway country. We want to make a peace agreement with you."

⁸The men of Israel said to these Hivite men, "Maybe you are trying to fool us. Maybe you live near us. We can't make a peace agreement with you until we know where you are from."

⁹The Hivite men said to Joshua, "We are your servants."

But Joshua asked, "Who are you? Where do you come from?"

¹⁰The men answered, "We are your servants. We have come from a faraway country. We came because we heard of the great power of the Lord your God. We heard about the things he did. We heard about everything he did in Egypt. ¹¹And we heard that he defeated the two kings of the Amorite people east of the Jordan River. This was Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan, in the land of Ashtaroath. ¹²So our elders (*leaders*) and our people said to us, 'Take enough food for your journey. Go and meet with the people of Israel.' Tell them, 'We are your servants. Make a peace agreement with us.'"

¹³"See our bread! When we left home it was warm and fresh. But now you can see that it is dry and old. ¹⁴See our wineskins! When we left home they were new and filled with wine. Now you can see that they are cracked and old. See our clothes and sandals! You can see that the long journey has almost destroyed the things we wear."

¹⁵The men of Israel wanted to know if these men were telling the truth. So they tasted the bread—but they did not ask the Lord what they should do. ¹⁶Joshua agreed to make peace with

wineskin(s) A bottle made from the skin of an animal and used for storing wine.

them. He agreed to let them live. The leaders of Israel agreed with this promise of Joshua.

¹⁰Three days later, the people of Israel learned that those men lived very near their camp. ¹¹So the people of Israel went to the place where those men lived. On the third day the people of Israel came to the cities of Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim. ¹²But the army of Israel did not try to fight against those cities. They had made a peace agreement with those people. They had made a promise to the people before the Lord, the God of Israel.

All the people complained against the leaders that made the agreement. ¹³But the leaders answered, "We have given our promise. We promised before the Lord, the God of Israel. We cannot fight against them now. ¹⁴This is what we must do. We must let them live. We cannot hurt them or God will be angry at us because we broke the promise we made to them. ¹⁵So let them live. But they will be our servants. They will cut wood for us and carry water for all of our people." So the leaders did not break their promise of peace to those people.

¹⁶Joshua called the Gibeonite people. He said, "Why did you lie to us? Your land was near our camp. But you told us you were from a faraway country. ¹⁷Now, your people will have many troubles. All of your people will be slaves—they will have to cut wood and carry water for the house of God.*

¹⁸The Gibeonite people answered, "We lied to you because we were afraid you would kill us. We heard that God commanded his servant Moses to give you all of this land. And God told you to kill all the people that lived in this land. That is why we lied to you. ¹⁹Now we are your servants. You can do whatever you think is right."

²⁰So the people of Gibeon became slaves. But Joshua let them live. Joshua did not allow the people of Israel to kill them. ²¹Joshua made the people of Gibeon become slaves of the

people of Israel. They cut wood and carried water for the people of Israel and for the altar of the Lord—wherever the Lord chose it to be. Those people are still slaves today.

The Day the Sun Stood Still

10 At this time Adoni-Zedek was the king of Jerusalem. This king heard that Joshua had defeated Ai and completely destroyed it. The king learned that Joshua had done the same thing to Jericho and its king. The king also learned that the people of Gibeon had made a peace agreement with Israel. And those people lived very near Jerusalem. ²So Adoni-Zedek and his people were very scared. Gibeon was not a little town like Ai. Gibeon was a very big city—it was as big as any royal city.* And all the men in that city were good fighters. So the king was afraid. ³Adoni-Zedek, the king of Jerusalem, talked with Hoham, king of Hebron. He also talked with Piram, king of Jarmuth, Japhia, king of Lachish, and Debir, king of Eglon. The king of Jerusalem begged these men, "Come with me and help me to attack Gibeon. Gibeon has made a peace agreement with Joshua and the people of Israel."

⁴So these five Amorite kings joined armies. (The five kings were the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.) Those armies went to Gibeon. The armies surrounded the city and began fighting against it.

⁵The people in the city of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua at his camp at Gilgal. The message said: "We are your servants! Don't leave us alone. Come and help us! Hurry! Save us! All the Amorite kings from the hill country have joined their armies. They are fighting against us."

⁶So Joshua marched out of Gilgal with his whole army. Joshua's best fighting men were with him. ⁷The Lord said to Joshua, "Don't be afraid of those armies. I will allow you to defeat them. None of those armies will be able to defeat you."

house of God This might mean the "family of God" (Israel), or it might be the Holy Tent, or the temple."

royal city Strong well-protected cities that controlled smaller towns nearby.

⁹Joshua and his army marched all night to Gibeon. The enemy did not know that Joshua was coming. So Joshua surprised them when he attacked.

¹⁰The Lord caused those armies to be very confused when Israel attacked. So Israel defeated them and won a great victory. Israel chased the enemy from Gibeon. They chased them on the road going to Beth Horon. The army of Israel killed men all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. ¹¹The army of Israel chased the enemy down the road from Beth Horon to Azekah. While they were chasing the enemy, the Lord caused large hailstones to fall from the sky. Many of the enemy were killed by these large hailstones. There were more men killed by these hailstones than the people of Israel killed with their swords.

¹²That day the Lord allowed Israel to defeat the Amorite people. And that day Joshua stood before all the people of Israel and said to the Lord:

"Sun, stay in the sky over Gibeon
and don't move.
Moon, stay in the sky over the valley of
Aijalon,
and don't move."

¹³So the sun did not move. And the moon also stopped until the people defeated their enemies. This story is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky. It did not move for a full day. ¹⁴That has never happened at any time before that day. And that has never happened since. That was the day the Lord obeyed a man. Truly the Lord was fighting for Israel!

¹⁵After this, Joshua and his army went back to the camp at Gilgal.

¹⁶During the fight, the five kings ran away. They hid in a cave near Makkedah. ¹⁷But someone found the five kings hiding in that cave. Joshua learned about this. ¹⁸Joshua said, "Cover the entrance to the cave with large rocks. Put some men there to guard the cave." ¹⁹But don't stay there yourselves. Continue chasing the enemy. Continue to attack them from behind. Don't let the enemy get to their

cities safely. The Lord your God has given you the victory over them."

²⁰So Joshua and the people of Israel killed the enemy. But some of the enemy were able to go to their cities and hide. These men were not killed. ²¹After the fighting, Joshua's men came back to him at Makkedah. None of the people in that country were brave enough to say anything against the people of Israel.

²²Joshua said, "Move the rocks that are covering the entrance to the cave. Bring those five kings to me." ²³So Joshua's men brought the five kings out of the cave. These five kings were the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.

²⁴So they brought the five kings to Joshua. Joshua called all his men to come to that place. Joshua said to the officers of his army, "Come here! Put your feet on the necks of these kings." So the officers of Joshua's army came close. They put their feet on the necks of the kings.

²⁵Then Joshua said to his men, "Be strong and brave! Don't be afraid. I will show you what the Lord will do to all of the enemies that you will fight in the future."

²⁶Then Joshua killed the five kings. He hung their bodies on five trees. Joshua left them hanging in the trees until evening.

²⁷At sunset Joshua told his men to take the bodies down from the trees. Then they threw their bodies into that same cave where they had been hiding. They covered the entrance of the cave with large rocks. Those bodies are still in that cave today.

²⁸That day Joshua defeated Makkedah. Joshua killed the king and the people in that city. There were no people left living. Joshua did the same thing to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

Taking the Southern Cities

¹Then Joshua and all the people of Israel traveled from Makkedah. They went to Libnah and attacked that city. ²The Lord allowed the people of Israel to defeat that city and its king. The people of Israel killed every person in that

city. No people were left alive. And the people did the same thing to that king as they had done to the king of Jericho.

¹¹Then Joshua and all the people of Israel left Libnah and went to Lachish. Joshua and his army camped around Lachish, and then they attacked that city. ¹²The Lord allowed the people of Israel to defeat the city of Lachish. On the second day they defeated that city. The people of Israel killed every person in that city. This is the same thing he did to Libnah. ¹³During this same time, Horem, the king of Gezer, came to help Lachish. But Joshua defeated him and his army also. There were no men left alive.

¹⁴Then Joshua and all the people of Israel traveled from Lachish to Eglon. They camped around Eglon and attacked it. ¹⁵That day they captured the city and killed all the people in the city, the same thing as they did to Lachish.

¹⁶Then Joshua and all the people of Israel traveled from Eglon to Hebron. Then they attacked Hebron. ¹⁷They captured the city and all the little towns near Hebron. The people of Israel killed every person in the city. No one was left alive there. This was the same thing they did to Eglon. They destroyed the city and killed all the people in it.

¹⁸Then Joshua and all the people of Israel went back to Debir and attacked that city. ¹⁹They captured that city, its king, and all the little towns near Debir. They killed every person in that city. No one was left alive there. The people of Israel did to Debir and its king the same thing they did to Hebron and its king. This was the same thing they did to Libnah and its king.

²⁰So Joshua defeated all the kings of the cities of the hill country, the Negev,* the western foothills, and the eastern foothills. The Lord God of Israel had told Joshua to kill all the people. So Joshua did not leave anyone alive in those places.

²¹Joshua captured all the cities from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza. He captured all the cities from the land of Goshen (in Egypt) to Gibeon.

²²Joshua captured all those cities and their kings on one trip. Joshua did this because the Lord God of Israel was fighting for Israel. ²³Then Joshua and all the people of Israel returned to their camp at Gilgal.

Defeating the Northern Cities

11 Jabin, king of Hazor, heard about all these things that happened. So he decided to call together the armies of several kings. Jabin sent a message to Jobab, king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, the king of Acshaph,² and to the kings of the north, in the hill country and in the desert. Jabin sent the message to the kings of the Kinnereth,* the Negev,* and the western foothills. Jabin also sent the message to the king of Naphtali Dor in the west. ³Jabin sent that message to the kings of the Canaanite people in the east and in the west. He sent the message to the Amorite people, the Hittite people, the Perizzite people, and the Jebusite people living in the hill country. He also sent the message to the Hivite people living below Mount Hermon near Mizpah. ⁴So the armies of all these kings came together. There were many fighting men and many horses and chariots. It was a very, very large army—it looked like there were as many men as there were sands on the sea shore.

⁵All of these kings met together at the small river of Merom. They joined their armies together into one camp. They made plans to fight against Israel.

⁶Then the Lord said to Joshua, "Don't be afraid of that army. I will allow you to defeat them. By this time tomorrow, you will have killed them all. You will cut the legs of the horses and burn all their chariots."

⁷Joshua and his whole army surprised the enemy. They attacked the enemy at the river of Merom. ⁸The Lord allowed Israel to defeat them. The army of Israel defeated them and chased them to Greater Sidon, Misrephoth Maim, and the Valley of Mizpah in the east. The army of Israel fought until none of the enemy was left alive. ⁹Joshua did what the Lord

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Kinnereth The area near the Sea of Galilee.

said he would do—Joshua cut the legs of their horses and burned their chariots.

¹⁰Then Joshua went back and captured the city of Hazor. Joshua killed the king of Hazor. (Hazor was the leader of all the kingdoms that fought against Israel.) ¹¹The army of Israel killed every person in that city. They completely destroyed all the people. There was nothing left alive. Then they burned the city.

¹²Joshua captured all of these cities. He killed all of their kings. Joshua completely destroyed everything in these cities. He did this the way Moses, the Lord's servant, had commanded. ¹³But the army of Israel did not burn any cities that were built on hills. The only city built on a hill that they burned was Hazor. This is the city Joshua burned. ¹⁴The people of Israel kept for themselves all the things they found in the cities. They kept all the animals that they found in the city. But they killed all the people there. They did not allow any people to be left alive. ¹⁵Long ago the Lord commanded his servant Moses to do this. Then Moses commanded Joshua to do this. So Joshua obeyed God. Joshua did everything that the Lord had commanded Moses.

¹⁶So Joshua defeated all the people in that whole country. He had control over the hill country, the Negev, all the area of Goshen, the area of the western foothills, Jordan Valley, and the mountains of Israel and all the hills near them. ¹⁷Joshua had control of all the land from Mount Halak near Seir to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. Joshua captured all the kings in that land and killed them. ¹⁸Joshua fought against those kings many years. ¹⁹Only one city in all the land made a peace agreement with Israel. That was the Hivite city of Gibeon. All the other cities were defeated in war. ²⁰The Lord wanted those people to think they were strong. Then they would fight against Israel. This way he could destroy them without mercy. He could destroy them the way the Lord had commanded Moses to do.

²¹The Anakite people* lived in the hill

country in the area of Hebron, Debir, Anab, and Judah. Joshua fought against these Anakite people. Joshua completely destroyed all those people and their towns. ²²There were no Anakite people left living in the land of Israel. The only Anakite people that were left alive lived in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. ²³Joshua took control of the whole land of Israel, just like the Lord had told Moses long ago. The Lord gave that land to Israel just like he promised. Then Joshua divided the land among the family groups of Israel. Then the fighting ended—finally there was peace in the land.

Kings Defeated by Israel

12 The people of Israel took control of the land east of the Jordan River. They now had all the land from Arnon Ravine to Mount Hermon and all the land along the eastern side of the Jordan Valley. Here are all of the kings the people of Israel defeated to take this land:

¹They defeated, Sihon, the king of the Amorite people living in the city of Heshbon. He ruled the land from Arer at the Arnon Ravine to the Jabbok River. His land started in the center of that ravine. This was their border with the Ammonite people. Sihon ruled over half of the land of Gilead. ²He also ruled over the eastern side of Jordan Valley from Lake Galilee to the Dead Sea (Salt Sea). And he ruled from Beth Jeshimoth to the south to the hills of Pisgah.

³They also defeated, Og, king of Bashan. Og was from the Rephaite people. He ruled the land in Ashtaroth and Edrei. ⁴Og ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, and all of the area of Bashan. His land ended where the people of Geshur and Maacah lived. Og also ruled half of the land of Gilead. This land stopped at the land of Sihon, the king of Heshbon.

⁵The Lord's servant Moses and the people of Israel defeated all these kings. And Moses gave that land to the family group of Reuben, the family group of Gad, and half the family group of Manasseh. Moses gave them this land to be their own.

Anakite people Descendants of Anak. They were a family famous for tall and powerful fighting men. See Num. 13:33.

⁷The people of Israel also defeated kings in the land that was west of the Jordan River. Joshua led the people in this land. Joshua gave the people this land and divided it among the twelve family groups. This was the land that God promised to give to them. This land was between Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon and Mount Halak near Seir. ⁸This included the hill country, the western foothills, the Jordan Valley, the eastern mountains, the desert, and the Negev.* This was the land where the Hittite people, the Amorite people, the Canaanite people, the Perizzite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people lived. Here is a list of the kings the people of Israel defeated:

- ⁹ The king of Jericho (one king),
the king of Ai (near Bethel) (one king),
- ¹⁰ the king of Jerusalem (one king),
the king of Hebron (one king),
- ¹¹ the king of Jarmuth (one king),
the king of Lachish (one king),
- ¹² the king of Eglon (one king),
the king of Gezer (one king),
- ¹³ the king of Debir (one king),
the king of Geder (one king),
- ¹⁴ the king of Hormah (one king),
the king of Arad (one king),
- ¹⁵ the king of Libnah (one king),
the king of Adullam (one king),
- ¹⁶ the king of Makkedah (one king),
the king of Bethel (one king),
- ¹⁷ the king of Tappuah (one king),
the king of Hopher (one king),
- ¹⁸ the king of Aphek (one king),
the king of Lasharon (one king),
- ¹⁹ the king of Madon (one king),
the king of Hazor (one king),
- ²⁰ the king of Shimron Meron (one king),
the king of Acshaph (one king),
- ²¹ the king of Taanach (one king),
the king of Megiddo (one king),
- ²² the king of Kedesh (one king),
the king of Jokneam in Carmel (one king),
- ²³ the king of Dor in the mountain of Dor (one king),

the king of Goyim in Gilgal (one king),

²⁴ the king of Tirzah (one king).

In all, there were 31 kings.

Land Not Yet Taken

13 When Joshua was very old, the Lord said to him, "Joshua you have grown old, but there is still much land for you to take control of. ²You have not yet taken the land of Geshur and the land of the Philistines. ³You have not yet taken the area from the Shihor River* at Egypt to the border of Ekron in the north. That land still belongs to the Canaanite people. You must still defeat the five Philistine leaders at Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. You must also defeat the Avvite people 'who live south of the Canaanite land. ⁴You have not yet defeated the area of the Gebalite people. And also there is the area of Lebanon east of Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo-Hamath.

⁵"People of Sidon are living in the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim. But I will force out all of these people for the people of Israel. Be sure to remember this land when you divide the land among the people of Israel. Do this like I told you. ⁷"Now, divide the land among the nine family groups and half of the family group of Manasseh."

Dividing the Land

¹"The other half of the Manasseh family group and the family groups of Reuben and Gad already took their land. The Lord's servant, Moses gave them the land east of the Jordan River. ²This is the land east of the Jordan River that Moses gave them:

That land covered the whole plain of Medeba as far as Dibon. The land started at Aroer at the Arnon Ravine. The land continued to the town in the middle of the ravine. ¹⁰All the towns that Sihon the king of the Amorite people ruled were in that land. That king ruled in the city of Heshbon. The land continued to

the area were the Amorite people lived. ¹¹Also the town of Gilead was in that land. And the area where the people of Geshur and Maacah lived was in that land. All of Mount Hermon and all of Bashan as far as Salecah was in that land. ¹²All the kingdom of king Og was in that land. King Og ruled in Bashan. In the past he ruled in Ashtaroth and Edrei. Og was from the Rephite people. In the past Moses had defeated those people and had taken their land. ¹³The people of Israel did not force out the people of Geshur and Maacah. Those people still live among the people of Israel today.

¹⁴The family group of Levi is the only family group that did not get any land. Instead, the people of Levi get all the animals that are offered as burnt offerings to the Lord God of Israel. That is what the Lord promised them.

¹⁵Moses gave each family group from the family group of Reuben some land. This is the land they got:

¹⁶The land from Aroer near the Arnon Ravine to the town of Medeba. This included the whole plain and the town in the middle of the ravine. ¹⁷The land continued to Heshbon. The land included all the towns on the plain. Those towns were Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, ¹⁸Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, ¹⁹Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, ²⁰Beth Peor, the hills of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth. ²¹So that land included all the towns on the plain and all the area that Sihon the king of the Amorite people had ruled. That king ruled at the town of Heshbon. But Moses had defeated him and the leaders of the Midianite people. Those leaders were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba. (All these leaders fought together with Sihon.) All these leaders lived in that country. ²²The people of Israel defeated Balaam son of Beor. (Balaam tried to use magic to tell the future.) The people of Israel killed many people during the fighting. ²³The land that was given to Reuben stopped at the shore of the Jordan River. So the land was given to the family groups of Reuben included all these towns and their fields that were listed.

²⁴This is the land Moses gave to the family group of Gad. Moses gave this land to each

family group:

²⁵The land of Jazer and all the towns of Gilead. Moses also gave them half of the land of the Ammonite people as far as Aroer near Rabbah. ²⁶That land included the area from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim. That land included the area from Mahanaim to the land of Debir. ²⁷That land included the valley of Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Succoth and Zaphon. All the other land that Sihon, the king of Heshbon, had ruled was included in this land. This is the land on the east side of the Jordan River. The land continued to the end of Lake Galilee. ²⁸All this land is the land Moses gave the family group of Gad. That land included all the towns that were listed. Moses gave that land to each family group.

²⁹This is the land Moses gave to half of the family group of Manasseh. Half of all the families in the family group of Manasseh got this land:

³⁰The land started at Mahanaim. The land included all of Bashan, all the land ruled by Og, king of Bashan, all the towns of Jair in Bashan. (In all, there were 60 cities.) ³¹The land also included half of Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei. (Gilead, Ashtaroth, and Edrei were the cities where king Og had lived.) All this land was given to the family of Makir son of Manasseh. Half of all those sons got this land.

³²Moses gave all this land to these family groups. Moses did this while the people were camped on the plains of Moab. This was across the Jordan River, east of Jericho. ³³Moses did not give any land to the family group of Levi. The Lord, God of Israel, promised that he himself would be the gift for the family group of Levi.

14 Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of all the family groups of Israel decided what land to give to the people. ²The Lord had commanded Moses long ago the way he wanted the people to choose their land. The people of the nine and a half family groups threw lots* to decide which land

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

they would get. "Moses had already given the two and a half family groups their land east of the Jordan River. But the family group of Levi was not given any land like the other people. 'The twelve family groups were given their own land.' The sons of Joseph had divided into two family groups—Manasseh and Ephraim. And each family group received some land. But, the people from the family group of Levi were not given any land. They were given only some towns to live in. And these towns were in every family group's land. They were also given fields for their animals. "The Lord had told Moses how to divide the land among the family groups of Israel. The people of Israel divided the land the way the Lord had commanded.

Caleb Gets His Land

"One day some people from the family group of Judah went to Joshua at Gilgal. One of those people was Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite. Caleb said to Joshua, "You remember the things the Lord said at Kadesh Barnea. The Lord was speaking to Moses, his servant.* The Lord was talking about you and me. "Moses, the Lord's servant, sent me to look at the land where we were going. I was 40 years old at that time. When I came back I told Moses what I thought about the land. "The other men that went with me told the people things that made them afraid. But I truly believed that the Lord would allow us to take that land. "So that day Moses made a promise to me. Moses said, "That land where you went will become your land. Your children will own that land forever. I will give you that land because you truly believed in the Lord, my God."

"Now, the Lord has kept me alive 45 years—like he said he would do. During that time we all wandered in the desert. Now, here I am, 85 years old. "I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. I am as ready to fight as I was then. "So now, give me the hill country that the Lord promised me that day

long ago. At that time, you heard that the strong Anakite people* lived there. And the cities were very big and well protected. But now, maybe the Lord will be with me, and I will take that land like the Lord said."

"Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh. Joshua gave him the city of Hebron as his own. "And that city still belongs to the family of Caleb son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite. That land still belongs to his people because he trusted and obeyed the Lord, God of Israel. "In the past that city was called Kiriath Arba. That city was named for the greatest man among the Anakite people—a man named Arba.

After this, there was peace in that land.

Land for Judah

15 The land that was given to Judah was divided among the families of that family group. That land went to the border of Edom and south all the way to the desert of Zin at the edge of Teman. "The southern border of Judah's land started at the south end of the Dead Sea. "The border went south to Scorpion Pass and continued on to Zin. Then the border continued south to Kadesh Barnea. The border continued past Hezron to Addar. From Addar the border turned and continued to Karka. "The border continued to Azmon, the brook of Egypt, and then to the Mediterranean Sea. All that land was on their southern border.

"Their eastern border was the shore of the Dead Sea to the area where the Jordan River flowed into the sea.

Their northern border started at the area where the Jordan River flowed into the Dead Sea. "Then the northern border went to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah. The border continued to the stone of Bohan. (Bohan was the son of Reuben). "Then the northern border went through the Valley of Achor to Debir. There the border turned to the north and went to Gilgal. Gilgal is across from the road that goes through the mountain of Adummim. That is on the south side of the

brook. The border continued along the waters of En Shemesh. The border stopped at En Rogel. ⁸Then the border went through the Valley of Ben Hinnom beside the southern side of the Jebusite city. (That Jebusite city was called Jerusalem.) At that place the border went to the top of the hill on the west side of Hinnom Valley. This was at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. ⁹From that place the border went to the spring of water of Nephtoah. Then the border went to the cities near Mount Ephron. At that place the border turned and went to Baalah. (Baalah is also called Kiriath Jearim.) ¹⁰At Baalah the border turned west and went to the hill country of Seir. The border continued along the north side of Mount Jearim (Kesalon) and continued down to Beth Shemesh. From there the border went past Timnah. ¹¹Then the border went to the hill north of Ekron. From that place the border turned to Shikkeron and went past Mount Baalah. The border continued on to Jabneel and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. ¹²The Mediterranean Sea was the western border of the land of Judah. So the land of Judah was inside these four borders. The families of Judah lived in this area.

¹³The Lord had commanded Joshua to give Caleb son of Jephunneh part of the land in Judah. So Joshua gave Caleb the land God commanded. Joshua gave him the town of Kiriath Arba (Hebron). (Arba was the father of Anak.) ¹⁴Caleb forced the three Anakite families living in Hebron to leave there. Those families were Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi. They were from the family of Anak. ¹⁵Then Caleb fought against the people living in Debir. (In the past, Debir was also called Kiriath Sepher.) ¹⁶Caleb said, "I want to attack Kiriath Sepher. I will give my daughter Acsah to the man that attacks and defeats that city. I will let that man marry my daughter."

¹⁷Othniel son of Kenaz defeated that city. So Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to Othniel to be his wife. ¹⁸Acsah went to live with Othniel. Othniel told Acsah* to ask her father Caleb for

some more land. (Acsah went to her father.) When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What do you want?"

¹⁹Acsah answered, "Give me a blessing.* You gave me dry desert land in the Negev.* Please give me some land with water on it." So Caleb gave her what she wanted. He gave her the upper and lower pools of water in that land.

²⁰The family group of Judah got the land that God promised them. Each family group got part of the land. ²¹The family group of Judah got all the towns in the southern part of the Negev.* These towns were near the border of Edom. Here is a list of those towns: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, ²²Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, ²³Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, ²⁴Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, ²⁵Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (Hazor), ²⁶Amam, Shema, Moladah, ²⁷Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, ²⁸Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, ²⁹Baalath, Iim, Ezem, ³⁰Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, ³¹Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, ³²Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon. In all, there were 29 towns and all their fields.

The family group of Judah also got towns in the western foothills. Here is a list of those towns: ³³Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, ³⁴Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, ³⁵Jarmuth, Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, ³⁶Shaaraim, Adithaim, and Gederah (Gederothaim). In all, there were 14 towns and all their fields.

³⁷The family group of Judah was also given these towns: Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, ³⁸Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, ³⁹Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, ⁴⁰Cabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, ⁴¹Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah. In all, there were 16 towns and all the fields around them.

⁴²The people of Judah also got these towns: Libnah, Ether, Ashan, ⁴³Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, ⁴⁴Keilah, Accib, and Mareshah. In all, there were nine towns and all the fields around them.

⁴⁵The people of Judah also got the town of Ekron and all the small towns and fields near it. ⁴⁶They also got the area west of Ekron and all

Give ... blessing Or, "Please welcome me." Or, "Give me a stream of water."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Othniel told Acsah Or, "Acsah told Othniel."

the fields and towns near Ashdod. ⁷All the area around Ashdod and the small towns there were part of the land of Judah. The people of Judah also got the area around Gaza and fields and the towns that were near it. Their land continued to the River of Egypt. And their land continued along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

⁸The people of Judah were also given towns in the hill country. Here is a list of those towns: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, ⁹Dannah, Kiriath Sannah, (Debir), ¹⁰Anab, Eshtemoah, Anim, ¹¹Goshen, Holon, and Giloh. In all, there were eleven towns and all the fields around them.

¹²The people of Judah were also given these towns: Arab, Dumah, Eshan, ¹³Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, ¹⁴Humtah, Kiriath Arba (Hebron), and Zior. There were nine towns and all the fields around them.

¹⁵The people of Judah were also given these towns: Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, ¹⁶Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, ¹⁷Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah. In all, there were ten towns and all the fields around them.

¹⁸The people of Judah were also given these towns: Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, ¹⁹Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon. In all, there were six towns and all the fields around them.

²⁰The people of Judah were also given the two towns of Rabbah, and Kiriath Beth (Kiriath Jearim).

²¹The people of Judah were also given towns in the desert. Here is a list of those towns: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, ²²Nibshan, the city of Salt, and En Gedi. In all, there were six towns and all the fields around them.

²³The army of Judah was not able to force out the Jebusite people living in Jerusalem. So today there are still Jebusite people living among the people of Judah in Jerusalem.

Land for Ephraim and Manasseh

16 This is the land that the family of Joseph got. This land started at the Jordan River near Jericho and continued to the waters of Jericho. (This was just east of Jericho.) The border went up from Jericho to the hill country of Bethel. ²Then the border continued from Bethel (Luz) to the Arkite

border at Ataroth. ³Then the border went west to the border of the Japhletite people. The border continued to Lower Beth Horon. Then the border went to Gezer and continued to the Mediterranean Sea.

⁴So the people of Manasseh and Ephraim got their land. (Manasseh and Ephraim were sons of Joseph.)

⁵This is the land that was given to the people of Ephraim: Their eastern border started at Ataroth Addar near Upper Beth Horon. ⁶And the western border started at Micmethath. The border turned to the east to Taanath-Shiloh and continued east to Janoah. ⁷Then the border went down from Janoah to Ataroth and to Naarah. The border continued until it touched Jericho and stopped at the Jordan River. ⁸The border went from Tappuah west to Kanah River and ended at the sea. This is all the land that was given to the Ephraim people. Each family in that family group got a part of this land. ⁹Many of the border towns of Ephraim were actually in Manasseh's borders, but the people of Ephraim got those towns and the fields around them. ¹⁰But the Ephraimite people were not able to force the Canaanite people to leave the town of Gezer. So the Canaanite people still live among the Ephraimite people today. But the Canaanite people became slaves of the Ephraimite people.

17 Then land was given to the family group of Manasseh. Manasseh was Joseph's first son. Manasseh's first son was Makir, the father of Gilead. ²Makir was a great soldier, so the areas of Gilead and Bashan were given to the Makir family. ³Land was also given to the other families in the family group of Manasseh. Those families were Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hephher, and Shemida. All these men were the other sons of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. The families of these men got their share of the land.

⁴Zelophehad was the son of Hephher. Hephher was the son of Gilead. Gilead was the son of Makir, and Makir was the son of Manasseh. Zelophehad did not have any sons, but he had

father of Gilead Or, "the leader of the area of Gilead."

five daughters. The daughters were named Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 'The daughters went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and all the leaders. The daughters said, "The Lord told Moses to give us land the same as the men." So Eleazar obeyed the Lord and gave the daughters some land. So these daughters got land the same as the sons.

'So the family group of Manasseh had ten areas of land west of the Jordan River and two more areas of land, Gilead and Bashan, on the other side of the Jordan River. 'The daughters of Manasseh got land the same as the sons. The land of Gilead was given to the rest of the families of Manasseh.

'The lands of Manasseh were in the area between Asher and Micmethath. This is near Shechem. The border went south to the En Tappuah area. 'The land around Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but the town itself did not. The town of Tappuah was at the border of Manasseh's land and it belonged to the people of Ephraim. 'The border of Manasseh continued south to Kanah River. This area belonged to Manasseh's family group, but the cities belonged to the people of Ephraim. Manasseh's border was on the north side of the river and it continued west to the Mediterranean Sea. 'The land to the south belonged to Ephraim. And the land to the north belonged to Manasseh. The Mediterranean Sea was the western border. The border touched Asher's land in the north and Issachar's land in the east.

'The people of Manasseh also had towns in the area of Issachar and Asher. Beth Shean, Ibleam and the small towns around them belonged to the people of Manasseh. People of Manasseh also lived in Dor, Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and the small towns around those cities. They also lived in the three towns of Naphtali. 'The people of Manasseh were not able to defeat those cities. So the Canaanite people continued to live there. 'But the people of Israel grew strong. When this happened, they forced the people of Canaan to work for them. But they did not force the Canaanite people to

leave that land.

"The family group of Joseph spoke to Joshua and said, "You gave us only one area of land. But we are many people. Why did you only give us one part of all the land that the Lord gave his people?"

"Joshua answered them, "If you have too many people, then go up to the hill country and take that land. That land now belongs to the Perizzite people and the Rephaite people. But if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, then go take that land."

"The people of Joseph said, "It is true that the hill country of Ephraim is not large enough for us. But the Canaanite people living there have powerful weapons—they have iron chariots!* And those people control the Valley of Jezreel, Beth Shean and all the small towns in that area."

"Then Joshua said to the people of Joseph, to Ephraim, and to Manasseh, "But there are many, many of you. And you are very powerful. You should get more than one share of the land. "You will take the hill country. It is a forest, but you can cut down the trees and make it a good place to live. And you will own all of it. You will force the Canaanite people to leave that land. You will defeat them even if they are strong and have powerful weapons."

Dividing the Rest of the Land

18 All of the Israelite people gathered together at Shiloh. At that place they set up the Meeting Tent.* The people of Israel controlled that country. They had defeated all the enemies in that land. 'But at this time there were still seven family groups of Israel that had not yet gotten the land God had promised them.

'So Joshua said to the people of Israel, "Why do you wait so long to take your land? The Lord, the God of your fathers, has given this land to you. 'So each of your family groups should choose three men. I will send those men

chariots Small wagons used in war. They were much faster and could carry more weapons than soldiers on foot.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

out to study the land. They will draw a map of that land, and then they will come back to me. ¹They will divide the land into seven parts. The people of Judah will keep their land in the south. The people of Joseph will keep their land in the north. ²But you should draw a map and divide the land into seven parts. Bring the map to me, and we will let the Lord our God decide which family group will get which land.* ³The Levite people do not get a share of the land. Their share is to serve the Lord as priests. Gad, Reuben, and half the family group of Manasseh have already received the land that was promised to them. They are on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses, the Lord's servant, already gave them that land."

⁴So the men that were chosen went to look at the land. They planned to draw maps of the land and bring them back to Joshua. Joshua told them, "Go and study the land and draw maps of it. Then come back to me at Shiloh. Then I will throw lots* and let the Lord divide the land for you."

⁵So the men went into the land. The men studied the land and drew maps for Joshua. They studied each town and divided the land into seven parts. They drew their maps and then went back to Joshua at Shiloh. ⁶Joshua threw lots* for them in front of the Lord at Shiloh. In this way, Joshua divided the land and gave each family group its part of the land."

Land for Benjamin

¹"The family group of Benjamin was given the land that was between the areas of Judah and Joseph. Each family in the family group of Benjamin got their land. This is the land that was chosen for Benjamin: ²The northern border started at the Jordan River. The border went along the northern edge of Jericho. Then the border went west into the hill country. The border continued until it was just east of Beth Aven. ³Then the border went south to Luz

(Bethel). Then the border went down to Ataroth Addar. Ataroth Addar is on the hill south of Lower Beth Horon. ⁴At the hill south of Beth Horon, the border turned south and went along the west side of the hill. The border went to Kiriath Baal (also called Kiriath Jearim). This town belonged to the people of Judah. This was the western border.

⁵The southern border started near Kiriath Jearim and went to the River of Nephtoth. ⁶Then the border went down to the bottom of the hill near the valley of Ben Hinnom, north of Rephaim Valley. The border continued down Hinnom Valley just south of the Jebusite city. Then the border went on to En Rogel. ⁷There, the border turned north and went to En Shemesh. The border continued to Geliloth. (Geliloth is near the Adummim Pass in the mountains.) The border went down to the Great Stone that was named for Bohan, the son of Reuben. ⁸The border continued to the northern part of Beth Arabah. Then the border went down into Arabah. ⁹Then the border went to the northern part of Beth Hoglah and ended at the north shore of the Dead Sea. This is where the Jordan River flows into that sea. That was the southern border.

¹⁰The Jordan River was the eastern border. So this was the land that was given to the family group of Benjamin. Those were the borders on all sides. ¹¹Each family got its land. These are their cities: Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, ¹²Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, ¹³Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, ¹⁴Kephar Ammoni, Ophni and Geba. There were twelve cities and their fields around them.

¹⁵The family group of Benjamin also got Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, ¹⁶Mizpah, Kephirah, Mozah, ¹⁷Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, ¹⁸Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city (*Jerusalem*), Gibeah and Kiriath. This were 14 cities and the fields around them. The family group of Benjamin got all these areas.

Land for Simeon

19 Then Joshua gave all the families in the family group of Simeon their share of the land. The land they got was inside the

we will ... land Literally, "I will throw lots here before the Lord our God."

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

area that belonged to Judah. ²This is what they got: Beersheba (also called Sheba), Moladah, ³Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, ⁴Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, ⁵Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, ⁶Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhem. There were 13 towns and all the fields around them.

⁷They also got the towns of Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan. There were four towns and all the fields around them. ⁸They also got all the fields around the cities as far as Baalath Beer (Ramah in the Negev). So that was the area that was given to the family group of Simeon. Each family got its land. ⁹Simeon's share of land was within the area that Judah got. The people of Judah had more land than they needed, so the people of Simeon got part of their land.

Land for Zebulun

¹⁰The next family group that got their land was Zebulun. Each family in Zebulun got the land that was promised to them. The border of Zebulun went as far as Sarid. ¹¹Then the border went west to Maralah and just touched Dabbesheth. Then the border went along the ravine near Jokneam. ¹²Then the border turned to the east. It went from Sarid to Kisloth Tabor. Then the border went on to Daberath and to Japhia. ¹³Then the border continued to the east to Gath Hopher and Eth Kazin. The border ended at Rimmon. Then the border turned and went to Neah. ¹⁴At Neah the border turned again and went north to Hannathon and then continued to the Valley of Iphtah El. ¹⁵Inside this border were the cities of Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem. In all, there were twelve towns and all the fields around them.

¹⁶So these are the towns and fields around them that were given to Zebulun. Each family in Zebulun got its part of the land.

Land for Issachar

¹⁷The fourth part of the land was given to the family group of Issachar. Each family in that family group got its part of the land. ¹⁸This is the land that was given to that family group: Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem, ¹⁹Hapharaim,

Shion, Anaharath, ²⁰Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, ²¹Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez.

²²The border of their land touched Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth Shemesh. The border stopped at the Jordan River. In all, there were 16 towns and the fields around them. ²³These cities and towns were part of the land that was given to the family group of Issachar. Each family got its part of the land.

Land for Asher

²⁴The fifth part of land was given to the family group of Asher. Each family in that family group got its part of the land. ²⁵This is the land that was given to that family group: Helkath, Hali, Beten, Acshaph, ²⁶Allammelech, Amad and Mishal.

The western border continued to Mount Carmel and Shihor Libnath. ²⁷Then the border turned to the east. The border went to Beth Dagon. The border touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El. Then the border went north of Beth Emek and Neiel. The border passed north of Cabul. ²⁸Then the border went to Abdon,* Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah. The border continued to the Greater Sidon area. ²⁹Then the border went back south to Ramah. The border continued to the strong city of Tyre. Then the border turned and went to Hosah. The border ended at the sea, near Aczib, ³⁰Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob.

In all there were 22 towns and the fields around them. ³¹These cities and the fields around them were given to the family group of Asher. Each family in that family group got its share of the land.

Land for Naphtali

³²The sixth part of land was given to the family group of Naphtali. Each family in that family group got its share of the land. ³³The border of their land started at the large tree near Zaananim. This is near Heleph. Then the border went through Adami Nekeb and Jabneel.

The border continued to Lakkum and ended at the Jordan River. ³⁴Then the border went to the west through Aznoth Tabor. The border stopped at Hukkok. The southern border touched Zebulun and the western border touched Asher. The border went to Judah, at the Jordan River to the east. ³⁵There were some very strong cities inside these borders. Those cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, ³⁶Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, ³⁷Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, ³⁸Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh. In all, there were 19 towns and all the fields around them.

³⁹These cities and the fields around them were given to the family group of Naphtali. Each family in that family group got its land.

Land for Dan

⁴⁰Then land was given to the family group of Dan. Each family in that family group got its land. ⁴¹This is the land that was given to them: Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, ⁴²Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, ⁴³Elon, Timnah, Ekron, ⁴⁴Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, ⁴⁵Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, ⁴⁶Me Jarkon, Rakkon, and the area near Joppa.

⁴⁷But the people of Dan had trouble taking their land. There were strong enemies there and the people of Dan could not easily defeat them. So the people of Dan went and fought against Leshem. They defeated Leshem and killed the people who lived there. So the people of Dan lived in the town of Leshem. They changed the name to Dan because that was the name of the father of their family group. ⁴⁸All of these cities and fields around them were given to the family group of Dan. Each family got its share of the land.

Land for Joshua

⁴⁹So the leaders finished dividing the land and giving it to the different family groups. After they finished, all the people of Israel decided to give Joshua son of Nun some land too. This was land that was promised to him. ⁵⁰The Lord had commanded that he get this land. So they gave Joshua the town of Timnah

Serah in the hill country of Ephraim. This was the town that Joshua told them he wanted. So Joshua built the town stronger and lived there.

⁵¹So all of these lands were given to the different family groups of Israel. Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders of each family group met together at Shiloh to divide the land. They met before the Lord at the entrance of the Meeting Tent. ⁵²So they finished dividing the land.

Cities of Safety

20 Then the Lord said to Joshua: ¹"I used Moses to give you a command. Moses told you to build special cities of safety. ²If any person kills another person, but it is an accident and he did not mean to kill that person, then he can go to a city of safety to hide.

³"This is what that person must do. When he runs away and goes to one of those cities, he must stop at the entrance of the city. He must stand at the gate and tell the leaders of the people what happened. Then the leaders can allow him to enter the city. They will give him a place to live among them. ⁴But the one who is chasing that person might follow him to that city. If this happens, the leaders of the city must not give up. They must protect the person who came to them for safety. They must protect that person because he did not mean to kill the person he killed. It was an accident. He was not angry and did not decide to kill the person. It was something that just happened. ⁵That person should stay in the city until he has been judged by the court in that city. And he should stay in that city until the time that the high priest dies. Then he can go back to his own home in the town he ran away from."

⁶So the people of Israel chose some cities to be called "Cities of Safety." These cities were:

Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali;
Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim;

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Kiriath Arba (Hebron) in the hill country of Judah.

- * Bezer on the east side of the Jordan River near Jericho in the desert in the land of Reuben;

Ramoth in Gilead in the land of Gad;

Golan in Bashan in the land of Manasseh.

³Any Jewish person or any foreigner living among them who kills someone, but it was an accident, was allowed to run away to one of those cities of safety. Then the person could be safe there and would not be killed by anyone who was chasing him. The person would be judged by the court in that city.

Towns for Priests and Levites

21 The family rulers of the Levite family group went to talk to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua son of Nun, and the rulers of the other family groups of Israel. ²This happened at the town of Shiloh in the land of Canaan. The Levite rulers said to them, "The Lord gave Moses a command. He commanded that you give us towns to live in. And he commanded that you give us fields where our animals can eat." ³So the people of Israel obeyed this command from the Lord. They gave the Levite people these towns and the land around them for their animals:

⁴The Kohath family was from the family group of Levi. Part of the Kohathite family was given 13 towns in the areas that belonged to Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. Those towns were given to the Kohathites that were descendants of Aaron the priest.

⁵The other Kohathite families were given ten towns in the areas that belonged to Ephraim, Dan, and half of Manasseh.

⁶The people from the Gershon family were given 13 towns. These towns were in the areas that belonged to Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the half of Manasseh that was in Bashan.

⁷The people from the Merari family were given twelve towns. These twelve towns came from the areas that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

⁸So the people of Israel gave the Levite people these towns and the fields around them. They did this to obey the command that the Lord had given Moses.

⁹These are the names of the towns that were in the areas that belonged to Judah and Simeon. ¹⁰The first choice of towns was given to Levites from the Kohath family. ¹¹They gave them Kiriath Arba (This is Hebron. It was named for a man named Arba. Arba was the father of Anak.) They also gave them some land near the town for their animals. ¹²But the fields and the small towns around the city of Kiriath Arba belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh. ¹³So they gave the city of Hebron to the Aaron's descendants. (Hebron was a city of safety.) They also gave Aaron's descendants the towns of Libnah, ¹⁴Jattir, Eshtemoa, ¹⁵Holon, Debir, ¹⁶Ain, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh. They also gave them some of the land near these towns for their animals. They gave nine towns to these two groups.

¹⁷They also gave Aaron's descendants cities that belonged to the family group of Benjamin. These cities were Gibeon, Geba, ¹⁸Anathoth, and Almon. They gave them these four towns and some of the land near the towns for their animals. ¹⁹In all, they gave 13 towns to the priests. (All priests were descendants of Aaron.) They also gave them some land near each town for their animals.

²⁰The other people from the Kohathite family were given towns that were in the areas that belonged to the family group of Ephraim. They got these towns: ²¹The city of Shechem from the hill country of Ephraim. (Shechem was a city of safety.) They also got Gezer, ²²Kibzaim, and Beth Horon. In all, Ephraim gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²³The family group of Dan gave them Eltekeh, Gibbethon, ²⁴Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. In all, Dan gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²⁵Half of the family group of Manasseh gave them Taanach and Gath Rimmon. In all, this half of Manasseh gave them two towns and some land around each town for their animals.

²In all, the rest of the people from the Kohath family got ten towns and some land around each town for their animals.

³The Gershon family was also from the family group of Levi. They got these towns:

Half of the family group of Manasseh gave them Golan in Bashan. (Golan was a city of safety.) Manasseh also gave them Be Eshtarah. In all, this half of Manasseh gave them two towns and some land around each town for their animals.

⁴The family group of Issachar gave them Kishion, Daberah, ⁵Jarmuth, and En Gannim. In all, Issachar gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

⁶The family group of Asher gave them Mishal, Abdon, ⁷Helkath, and Rehob. In all, Asher gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

⁸The family group of Naphtali gave them Kedesh in Galilee. (Kedesh was a city of safety.) Naphtali also gave them Hammoth Dor and Kartan. In all, Naphtali gave them three towns and some land around each town for their animals.

⁹In all, the Gershon family got 13 towns and some land around each town for their animals.

¹⁰The other Levite group was the Merari family. The Merari family got these towns:

The family group of Zebulun gave them Jokneam, Kartah, ¹¹Dimnah, and Nahalal. In all, Zebulun gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

¹²The family group of Reuben gave them Bezer, Jahaz, ¹³Kedemoth, and Mephaath. In all, Reuben gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

¹⁴The family group of Gad gave them Ramoth in Gilead. (Ramoth was a city of safety.) They also gave them Mahanaim, ¹⁵Heshbon, and Jazer. In all, Gad gave them four towns and some land around each town for their animals.

¹⁶In all, the last family of Levites, the Merari family, got twelve towns.

¹⁷So the Levites got a total of 48 towns and some land around each town for their animals.

All these towns were in areas that belonged to the other family groups. ¹⁸Each of these towns had some land in it for their animals. That was true for every town.

¹⁹So the Lord kept the promise that he had made to the people of Israel. He gave the people all the land that he had promised. The people took the land and lived there. ²⁰And the Lord allowed them to have peace on all sides of their land, just like he had promised their ancestors.^{*} None of their enemies defeated them. The Lord allowed the people of Israel to defeat every enemy. ²¹The Lord kept every promise that he made to the people of Israel. There were no promises that he failed to keep. Every promise came true.

Three Family Groups Go Home

22 Then Joshua called a meeting of all the people from the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. ²Joshua said to them, "Moses was the Lord's servant. You obeyed all things that Moses told you to do. And also, you obeyed all of my commands. ³And all this time you have supported all the other people of Israel. You carefully obeyed all the commands that the Lord your God gave you. ⁴The Lord your God promised to give the people of Israel peace. And now, the Lord has kept his promise. So now you can go home. The Lord's servant Moses gave you the land on the east side of the Jordan River. Now you can go home to that land. ⁵But remember—continue to obey the law that Moses gave you. You must love the Lord your God and obey his commands. You must continue to follow him and serve him the very best that you can."

⁶Then Joshua said good-bye to them and they left. They went home. ⁷Moses had given the land of Bashan to half of the Manasseh family group. Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan River to the other half of the Manasseh family group. Joshua blessed them and sent them home. ⁸He said, "You have become very rich. You have many animals.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

You have gold and silver and expensive jewelry. You have many beautiful clothes. You have taken many things from your enemies. Divide these things among yourselves and go home."

⁵So the people from the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh left the other people of Israel. They were at Shiloh in Canaan. They left that place and went back to Gilead. They went home to their own land—the land that Moses gave them. The Lord had commanded Moses to give them this land.

⁶The people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh went to the place called Geliloth. This was near the Jordan River in the land of Canaan. At that place the people built a beautiful altar. ⁷But the other people of Israel that were still at Shiloh heard about the altar that these three family groups built. They heard that the altar was at the border of Canaan at the place called Geliloth. It was near the Jordan River on Israel's side. ⁸All the people of Israel became very angry at these three family groups. They met together and decided to fight against them.

⁹So the people of Israel sent some men to talk to the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. The leader of these men was Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest. ¹⁰They also sent ten of the leaders of the family groups there. There was one man from each family group of Israel that was at Shiloh.

¹¹So these eleven men went to Gilead. They went to talk to the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. The eleven men said to them, ¹²"All the people of Israel ask you: Why did you do this thing against the God of Israel? Why did you turn against the Lord? Why did you build an altar for yourselves? You know that this is against God's teachings! ¹³Remember what happened at Peor? We are still suffering because of that sin. Because of that great sin, God caused many of the people of Israel to become very sick. And we are still suffering because of that sickness today. ¹⁴And now you are doing the same thing! You are turning against the Lord! Will you refuse to follow the Lord? If you don't stop what you are doing, the Lord will be angry with every person in Israel.

¹⁵"If your land is not a good enough place to worship, then come over into our land. The Lord's Tent is in our land. You can have some of our land and live there. But don't turn against the Lord. Don't build another altar. We already have the altar of the Lord our God at the Meeting Tent.

¹⁶"Remember the man named Achan son of Zerah. He refused to obey the command about things that must be destroyed. That one man broke God's law, but all the people of Israel were punished. Achan died because of his sin. But also many other people died."

¹⁷The people from the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh answered the eleven men. They said, ¹⁸"The Lord is our God! Again we say that the Lord is our God!* And God knows why we did this thing. We want you to know also. You can judge what we did. If you believe that we have done something wrong, then you can kill us. ¹⁹If we broke God's law, then we ask the Lord himself to punish us. ²⁰Do you think we built this altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and fellowship offerings? No! We did not build it for that reason. Why did we build this altar? We were afraid that in the future your people would not accept us as part of your nation. Then your people would say that we can't worship the Lord God of Israel. ²¹God gave us land on the other side of the Jordan River. This means that the Jordan River separates us. We were afraid that when your children grew up and ruled your land, they would not remember that we were also your people. They would say to us, 'You people of Reuben and Gad aren't part of Israel!' Then your children would make our children stop worshipping the Lord.

²²"So we decided to build this altar. But we did not plan to use it for burning offerings and sacrifices. ²³The real reason we wanted our altar was to show our people that we worship the same God as you. This altar will be the proof to you and to us and to all our future children that we worship the Lord. We give our sacrifices,

The ... God Or, "Yahweh is the true God! Yahweh is the true God!" Literally, "El Elohim Yahweh! El Elohim Yahweh."

grain offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord. We wanted your children to grow up and know that we are also people of Israel like yourselves. ²In the future, if it happens that your children say that we do not belong to Israel, then our children can say, 'Look! Our fathers who lived before us made an altar. That altar is exactly like the Lord's altar, at the Holy Tent. We do not use this altar for sacrifices—this altar is proof that we are part of Israel.'

³"Truly, we do not want to be against the Lord. We don't want to stop following him now. We know that the only true altar is the one that is in front of the Holy Tent. That altar belongs to the Lord our God."

⁴Phinehas the priest and the leaders with him heard these things the people from Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh said. They were satisfied that these people were telling the truth. ⁵So Phinehas the priest said, "Now we know that the Lord is with us. And we know that you did not turn against him. We are happy that the people of Israel will not be punished by the Lord."

⁶Then Phinehas and the leaders left that place and went home. They left the people of Reuben and Gad in the land of Gilead and went back to Canaan. They went back to the people of Israel and told them what happened. ⁷The people of Israel were also satisfied. They were happy and thanked God. They decided not to go and fight against the people of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. They decided not to destroy the land where those people live.

⁸The people of Reuben, and Gad gave the altar a name. They called it, "Proof That We Believe the Lord is God."

Joshua Encourages the People

23 The Lord gave Israel peace from their enemies around them. The Lord made Israel safe. Many years passed, and Joshua became very old. ²At this time, Joshua called a meeting of all the older leaders, heads of families, judges, and officers of the people of Israel. Joshua said, "I have grown very old. ³You have seen the things that the Lord did to

our enemies. He did this to help us. The Lord your God fought for you. 'Remember that I told you your people could have that land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. I promised to give you that land, but you don't control it yet. 'But the Lord your God will force the people living there to leave. You will take that land. The Lord will force the people living there to leave! The Lord your God promised to do this for you.

⁴"You must be careful to obey all the things the Lord has commanded us. Obey everything that is written in the book of the Law of Moses. Don't turn away from that law. ⁵There are still some people living among us that are not people of Israel. Those people worship their own gods. Don't become friends with those people. Don't serve or worship their gods. ⁶You must continue to follow the Lord your God. You have done this in the past, and you must continue to do it.

⁷"The Lord helped you to defeat many great and powerful nations. The Lord forced those people to leave. No nation has been able to defeat you. ⁸With the Lord's help, one man from Israel could defeat 1,000 enemy soldiers. Why? Because the Lord your God fights for you. The Lord promised to do this. ⁹So you must continue to love the Lord your God.

¹⁰"Don't stop following the Lord. Don't become friends with these other people that are not part of Israel. Don't marry any of their people. But if you do become friends with these people, ¹¹then the Lord your God will not help you to defeat your enemies. These people will become like a trap for you. They will cause you pain—like smoke and dust in your eyes. And you will be forced to leave this good land. The Lord your God gave you this land. But you can lose it if you don't obey this command.

¹²"It is almost time for me to die. You know and truly believe that the Lord has done many great things for you. You know that he has not failed in any of his promises. The Lord has kept every promise that he has made to us. ¹³Every good promise that the Lord your God made to us has come true. But in the same way, the Lord will make his other promise come true.

He promised that if you do wrong, then bad things will happen to you. He promised that he will force you to leave this good land that he gave you. "This will happen if you refuse to keep your agreement with the Lord your God. You will lose this land if you go and serve other gods. You must not worship those other gods. If you do, the Lord will become very angry at you. Then you will quickly be forced to leave this good land that he gave you."

Joshua Says Good-bye

24 Joshua called all the family groups of Israel to meet together at Shechem. Then Joshua called the older leaders, the heads of the families, the judges, and the officers and the rulers and the judges of Israel. These men stood before God.

¹Then Joshua spoke to all the people. He said, "I am telling you what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you:

"A long time ago, your ancestors lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. I am talking about men like Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor. At that time, those men worshiped other gods. ²But I, the Lord, took your father Abraham out of the land on the other side of the River. I led him through the land of Canaan and gave him many, many children. I gave Abraham his son named Isaac. ⁴And I gave Isaac two sons named Jacob and Esau. To Esau, I gave the land around the mountains of Seir. Jacob and his sons did not live there. They went to live in the land of Egypt.

⁵"Then I sent Moses and Aaron to Egypt. I wanted them to bring my people out of Egypt. I caused many terrible things to happen to the people of Egypt. Then I brought your people out of Egypt. ⁶"So I brought your ancestors out of Egypt. They came to the Red Sea, and the men of Egypt were chasing them. There were chariots and men on horses. ⁷So the people asked me, the Lord, for help. And I caused great trouble to come

to the men of Egypt. I, the Lord, caused the sea to cover them. You yourselves saw what I did to the army of Egypt.

"After that, you lived in the desert for a long time. ⁸Then I brought you to the land of the Amorite people. This was east of the Jordan River. Those people fought against you, but I allowed you to defeat them. I gave you the power to destroy those people. Then you took control of that land.

⁹"Then Balak, the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against the people of Israel. The king sent for Balaam the son of Beor. He asked Balaam to curse* you. ¹⁰But I, the Lord, refused to listen to Balaam. So Balaam asked for good things to happen to you! He blessed you many times. I saved you and brought you out of trouble.

¹¹"Then you went across the Jordan River. You went to the Jericho. The people in the city of Jericho fought against you. Also, the Amorite people, the Perizzite people, the Canaanite people, the Hittite people, the Girgashite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people fought against you. But I allowed you to defeat all of them. ¹²While your army traveled forward, I sent hornets* ahead of them. These hornets made the people leave. So you took the land without using your swords and bows.

¹³"I, the Lord, gave that land to you! You didn't work for that land—I gave it to you! You did not build those cities—I gave them to you! And now you live in that land and in those cities. You have gardens of grapevines and olive trees, but you did not have to plant those gardens."

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.
hornet(s) A large wasp.

¹⁴Then Joshua said to the people, "Now you have heard the Lord's words. So you must respect the Lord and truly serve him. Throw away the false gods that your ancestors worshiped. That was something that happened a long time ago on the other side of the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Now you must serve only the Lord.

¹⁵"But maybe you don't want to serve the Lord. You must choose for yourselves today. Today you must decide who you will serve. Will you serve the gods that your ancestors worshiped when they lived on the other side of the Euphrates River? Or will you serve the gods of the Amorite people that lived in this land? You must choose for yourselves. But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord!"

¹⁶Then the people answered, "We will never stop following the Lord. We will never serve other gods! ¹⁷We know that it was the Lord God who brought our people out of Egypt. We were slaves in that land. But the Lord did great things for us there. He brought us out of that land and protected us while we traveled through other lands. ¹⁸The Lord helped us to defeat the people living in these lands. The Lord helped us to defeat the Amorite people who lived in this land where we are now. So we will continue to serve the Lord. Why? Because he is our God."

¹⁹Then Joshua said, "That is not true. You will not be able to continue serving the Lord. The Lord God is holy. And God hates his people worshiping other gods. God will not forgive you if you turn against him like that. ²⁰But you will leave the Lord and serve other gods. And the Lord will cause terrible things to happen to you. The Lord will destroy you. The Lord God has been good to you, but if you turn against him he will destroy you."

²¹But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the Lord."

²²Then Joshua said, "Look around at yourselves and the people with you here. Do you all know and agree that you have chosen to serve the Lord? Are you all witnesses to this?"

The people answered, "Yes, it is true! We all see that we have chosen to serve the Lord."

²³Then Joshua said, "So throw away the false gods that you have among you. Love the Lord the God of Israel with all your heart."

²⁴Then the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the Lord our God. We will obey him."

²⁵So that day Joshua made an agreement for the people. Joshua made this agreement at the town called Shechem. It became a law for them to follow. ²⁶Joshua wrote these things in the book of the Law of God. Then Joshua found a large stone. This stone was proof of this agreement. He put the stone under the oak tree near the Lord's Holy Tent.

²⁷Then Joshua said to all the people, "This stone will help you remember the things we said today. This stone was here when the Lord was speaking to us today. So this stone will be something that helps you remember what happened today. The stone will be a witness against you. It will stop you from turning against the Lord your God."

²⁸Then Joshua told the people to go home. So every person went back to his own land.

Joshua Dies

²⁹After that Joshua son of Nun died. Joshua was 110 years old. ³⁰Joshua was buried on his own land at Timnath Serah. This was in the hill country of Ephraim north of Mount Gaash.

³¹The people of Israel had served the Lord during the time Joshua was living. And after Joshua died, the people continued to serve the Lord. The people continued to serve the Lord while their leaders were alive. These were the leaders that had seen the things that the Lord had done for Israel.

Joseph Comes Home

³²When the people of Israel left Egypt, they carried the bones from the body of Joseph with them. So the people buried the bones of Joseph at Shechem. They buried the bones on the land that Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor, the father of the man named Shechem. Jacob had bought that land for 100 pieces of pure silver. This land belonged to Joseph's children.

²³Aaron's son Eleazar died. Eleazar was buried at Gibeah. Gibeah was a town in the hill country of Ephraim. That town had been given to Eleazar's son Phinehas.

Judges

Judah Fights the Canaanites

1 Joshua died. Then the people of Israel prayed to the Lord. They said, "Which of our family groups should be the first to go and fight for us against the Canaanite people?"

"The Lord said to the Israelite people, "The family group of Judah will go. I will let them take this land."

"The men of Judah asked for help from their brothers from the family group of Simeon. The men of Judah said, "Brothers, the Lord promised to give each of us some land. If you will come and help us fight for our land, then we will go and help you fight for your land." The men of Simeon agreed to help their brothers from Judah fight.

"The Lord helped the men of Judah defeat the Canaanites and the Perizzites. The men of Judah killed 10,000 men at the city of Bezek. In the city of Bezek the men of Judah found the ruler of Bezek* and fought him. The men of Judah defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

"The ruler of Bezek* tried to escape. But the men of Judah chased him and caught him. When they caught him, they cut off his thumbs and big toes. Then the ruler of Bezek* said, "I cut the thumbs and big toes off of 70 kings. And those kings had to eat pieces of food that fell from my table. Now God has paid me back for the things I did to those kings." The men of Judah took the ruler of Bezek* to Jerusalem and he died there.

"The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it. The men of Judah used their swords to kill the people of Jerusalem. Then they burned the city. Later, the men of Judah went down to fight against some more Canaanites. Those Canaanites lived in the hill country, in the Negev,* and in the western foothills.

"Then the men of Judah went to fight against the Canaanite people that lived in the city of Hebron. (Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba.) The men of Judah defeated the men named Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi.*

Caleb and His Daughter

"The men of Judah left that place. They went to the city of Debir to fight against the people there. (In the past, Debir was called Kiriath Sepher.) Before the men of Judah started to fight, Caleb made a promise to the men. Caleb said, "I want to attack Kiriath Sepher. I will give my daughter Acsah to the man that attacks and captures that city. I will let that man marry my daughter."

"Caleb had a younger brother named Kenaz. Kenaz had a son named Othniel. Othniel captured the city of Kiriath Sepher. So Caleb gave his daughter Acsah to Othniel to be his wife.

"Acsah went to live with Othniel. Othniel

the ruler of Bezek This might be the name "Adoni-Bezek."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Sheshai ... Talmi These three men were the sons of a man named Anak. They were giants. See Numbers 13:22.

told Acsah* to ask her father for some land. Acsah went to her father. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What is wrong?"

"Acsah answered Caleb, "Give me a blessing.* You gave me dry desert land in the Negev.* Please give me some land with water on it." So Caleb gave her what she wanted. He gave her the upper and lower pools of water in that land.

"The Kenite people left the City of Palm trees (*Jericho*) and went with the men of Judah. Those people went to the Desert of Judah to live with the people there. This was in the Negev* near the city Arad. (The Kenite people were from the family of Moses' father-in-law.)

"Some Canaanite people lived in the city of Zephath. So the men of Judah and men from the family group of Simeon attacked those Canaanite people. They completely destroyed the city. So they named the city Hormah.*

"The men of Judah also captured the city of Gaza and the small towns around it. The men of Judah also captured the cities of Ashkelon and Ekron and all the small towns around them.

"The Lord was on the side of the men of Judah when they fought. They took the land in the hill country. But the men of Judah failed to take the land in the valleys, because the people living there had iron chariots.*

"Moses had promised to give the land near Hebron to Caleb. So that land was given to Caleb's family. The men of Caleb forced the three sons of Anak* to leave that place.

The Men of Benjamin Settle in Jerusalem

"The family group of Benjamin could not force the Jebusite people to leave Jerusalem. So even today, the Jebusite people live with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem.

Othniel ... Acsah Or, "Acsah told Othniel."

Give me a blessing Or, "Please welcome me." Or, "Give me a stream of water."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Hormah This is like the word meaning "to destroy completely."

iron chariots Small wagons used in war. They were faster and could carry more weapons than soldiers on foot.

the three sons of Anak These men were Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmi, mentioned above in verse 10.

The Men of Joseph Capture Bethel

²²"Men from the family group of Joseph went to fight against the city of Bethel. (In the past, Bethel was named Luz.) The Lord was on the side of the men from the family group of Joseph. The men from the family of Joseph sent some spies to the city of Bethel. These men looked for ways to defeat the city of Bethel. ²³While the spies were watching the city of Bethel, they saw a man come out of the city. The spies said to the man, "Show us a secret way into the city. We will attack the city. But if you help us, we will not hurt you."

²⁴The man showed the spies the secret way into the city. The men of Joseph used their swords to kill the people of Bethel. But they did not hurt the man that helped them. And they did not hurt the people in his family. That man and his family were allowed to go free.

²⁵That man then went to the land where the Hittite people lived and built a city. He named the city Luz. And that city is still called Luz today.

The Other Family Groups Fight the Canaanites

²⁶There were Canaanite people living in the cities of Beth-Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, Megiddo, and the small towns around those cities. The people from the family group of Manasseh could not force those people to leave those towns. So the Canaanite people stayed. They refused to leave their homes. ²⁷Later the people of Israel grew stronger and forced the Canaanite people to work as slaves for them. But the people of Israel could not force all of the Canaanite people to leave their land.

²⁸The same thing happened with the people from the family group of Ephraim. There were Canaanite people living in Gezer. And the people of Ephraim did not make all of those Canaanite people leave their land. So the Canaanite people continued to live in Gezer with the people of Ephraim.

²⁹The same thing happened with the people from the family group of Zebulun. Some Canaanite people lived in the cities of Kitron

and Nahalol. The people of Zebulun did not force those people to leave their land. Those Canaanite people stayed and lived with the people of Zebulun. But the people of Zebulun made those people work for them as slaves.

³¹The same thing happened with the people from the family group of Asher. The people of Asher did not force the other people to leave the cities of Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Aczib, Helbah, Aphek, and Rehob. ³²The people of Asher did not force those Canaanite people to leave their land. So the Canaanite people continued to live with the people of Asher.

³³The same thing happened with the people from the family group of Naphtali. The people of Naphtali did not force the people to leave the cities of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath. So the people of Naphtali continued to live with the people in those cities. Those Canaanite people worked as slaves for the people of Naphtali.

³⁴The Amorite people forced the people of the family group of Dan to live in the hill country. The people of Dan had to stay in the hills because the Amorite people would not let them come down to live in the valleys. ³⁵The Amorite people decided to stay in Mount Heres, Aijalon, and Shaalbim. Later, the family group of Joseph grew stronger. Then they made the Amorite people work as slaves for them. ³⁶The land of the Amorite people was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and up into the hill country past Sela.

The Angel of the Lord at Bokim

2 The angel of the Lord went up to the city of Bokim from the city of Gilgal. The angel spoke a message from the Lord to the people of Israel. This was the message: "I brought you out of Egypt. I led you to the land that I promised to give to your ancestors.* I said, 'I will never break my agreement with you. But in return, you must not make an agreement with the people that live in this land. You must destroy their altars.'* I told you this, but you did not obey me. Why?

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
altars A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

³⁷"Now I will tell you this, 'I will not force the other people to leave this land any longer. These people will become a problem for you. They will be like a trap to you. Their false gods will become like a net to trap you.'"

³⁸After the angel gave the people of Israel this message from the Lord, the people cried loudly. ³⁹So the people of Israel named the place where they cried, Bokim.* At Bokim the people of Israel offered sacrifices to the Lord.

Disobedience and Defeat

⁴⁰Then Joshua told the people to go home. So each family group went to take their area of land to live in it. ⁴¹The people of Israel served the Lord as long as Joshua was alive. They continued serving the Lord during the lifetimes of the elders (*leaders*) that lived after Joshua had died. These old men had seen all the great things the Lord had done for the people of Israel. ⁴²Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. ⁴³The people of Israel buried Joshua. They buried Joshua on the land that he had been given. That was at Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

⁴⁴After that whole generation died, the next generation grew up. This new generation did not know about the Lord and what the Lord had done for the people of Israel. ⁴⁵So the people of Israel did evil and served the false god Baal.* The Lord saw the people doing this evil thing. ⁴⁶The Lord had brought the people of Israel out of Egypt. And the ancestors* of these people had worshiped the Lord. But the people of Israel quit following the Lord. The people of Israel began to worship the false gods of the people that lived around them. That made the Lord angry. ⁴⁷The people of Israel quit following the Lord and began worshiping Baal and Astarte.*

Bokim This name means "People crying."

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

¹⁴The Lord was angry with the people of Israel. So the Lord let enemies attack the people of Israel and take their possessions. The Lord let their enemies that lived around them defeat them. The people of Israel could not protect themselves from their enemies. ¹⁵When the people of Israel went out to fight, they always lost. They lost because the Lord was not on their side. The Lord had already warned the people of Israel that they would lose if they served the gods of the people that lived around them. The people of Israel suffered very much.

¹⁶Then the Lord chose leaders called judges. These leaders saved the people of Israel from the enemies that took their possessions. ¹⁷But the people of Israel did not listen to their judges. The people of Israel were not faithful to God—they followed other gods.* In the past, the ancestors* of the people of Israel obeyed the Lord's commands. But now the people of Israel changed and stopped obeying the Lord.

¹⁸Many times the enemies of Israel did bad things to the people. So the people of Israel would cry for help. And each time, the Lord felt sorry for the people. Each time he sent a judge to save the people from their enemies. The Lord was always with those judges. So each time, the people of Israel were saved from their enemies. ¹⁹But when each judge died, the people of Israel again sinned and started worshipping the false gods. The people of Israel were very stubborn—they refused to change their evil ways.

²⁰So the Lord became angry with the people of Israel, and he said, "This nation has broken the Agreement that I made with their ancestors.* They have not listened to me. ²¹So I will no longer defeat the nations and clear the way for the people of Israel. Those nations were still in this land when Joshua died. And I will let those nations stay in this land. ²²I will use those nations to test the people of Israel. I will see if the people of Israel can keep the Lord's commands like their ancestors did."

were not faithful ... other gods Literally, "acted like a prostitute to other gods."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

²³The Lord allowed those nations to stay in the land. The Lord did not force those nations to quickly leave the country. He did not help Joshua's army defeat them.

3 ¹⁻²The Lord did not force all the people of those other nations to leave Israel's land. The Lord wanted to test the people of Israel. None of the people of Israel living at this time had fought in the wars to take the land of Canaan. So the Lord let those other nations stay in their country. (The Lord did this to teach the people of Israel that had not fought in those wars.) Here are the names of the nations the Lord left in the land: ³the five rulers of the Philistine people, all of the Canaanite people, the people of Sidon, and the Hivite people that lived in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Gaal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. ⁴The Lord left those nations in the land to test the people of Israel. He wanted to see if the people of Israel would obey the Lord's commands that he had given to their ancestors* through Moses.

⁵The people of Israel lived with the Canaanite people, the Hittite people, the Amorite people, the Perizzite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people. ⁶The people of Israel began to marry the daughters of those people. The people of Israel allowed their own daughters to marry the sons of those people. And the people of Israel began to worship the gods of those people.

Othniel, the First Judge

¹The Lord saw that the people of Israel did evil things. The people of Israel forgot about the Lord their God and served the false gods Baal* and Asherah.* ²The Lord was angry with the people of Israel. The Lord allowed Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram Naharaim* to defeat the people of Israel and to

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

Aram Naharaim A land in northern Syria. This name means "Aram of the Two Rivers." The two rivers were the Euphrates and the Tigris Rivers.

rule over them. The people of Israel were under that king's rule for eight years. ⁹But the people of Israel cried to the Lord for help. The Lord sent a man to save them. That man's name was Othniel. He was the son of a man named Kenaz. Kenaz was Caleb's younger brother. Othniel saved the people of Israel. ¹⁰The Spirit of the Lord came on Othniel, and he became a judge for the people of Israel. Othniel led the people of Israel to war. The Lord help Othniel to defeat Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram. ¹¹So the land was at peace for 40 years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ehud, the Judge

¹²Again the Lord saw the people of Israel do evil things. So the Lord gave Eglon king of Moab power to defeat the people of Israel. ¹³Eglon got help from the Ammonite people and the Amalekite people. They joined him and attacked the people of Israel. Eglon and his army defeated the people of Israel and forced them to leave the City of Palm Trees (*Jericho*). ¹⁴Eglon king of Moab ruled over the people of Israel for 18 years.

¹⁵The people cried to the Lord. The Lord sent a man to save the people of Israel. That man's name was Ehud. Ehud was a left-handed man. Ehud was the son of a man named Gera from the family group of Benjamin. The people of Israel sent Ehud to give some tax money to Eglon king of Moab. ¹⁶Ehud made a sword for himself. That sword had two edges and was about 18 inches* long. Ehud tied the sword to his right thigh and hid it under his clothes.

¹⁷So Ehud came to Eglon king of Moab and gave him the tax money. (Eglon was a very fat man.) ¹⁸After Ehud had given the money to Eglon, he sent the men that had carried the money back home. ¹⁹Ehud started to leave. When he was near the idols in the city Gilgal, he turned around. Then Ehud said to Eglon, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

The king said, "Be quiet!" Then he sent all of servants out of the room. ²⁰Ehud went to

King Eglon. Eglon was now sitting all alone in the room on the top of his summer palace.*

Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." The king stood up from his throne, he was very close to Ehud. ²¹As the king stood up from his throne,* Ehud reached with his left hand and took out the sword that was tied to his right thigh. Then Ehud pushed the sword into the king's belly. ²²The sword went into Eglon's belly so far that even the handle sank in. The king's fat covered the whole sword. So Ehud left the sword in Eglon. ²³Ehud went out of the room and closed and locked the doors behind him.

²⁴The servants came back just after Ehud left. The servants found the doors to the room locked. So the servants said, "The king must be relieving himself in his restroom." ²⁵So the servants waited for a long time. Finally they became worried. They got the key and unlocked the doors. When the servants entered, they saw their king lying on the floor dead.

²⁶While the servants were waiting for the king, Ehud had time to escape. Ehud passed by the idols and went toward the place named Seirah. ²⁷Ehud arrived at the place named Seirah. Then he blew a trumpet there in the hill country of Ephraim. The people of Israel heard the trumpet and went down from the hills, with Ehud leading them. ²⁸Ehud said to the people of Israel, "Follow me! The Lord has helped us to defeat our enemies, the people of Moab."

So the people of Israel followed Ehud. They followed Ehud down to take control of the places where the Jordan River could easily be crossed. Those places led to the land of Moab. The people of Israel did not allow any one to go across the Jordan River. ²⁹The people of Israel killed about 10,000 strong and brave men from Moab. Not one Moabite man escaped. ³⁰So on that day the people of Israel began to rule over the people of Moab. And there was peace in the land for 80 years.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

he was ... throne This section of the text is found in the ancient Greek translation, but it was accidentally left out of the Hebrew text.

Shamgar, the Judge

¹After Ehud saved the people of Israel, another man saved Israel. That man's name was Shamgar son of Anath.* Shamgar used an oxgoad* to kill 600 Philistine men.

Deborah, the Woman Judge

4 After Ehud died, the people again did the things the Lord said are evil. ²So the Lord allowed Jabin king of Canaan to defeat the people of Israel. Jabin ruled in a city named Hazor. A man named Sisera was the commander of King Jabin's army. Sisera lived in a town called Harosheth Haggoyim. ³Sisera had 900 iron chariots, and he was very cruel to the people of Israel for 20 years. So they cried to the Lord for help.

⁴There was a woman prophet named Deborah. She was the wife of a man named Lappidoth. She was judge of Israel at that time. ⁵One day, Deborah was sitting under the Palm Tree of Deborah. And the people of Israel came up to her to ask her what to do about Sisera. The Palm Tree of Deborah is between the cities of Ramah and Bethel, in the hill country of Ephraim. ⁶Deborah sent a message to a man named Barak. She asked him to come to meet with her. Barak was the son of a man named Abinoam. Barak lived in the city of Kedesh, which is in the area of Naphtali. Deborah said to Barak, ⁷"The Lord God of Israel commands you: 'Go and gather 10,000 men from the family groups of Naphtali and Zebulun. Lead those men to Mount Tabor. ⁸I will make Sisera, the commander of King Jabin's army, come to you. I will make Sisera, his chariots and his army come to the Kishon River.* I will help you to defeat Sisera there.'"

⁹Then Barak said to Deborah, "I will go and do this if you will go with me. But if you will not go with me, then I won't go."

Anath This is the name of the Canaanite goddess of war. Here the name seems to be that of Shamgar's father, but it may be the name of his mother.

oxgoad A sharp stick used to make cattle go the right way.

Kishon River This river flows about ten miles from Mount Tabor.

¹⁰"Of course I will go with you," Deborah answered. ¹¹"But because of your attitude, you will not be honored when Sisera is defeated. The Lord will allow a woman to defeat Sisera."

So Deborah went with Barak to the city of Kedesh. ¹²At the city of Kedesh, Barak called the family groups of Zebulun and Naphtali together. Barak gathered 10,000 men to follow him from those family groups. Deborah also went with Barak.

¹³Now there was a man named Heber, that was from the Kenite people. Heber had left the other Kenite people. (The Kenite people were descendants* of Hobab. Hobab was Moses' father-in-law.* Heber had made his home by the oak tree in a place named Zaanannim. Zaanannim is near the city of Kedesh.

¹⁴Someone told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam was at Mount Tabor. ¹⁵So Sisera got together his 900 iron chariots. Sisera also got together all the men with him. They marched from the city of Harosheth Haggoyim to the Kishon River.

¹⁶Then Deborah said to Barak, "Today the Lord will help you defeat Sisera. Surely you know that the Lord has already cleared the way for you." So Barak led the 10,000 men down from Mount Tabor. ¹⁷Barak and his men attacked Sisera. During the battle, the Lord confused Sisera and his army and chariots. They did not know what to do. So Barak and his men defeated Sisera's army. But Sisera left his chariot and ran away on foot. ¹⁸Barak continued fighting Sisera's army. Barak and his men chased Sisera's chariots and army all the way to Harosheth Haggoyim. Barak and his men used their swords to kill all of Sisera's men. Not one of Sisera's men was left alive.

¹⁹But Sisera ran away. He came to the tent where a woman named Jael lived. Jael was the wife of a man named Heber. He was one of the Kenite people. Heber's family was at peace with Jabin king of Hazor. So Sisera ran to Jael's tent. ²⁰Jael saw Sisera coming, so she went out to meet him. Jael said to Sisera, "Sir,

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

father-in-law Or possibly, "son-in-law."

come into my tent. Come in. Don't be afraid." So Sisera went into Jael's tent, and she covered him with a carpet.

¹⁰ "Sisera said to Jael, "I am thirsty. Please give me a little water to drink." Jael had a bottle made from animal skin. She kept milk in that bottle. Jael gave Sisera a drink of that milk. Then she covered Sisera up.

¹¹ "Then Sisera said to Jael, "Go stand at the entrance to the tent. If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is anyone in there?', tell him, 'No.'"

¹² But Jael found a tent peg and a hammer. Jael quietly went to Sisera. Sisera was very tired, so he was sleeping. Jael put the tent peg to the side of Sisera's head and hit it with a hammer. The tent peg went through the side of Sisera's head and into the ground! Sisera died.

¹³ Just then Barak came by Jael's tent, looking for Sisera. Jael went out to meet Barak and said, "Come in here, and I will show you the man that you are looking for." So Barak entered the tent with Jael. There Barak found Sisera lying dead on the ground, with the tent peg through the side of his head.

¹⁴ On that day God defeated Jabin king of Canaan for the people of Israel. ¹⁵ So the people of Israel became stronger and stronger until they defeated Jabin king of Canaan. The people of Israel finally destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song of Deborah

5 On the day that the people of Israel defeated Sisera, Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song:^{*}

- ¹ The men of Israel prepared themselves for battle.*

The people volunteered to go to battle—
Bless the Lord!

- ² Listen, kings,

ong This song is very old, and the meaning of many of the lines in this poem is hard for us to understand.

The men of Israel ... battle This might also mean "When leaders led in Israel," or "When men wore long hair in Israel." Soldiers often dedicated their hair as a special gift to God.

Pay attention, rulers!

I will sing,

I myself will sing to the Lord.

I will make music to the Lord,
to the God of the people of Israel.

- ⁴ Lord, in the past you came from the land of Seir,*
you marched from the land of Edom.*
You marched and the earth shook.
The skies rained.
The clouds dropped water.
⁵ The mountains shook
before the Lord, the God of Mount Sinai,
before the Lord, the God of Israel!

- ⁶ In the days of Shamgar* son of Anath,*
in the days of Jael, the main roads were empty.

Caravans* and travelers
went on the back roads.

- ⁷ There were no soldiers.
In Israel, there were no soldiers,
until you came, Deborah,
until you came to be a mother to Israel.

- ⁸ They chose to follow new gods.
So they had to fight at their city gates.*
No one could find a shield or a spear
among the 40,000 soldiers of Israel.

- ⁹ My heart is with the commanders of Israel.
These commanders volunteered to fight
for Israel.
Bless the Lord!

- ¹⁰ You people that ride on white donkeys,
you people that sit on saddle blankets,*

Seir Another name for the land of Edom.

Edom This land was south and east of Israel.

Shamgar Shamgar was one of the judges. He is mentioned in Judges 3:31.

Anath This is the name of a goddess of love and war. "Shamgar son of Anath" might be translated "Shamgar, the great soldier" or "Shamgar from the town of Anath."

Caravans Groups of traders. Usually many traders traveled together with their things packed on donkeys or camels.

They chose ... gates These two lines are hard to understand in Hebrew.

saddle blankets We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word.

- and you people that travel on the road,
pay attention!
- ¹¹ At the sound of the cymbals,*
at the watering holes for the animals—
there they tell about the victories of the
Lord,
the victories of the Lord's soldiers in
Israel,
at the time the Lord's people went to
fight at the city gates.
- ¹² Wake up, wake up, Deborah!
Wake up, wake up, sing a song!
Get up, Barak!
Go capture your enemies, son of
Abinoam!
- ¹³ At that time, the men that had survived
came down to the leaders.
The Lord's people came down to me
with soldiers.*
- ¹⁴ The men of Ephraim settled in the hill
country of Amalek.*
Benjamin, those men followed you
and your people.
From the family group of Makir,* the
commanders came down.
And from the family group of Zebulun,
came those men that lead with a
bronze staff.
- ¹⁵ The leaders of Issachar were with
Deborah.
The family group of Issachar was true
to Barak.
Those men marched into the valley on
foot.
The soldiers of Reuben bragged about
what they would do!
- ¹⁶ Why, then, did all of you stay seated by
the walls of the sheep pen*?
The brave soldiers of Reuben thought
hard about war,
but they stayed home listening to the
music played for their sheep.*
- ¹⁷ The people of Gilead* stayed in their
camps
on the other side of the Jordan River.
As for you, people of Dan,
why did you stay by your ships?
The family group of Asher stayed at the
seashore.
They camped at their safe harbors.
- ¹⁸ But the men of Zebulun
and the men of Naphtali
risked their lives to fight on those
hills.
- ¹⁹ The kings came.
They fought.
The kings of Canaan fought
at the city of Taanach,
by the waters of Megiddo.
But they didn't carry any treasures home!
- ²⁰ The stars fought from heaven.
From their paths, the stars fought with
Sisera.
- ²¹ The Kishon River swept Sisera's men
away,
that ancient river, the Kishon River.
My soul, march on with strength!*
- ²² The horses' hooves hammered the
ground.
Sisera's mighty horses ran and ran.
- ²³ "Curse the city of Meroz,"
said the angel of the Lord.
"Curse its people,
because they did not come to help the

cymbals We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word.

At that time ... soldiers Or, "At that time, the men that survived ruled over the leaders. The Lord's people ruled for me with soldiers."

hill country of Amalek This area was part of the land settled by the family group of Ephraim. See Judges 12:15.

Makir This family group was part of the family group of Manasseh. It was the part that settled to the west of the Jordan River.

walls of the sheep pen Or possibly, "campfires" or "saddlebags."

The brave soldiers ... sheep This song is making fun of these people, because they did not help fight against Sisera. **Gilead** These were people that lived in the land east of the Jordan River.

My soul ... strength Or, with some changes it could be "His mighty charging horses marched forward."

Lord,
to help the Lord with soldiers."

- ²⁴ Jael wife of Heber the Kenite
will be blessed above all women.
- ²⁵ Sisera asked for water.
Jael gave him milk.
In a bowl fit for a ruler,
she brought him cream.
- ²⁶ Then Jael reached out
and took the tent peg.
Her right hand reached for the hammer
that a worker would use,
and she hammered Sisera!
She smashed his head!
She hit him!
She made a hole in the side of his head!
- ²⁷ Between Jael's feet he sank;
he fell.
He lay there!
Between her feet he sank.
He fell!
Where Sisera sank,
there he fell,
dead!
- ²⁸ Sisera's mother looks through the
window
and cries.
Sisera's mother looks through the
curtains.
"Why is Sisera's chariot so late?
Why are sounds of his chariots' horses
delayed?"
- ²⁹ The wisest of her servant ladies answers
her,
Yes, the servant gives her an answer:
- ³⁰ "Surely they have won!
They are taking the things from the
people they defeated!
They are dividing those things among
themselves!
Each soldier is taking a girl or two.
Maybe Sisera is taking a piece of dyed
cloth.
That's it!
Sisera is taking a piece of fancy cloth—
or maybe two pieces—

for Sisera the Conqueror to wear."

- ³¹ May all of your enemies die this way,
Lord!

But may all the people that love you
be like the bright shining sun!

There was peace in the land for 40 years.

The Midianites Fight Israel

6 Again the people of Israel did things the Lord said were evil. So for seven years the Lord allowed the people of Midian to defeat the people of Israel.

²The people of Midian were very powerful and were cruel to the people of Israel. So the people of Israel made many hiding places in the mountains. They hid their food in caves and places that were hard to find. ³They did that because the Midianite and Amalekite people from the east always came and destroyed their crops. ⁴Those people camped in the land and destroyed the crops that the people of Israel had planted. Those people ruined the crops of the people of Israel as far as the land near the city of Gaza. Those people did not leave anything for the people of Israel to eat. They did not even leave them any sheep, or cattle, or donkeys. ⁵The people of Midian came up and camped in the land. They brought their families and their animals with them. They were as many as swarms of locusts! There were so many of those people and their camels that it was not possible to count them. All of these people came into the land and ruined it. ⁶The people of Israel became very poor because of the people of Midian. So the people of Israel cried to the Lord for help.

⁷The people* of Midian did all those bad things. So the people of Israel cried out to the Lord for help. ⁸So the Lord sent a prophet to them. The prophet said to the people of Israel, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'You were slaves in the land of Egypt. I made you free and brought you out of that land. 'I

The people Verses 7-10 do not appear in the oldest Hebrew copy of the book of Judges, the Dead Sea Scroll fragment, 4QJudgesA.

saved you from the powerful people of Egypt. Then the people of the land of Canaan hurt you. So I again saved you. I made those people leave their land. And I gave their land to you.' "Then I said to you, 'I am the Lord your God. You will live in the land of the Amorite people, but you must not worship their false gods.' But you did not obey me."

The Angel of the Lord Visits Gideon

"At that time, the angel of the Lord came to a man named Gideon. The angel of the Lord came and sat down under an oak tree at a place called Ophrah. This oak tree belonged to a man named Joash. Joash was from the Abiezer family. Joash was the father of Gideon. Gideon was beating some wheat* in a winepress.* The angel of the Lord sat down near Gideon. Gideon was hiding so the Midianite could not see the wheat. "The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said to him, "The Lord be with you, great soldier!"

"Then Gideon said, "I promise sir, if the Lord is with us, then why are we having so many troubles? We heard that he did wonderful things for our ancestors.* Our ancestors told us that the Lord took them out of Egypt. But the Lord left us. The Lord has allowed the people of Midian to defeat us."

"The Lord turned toward Gideon and said, "Use your power. Go save the people of Israel from the people of Midian. I am sending you to save them!"

"But Gideon answered and said, "Pardon me, sir. How can I save Israel? My family is the weakest in the family group of Manasseh. And I am the youngest one in my family."

"The Lord answered Gideon and said, "I am with you! So you can defeat the people of Midian! It will seem like you are fighting against only one man."

"Then Gideon said to the Lord, "If you are pleased with me, give me proof that you really are the Lord. "Please wait here. Don't go away until I come back to you. Let me bring my offering and set it down in front of you."

And the Lord said, "I will wait until you come back."

"So Gideon went in and cooked a young goat in boiling water. Gideon also took about 20 pounds* of flour and made bread without yeast. Then Gideon put the meat into a basket and the water from the boiled meat into a pot. Gideon brought out the meat, the water from the boiled meat, and the bread without yeast. Gideon gave that food to the Lord under the oak tree.

"The angel of God said to Gideon, "Put the meat and the bread without yeast on that rock over there. Then pour the water out." Gideon did as he was told.

"The angel of the Lord had a walking stick in his hand. The angel of the Lord touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick. Then fire jumped up from the rock! The meat and the bread were completely burned up! Then the angel of the Lord disappeared.

"Then Gideon realized that he had been talking to the angel of the Lord. So Gideon shouted, "Lord All-Powerful! I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face!"

"But the Lord said to Gideon, "Calm down!* Don't be afraid! You will not die!"*

"So Gideon built an altar* in that place to worship the Lord. Gideon named that altar, "The Lord is Peace." That altar still stands in the city of Ophrah. Ophrah is where the Abiezer family lives.

Gideon Tears Down the Altar of Baal.

"That same night the Lord spoke to Gideon. The Lord said, "Take the full-grown bull that belongs to your father, the one that is seven

beating some wheat This was the way people separated the grains of wheat from the other parts of the plants.

winepress A place for squeezing the juice from grapes. Sometimes this was only a shallow hole in a large rock in the ground.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

20 pounds Literally, "1 eph."

Calm down Literally, "Peace."

You will not die! Gideon thought he would die because he had seen the Lord face to face.

altar A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

years old. Your father has an altar* to the false god Baal.* There is also a wooden pole beside the altar. That pole was made to honor the false god Asherah.* Use the bull to pull down the Baal altar, and cut down the Asherah pole.¹⁸ Then build the right kind of altar for the Lord your God. Build that altar on this high ground. Then kill and burn the full-grown bull on this altar. Use the wood from the Asherah pole to burn your offering."

¹⁹So Gideon got ten of his servants and did what the Lord had told him to do. But Gideon was afraid that his family and the men of the city might see what he was doing. Gideon did what the Lord told him to do. But he did it at night, and not in the daytime.

²⁰The men of the city got up the next morning. And they saw that the altar for Baal* had been destroyed! They also saw that the Asherah* pole had been cut down. The Asherah pole had been sitting next to the altar for Baal. Those men also saw the altar that Gideon had built. And they saw the bull that had been sacrificed on that altar.

²¹The men of the city looked at each other and asked, "Who pulled down our altar? Who cut down our Asherah* pole? Who sacrificed this bull on this new altar?" They asked many questions and tried to learn who did those things.

Someone told them, "Gideon son of Joash did this."

²²So the men of the city came to Joash. They said to Joash, "You must bring your son out. He pulled down the altar* for Baal.* And he cut down the Asherah* pole that was by that altar. So your son must die."

²³Then Joash spoke to the crowd that was standing around him. Joash said, "Are you going to take Baal's side? Are you going to rescue Baal? If anyone takes Baal's side, let him be put to death by morning. If Baal really

is a god, let him defend himself when someone pulls down his altar." ²⁴Joash said, "If Gideon pulled Baal's altar down, then let Baal argue with him." So on that day Joash gave Gideon a new name. He called him Jerub-Baal.*

Gideon Defeats the People of Midian

¹"The people of Midian, Amalek, and other people from the east joined together to fight against the people of Israel. Those people went across the Jordan River and camped in Jezreel Valley. ²The Spirit of the Lord came to Gideon and gave him great power. Gideon blew a trumpet to call the Abiezer family to follow him. ³Gideon sent messengers to all the people of the family group of Manasseh. Those messengers told the people of Manasseh to get their weapons and prepare for battle. Gideon also sent messengers to the family groups of Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. The messengers took the same message. So those family groups also went up to meet Gideon and his men.

⁴Then Gideon said to God, "You said that you would help me save the people of Israel. Give me proof! ⁵I will put a sheepskin on the threshing floor.* If there is dew only on the sheepskin, while all of the ground is dry, then I will know that you will use me to save Israel, like you said."

⁶And that is exactly what happened. Gideon got up early the next morning and squeezed the sheepskin. He was able to drain a bowl full of water from the sheepskin.

⁷Then Gideon said to God, "Don't be angry with me. Let me ask just one more thing. Let me test you one more time with the sheepskin. This time let the sheepskin be dry, while the ground around it gets wet with dew."

⁸That night God did that very thing. Just the sheepskin was dry, but the ground around it was wet with dew.

7 Early in the morning Jerub-Baal (*Gideon*) and all his men set up their camp at the

altar(s) A table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

Jerub-Baal This is like the Hebrew words meaning, "Let Baal argue." The same verb is translated "take one's side" and "defend" in verse 31.

threshing floor The place where people beat wheat to separate the grain from the other parts of the plants.

spring of Harod. The people of Midian were camped in the valley at the bottom of the hill called Moreh. This was north of Gideon and his men.

¹Then the Lord said to Gideon, "I am going to help your men to defeat the people of Midian. But you have too many men for the job. I don't want the people of Israel to forget me and brag that they saved themselves. ²So now, make an announcement to your men. Tell them, 'Anyone that is afraid may leave Mount Gilead. He may go back home.'"

At that time, 22,000 men left Gideon and went back home. But 10,000 still remained.

³Then the Lord said to Gideon, "There are still too many men. Take the men down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say, 'This man will go with you,' he will go. But if I say, 'That one will not go with you,' then he will not go."

⁴So Gideon led the men down to the water. At the water the Lord said to Gideon, "Separate the men like this: The men that drink the water by using their tongue to lap it up like a dog will be in one group. And the men that bend down to drink will be in the other group."

⁵There were 300 men that used their hands to bring water to their mouth and lapped it like a dog does. All the other people bent down and drank the water. ⁶The Lord said to Gideon, "I will use the 300 men that lapped the water like a dog. I will use those men to save you, and I will allow you to defeat the people of Midian. Let the other men go to their homes."

⁷So Gideon sent the other men of Israel home. Gideon kept the 300 men with him. Those 300 men kept the supplies and the trumpets of the other men that went home.

The people of Midian were camped in the valley below Gideon's camp. ⁸During the night the Lord spoke to Gideon. The Lord said to him, "Get up. I will let you defeat the Midianite army. Go down to their camp. ⁹If you are afraid to go alone, then take Purah your servant with you. ¹⁰Go into the camp of the people of Midian. Listen to the things those people are saying. After that, you will not be afraid to attack them."

So Gideon and Purah his servant went down to the edge of the enemy camp. ¹¹The people of Midian, the people of Amalek, and all the other people from the east were camped in that valley. There were so many of those people that they seemed like a swarm of locusts.* It seemed like those people had as many camels as there are grains of sand on the seashore.

¹²Gideon came to the enemy camp, and he heard a man talking. That man was telling his friend about a dream that he had. The man was saying, "I dreamed that a round loaf of bread came rolling into the camp of the people of Midian. That loaf of bread hit the tent so hard that the tent turned over and fell flat."

¹³The man's friend knew the meaning of the dream. That man's friend said, "Your dream can only have one meaning. Your dream is about that man from Israel. It is about Gideon son of Joash. It means that God will let Gideon defeat the whole army of Midian."

¹⁴After he heard the men talking about the dream and what it meant, Gideon bowed down to God. Then Gideon went back to the camp of the people of Israel. Gideon called out to the people, "Get up! The Lord will help us defeat the people of Midian." ¹⁵Then Gideon divided the 300 men into three groups. Gideon gave each man a trumpet and an empty jar. A burning torch was inside each jar. ¹⁶Then Gideon told the men, "Watch me and do what I do. Follow me to the edge of the enemy camp. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly what I do. ¹⁷You men surround the enemy camp. I and all the men with me will blow our trumpets. When we blow our trumpets, you blow your trumpets, too. Then shout these words: 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'"

¹⁸So Gideon and the 100 men that were with him went to the edge of the enemy camp. They came there just after the enemy changed guards. It was during the middle watch of the night. Gideon and his men blew their trumpets and smashed their jars. ¹⁹Then all three groups of Gideon's men blew their trumpets and

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. Locusts can destroy a large crop very quickly.

smashed their jars. The men held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands. As those men blew their trumpets, they shouted, "A sword for the Lord, and a sword for Gideon!"

¹¹Gideon's men stayed where they were. But inside the camp, the men of Midian began shouting and running away. ¹²When Gideon's 300 men blew their trumpets, the Lord caused the men of Midian to kill each other with their swords. The enemy army ran away to the city of Beth Shittah, which is toward the city of Zererah. Those men ran as far as the border of the city of Abel Meholah, which is near the city of Tabbath.

¹³Then soldiers from the family groups of Naphtali, Asher, and all of Manasseh were told to chase the people of Midian. ¹⁴Gideon sent messengers through all the hill country of Ephraim. The messengers said, "Come down and attack the people of Midian. Take control of the river as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan River. Do this before the people of Midian get there."

So they called all men from the family group of Ephraim. They took control of the river as far as Beth Barah. ¹⁵The men of Ephraim caught two of the Midianite leaders. These two leaders were named Oreb and Zeeb. The men of Ephraim killed Oreb at a place named the Rock of Oreb. They killed Zeeb at a place named the Winepress of Zeeb. The men of Ephraim continued chasing the people of Midian. But they first cut off the heads of Oreb and Zeeb and took the heads to Gideon. Gideon was at the place where people cross the Jordan River.

8 The men of Ephraim were angry at Gideon. When the men of Ephraim found Gideon, they asked Gideon, "Why did you treat us this way? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight against the people of Midian?"

¹But Gideon answered the men of Ephraim, "I have not done as well as you men have done. You people of Ephraim have a much better harvest than my family, the Abiezers. At harvest time, you leave more grapes in the field than my family gathers! Isn't that true?" In the

same way, you have a better harvest now. God allowed you to capture Oreb and Zeeb, the leaders of Midian! How can I compare my success with what you did?" When the men of Ephraim heard Gideon's answer, they were not as angry as they had been.

Gideon Captures Two Kings of Midian

¹Then Gideon and his 300 men came to the Jordan River and went across to the other side. But they were tired and hungry. ²Gideon said to the men of the city of Succoth, "Give my soldiers something to eat. My soldiers are very tired. We are still chasing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

³But the leaders of the city of Succoth said to Gideon, "Why should we give your soldiers something to eat? You haven't caught Zebah and Zalmunna yet."

⁴Then Gideon said, "You won't give us food. The Lord will help me capture Zebah and Zalmunna. After that, I will come back here. And I will beat your skin with thorns and briers from the desert."

⁵Gideon left the city of Succoth and went to the city of Penuel. Gideon asked the men of Penuel for food, just as he had asked the men of Succoth. But the men of Penuel gave Gideon the same answer that the men of Succoth had given. ⁶So Gideon said to the men of Penuel, "After I win the victory, I will come back here and pull this tower down."

⁷Zebah and Zalmunna and their army were in the city of Karkor. Their army had 15,000 soldiers in it. These soldiers were all that were left of the army of the people of the east. 120,000 strong soldiers of that army had already been killed. ⁸Gideon and his men used Tent Dwellers' Road. That road is east of the cities of Nobah and Jogbehah. Gideon came to the city of Karkor and attacked the enemy. The enemy army did not expect the attack. ⁹Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of the people of Midian, ran away. But Gideon chased and caught those kings. Gideon and his men defeated the enemy army.

hungry Following the Septuagint reading here. The Hebrew text reads, "chasing."

¹¹Then Gideon son of Joash returned from the battle. Gideon and his men returned by going through a mountain pass called the Pass of Heres. ¹²Gideon captured a young man from the city of Succoth. Gideon asked the young man some questions. The young man wrote down some names for Gideon. The young man wrote down the names of the leaders and elders of the city of Succoth. He gave the names of 77 men.

¹³Then Gideon came to the city of Succoth. He said to the men of that city, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna. You made fun of me by saying, 'Why should we give food to your tired soldiers? You have not caught Zebah and Zalmunna yet.'"¹⁴Gideon took the elders of the city of Succoth, and he beat them with thorns and briers from the desert to punish them. ¹⁵Gideon also pulled down the tower in the city of Penueel. Then he killed the men that lived in that city.

¹⁶Then Gideon said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "You killed some men on Mount Tabor. What were those men like?"

Zebah and Zalmunna answered, "Those men were like you. Each one of them seemed like a prince."

¹⁷Gideon said, "Those men were my brothers! My mother's sons! As the Lord lives, if you had not killed them, then I wouldn't kill you now."

¹⁸Then Gideon turned to Jether. Jether was Gideon's oldest son. Gideon said to him, "Kill these kings." But Jether was only a boy and was afraid. So he would not take out his sword.

¹⁹Then Zebah and Zalmunna said to Gideon, "Come on, kill us yourself. You are a man and strong enough to do the job." So Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Zalmunna. Then Gideon took the decorations shaped like the moon off their camels' necks.

Gideon Makes an Ephod

²⁰The people of Israel said to Gideon, "You saved us from the people of Midian. So now, rule over us. We want you, your son and your grandson to rule over us."

²¹But Gideon told the people of Israel, "The Lord will be your ruler. I will not rule over you. And my son will not rule over you."

²²Some of the people that the men of Israel defeated were Ishmaelites. And the Ishmaelite men wore gold earrings. So Gideon said to the people of Israel, "I want you to do this one thing for me. I want each of you to give me a gold earring from the things you took in the fighting."

²³So the people of Israel said to Gideon, "We will gladly give you what you want." So they put a coat down on the ground. Each man threw an earring onto the coat. ²⁴When those earrings were gathered up, they weighed about 43 pounds.* This did not include the other gifts the people of Israel gave to Gideon. They also gave him jewelry shaped like the moon and jewelry shaped like teardrops. And they gave him purple robes. These were things that the kings of the people of Midian had worn. They also gave him the chains from the camels of the Midianite kings.

²⁵Gideon used the gold to make an ephod.* He put the ephod in his home town, the town called Ophrah. All the people of Israel worshiped the ephod. In this way, the people of Israel were not faithful to God—they worshiped the Ephod.* The ephod became a trap that caused Gideon and his family to sin.

The Death of Gideon

²⁶The people of Midian were forced to be under the rule of the people of Israel. The people of Midian did not cause trouble any more. And the land was at peace for 40 years, as long as Gideon was alive.

²⁷Jerub-Baal (*Gideon*) son of Joash went home. ²⁸Gideon had 70 sons of his own. He had so many sons because he had many wives. ²⁹Gideon had a concubine* that lived in the city

43 pounds Literally, "1,700 shekels."

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

were not faithful ... Ephod Literally, "acted like a prostitute to it."

concubine A slave woman that was like a wife to a man.

of Shechem. He had a son with that concubine. He named that son Abimelech.

²⁵So Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age. Gideon was buried in the tomb that Joash, his father, owned. That tomb is in the city of Ophrah, where the Abiezer family lives. ²⁶As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel again were not faithful to God—they followed Baal.* They made Baal-Berith* their god. ²⁷The people of Israel did not remember the Lord their God, even though the Lord had saved them from all their enemies that were living all around the people of Israel. ²⁸The people of Israel were not loyal to the family of Jerub-Baal (*Gideon*), even though he had done many good things for them.

Abimelech Becomes King

9 Abimelech was the son of Jerub-Baal (*Gideon*). Abimelech went to his uncles that lived in the city of Shechem. He said to his uncles and all of his mother's family, ¹"Ask the leaders of the city of Shechem this question: 'Is it better for you to be ruled by the 70 sons of Jerub-Baal, or to be ruled by only one man? Remember, I am your relative.'"

²Abimelech's uncles spoke to the leaders of Shechem and asked them that question. The leaders of Shechem decided to follow Abimelech. The leaders said, "After all, he is our brother." ³So the leaders of Shechem gave Abimelech 70 pieces of silver. That silver was from the temple of the god Baal-Berith.* Abimelech used the silver to hire some men. These men were worthless, reckless men. They followed Abimelech wherever he went.

⁴Abimelech went to his father's house at Ophrah. Abimelech murdered his brothers. Abimelech killed the 70 sons of his father, Jerub-Baal (*Gideon*). He killed them all at the same time.* But Jerub-Baal's youngest son hid from Abimelech and escaped. The youngest son's name was Jotham.

were not faithful ... Baal Literally, "they acted like a prostitute to Baal."

Baal-Berith The name of this god means "Lord of the Agreement."

all at the same time Literally, "on one stone."

⁵Then all of the leaders in Shechem and the house of Millo* came together. All those people gathered beside the big tree of the pillar in Shechem and made Abimelech their king.

Jotham's Story

¹Jotham heard that the leaders of the city of Shechem had made Abimelech king. When he heard this, he went and stood on the top of Mount Gerizim.* Jotham shouted out this story to the people,

Listen to me you leaders of the city of Shechem. Then let God listen to you.

²One day the trees decided to choose a king to rule over them. The trees said to the olive tree, "You be king over us."

³But the olive tree said, "Men and gods praise me for my oil. Should I stop making my oil just to go and sway over the other trees?"

⁴Then the trees said to the fig tree, "Come and be our king."

⁵But the fig tree answered, "Should I stop making my good, sweet fruit just to go and sway over the other trees?"

⁶Then the trees said to the vine, "Come and be our king."

⁷But the vine answered, "My wine makes men and kings happy. Should I stop making my wine just to go and sway over the trees?"

⁸Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, "Come and be our king."

⁹But the thorn bush said to the trees, "If you really want to make me king over you, come and find shelter in my shade. But if you do not want to do this, then let fire come out of the thorn bush. Let the fire burn even the cedar trees of Lebanon."

Millo This was probably a well protected part of the city. It might have been in the city itself, or somewhere near the city.

Mount Gerizim This mountain is right beside the city of Shechem.

"Now if you were completely honest when you made Abimelech king, then may you be happy with him. And if you have been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family, fine. And if you have treated Jerub-Baal as you should, fine. "But think what my father did for you. My father fought for you. He risked his life when he saved you from the people of Midian. "But now you have turned against my father's family. You have killed my father's 70 sons all at the same time.* You made Abimelech king over the city of Shechem. You made him king because he is your relative. But he is only the of son my father's slave girl! "So, if you have been completely honest to Jerub-Baal and his family today, then may you be happy with Abimelech as your king. And may he be happy with you people. "But if you have not acted right, then may Abimelech destroy you leaders of Shechem and house of Millo.* And may Abimelech be destroyed too!"

²¹After Jotham had said all of this, he ran away. He escaped to the city named Beer. Jotham stayed in that city because he was afraid of his brother Abimelech.

Abimelech Fights Against Shechem

²²Abimelech ruled the people of Israel for three years. ²³⁻²⁴Abimelech had killed Jerub-Baal's 70 sons—and they were Abimelech's own brothers! The leaders of Shechem had supported him in doing this bad thing. So God caused trouble between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem. And the leaders of Shechem began planning ways to hurt Abimelech. ²⁵The leaders of the city of Shechem did not like Abimelech anymore. Those people put men on the hilltops to attack and rob everyone that went by. Abimelech found out about those attacks.

²⁶A man named Gaal son of Ebed and his brothers moved to the city of Shechem. The leaders of the city of Shechem decided to trust and follow Gaal.

²⁷One day the people of Shechem went out to the fields to pick grapes. The people squeezed the grapes to make wine. And then they had a party at the temple of their god. The people ate and drank and said bad things about Abimelech.

²⁸Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "We are the men of Shechem. Why should we obey Abimelech? Who does he think he is? Abimelech is one of Jerub-Baal's sons, right? And Abimelech made Zebul his officer, right? We should not obey Abimelech! We should follow our own people, men from Hamor.* (Hamor was the father of Shechem.) ²⁹If you make me the commander of these people, then I will destroy Abimelech. I will say to him, 'Get your army ready and come out to battle.'"

³⁰Now Zebul was the governor of the city of Shechem. Zebul heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, and Zebul became very angry. ³¹Zebul sent messengers to Abimelech in the city of Arumah.* This is the message:

Gaal son of Ebed and Gaal's brothers have come to the city of Shechem. They are making trouble for you. Gaal is turning the whole city against you. ³²So now you and your men should come tonight and hide in the fields outside the city. ³³Then, when the sun comes up in the morning, attack the city. Gaal and his men will come out of the city to fight you. When those men come out to fight, do what you can to them.

³⁴So Abimelech and all his soldiers got up during the night and went to the city. Those soldiers separated into four groups. They hid near the city of Shechem. ³⁵Gaal son of Ebed went out and was standing at the entrance to the gate of the city of Shechem. While Gaal was standing there, Abimelech and his soldiers came out of their hiding places.

men from Hamor This refers to native born citizens of Shechem. Hamor was the father of Shechem in a story in Genesis 34. The city of Shechem is said to have been named after Hamor's son.

in the city of Arumah Or "Tormah," the town where Abimelech lived as king. It was probably about eight miles south of Shechem.

all at the same time Literally, "on one stone."

Millo This was probably a well protected part of the city. It might have been in the city itself, or somewhere near the city.

*Gaal saw the soldiers. Gaal said to Zebul, "Look, there are people coming down from the mountains."

But Zebul said, "You are only seeing the shadows of the mountains. The shadows just look like people."

"But again Gaal said, "Look, there are some people coming down from that place over there, by Land's Navel. And there! I saw someone's head over by Magician's Tree.*" Zebul said to Gaal, "Why aren't you bragging now? You said, 'Who is Abimelech? Why should we obey him?' You made fun of these men. Now go out and fight them."

"So Gaal led the leaders of Shechem out to fight Abimelech. Abimelech and his men chased Gaal and his men. Gaal's men ran back toward the gate of the city of Shechem. Many of Gaal's men were killed before they could get back to the gate.

"Then Abimelech returned to the city of Arumah. Zebul forced Gaal and his brothers to leave the city of Shechem.

"The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields to work. Abimelech found out about that. "So Abimelech separated his men into three groups. He wanted to attack the people of Shechem by surprise. So he hid his men in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of the city he jumped up and attacked them. "Abimelech and his group ran to a place near the gate to Shechem. The other two groups ran out to the people in the fields and killed them. "Abimelech and his men fought against the city of Shechem all that day. Abimelech and his men captured the city of Shechem and killed the people of that city. Then Abimelech tore down the city and threw salt over the ruins.

"There were some people that lived at the Tower of Shechem.* When the people of that place heard what had happened to Shechem,

they gathered together in the safest room* of the temple of the god El-Berith.*

"Abimelech heard that all the leaders of the Tower of Shechem had gathered together. "So Abimelech and all his men went up to Mount Zalmon.* Abimelech took an axe and cut off some branches. He carried those branches on his shoulders. Then Abimelech said to the men with him, "Hurry! Do the same thing that I have done." "So all those men cut branches and followed Abimelech. They piled the branches against the safest room* of the temple of the god El-Berith.* Then they set the branches on fire and burned the people in the room. So about 1,000 men and women that lived at the Tower of Shechem died.

Abimelech's Death

"Then Abimelech and his men went to the city of Thebez. Abimelech and his men captured that city. "But inside the city there was a strong tower. All the leaders and other men and women of that city ran to the tower. When the people were inside the tower, they locked the door behind them. Then they climbed up to the roof of the tower. "Abimelech and his men came to the tower to attack it. Abimelech went up to the door of the tower. He wanted to burn the tower. "But, while Abimelech was standing at the door of the tower, a woman on the roof dropped a grinding stone on his head. The grinding stone crushed Abimelech's skull. "Abimelech quickly said to the servant that carried his weapons, "Take out your sword and kill me. I want you to kill me so that people won't say, 'A woman killed Abimelech.'" So the servant stabbed Abimelech with his sword, and Abimelech died. "The people of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead. So they all went back home.

safest room We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word.

El-Berith The name of this god means "God of the Agreement.

Mount Zalmon This is probably another name for Mount Ebal, a mountain near Shechem.

Land's Navel ... Magician's Tree Two places in the hills near Shechem.

Tower of Shechem This was probably a place near Shechem, but not actually part of the city.

⁹In that way, God punished Abimelech for all the bad things he did. Abimelech sinned against his own father by killing his 70 brothers. ¹⁰God also punished the men of the city of Shechem for the bad things they did. So the things Jotham said came true. (Jotham was Jerub-Baal's youngest son. Jerub-Baal was Gideon.)

Tola the Judge

10 After Abimelech died, God sent another judge to save the people of Israel. That man's name was Tola. Tola was the son of a man named Puah. Puah was the son of a man named Dodo. Tola was from the family group of Issachar. Tola lived in the city of Shamir. The city of Shamir was in the hill country of Ephraim. ²Tola was a judge for the people of Israel for 23 years. Then Tola died and was buried in the city of Shamir.

Jair the Judge

¹After Tola died, another judge was sent by God. That man's name was Jair. Jair lived in the area of Gilead. Jair was a judge for the people of Israel for 22 years. ⁴Jair had 30 sons. Those 30 sons rode 30 donkeys.* Those 30 sons controlled 30 towns in the area of Gilead. Those towns are called the Towns of Jair to this very day. ⁵Jair died and was buried in the city of Kamon.

The Ammonites Fight Against Israel

⁶Again the people of Israel did things the Lord said are evil. They began worshiping the false gods Baal* and the Astarte.* They also worshiped the gods of the people of Aram, the gods of the people of Sidon, the gods of the

people of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistine people. The people of Israel left the Lord and stopped serving him.

⁷So the Lord became angry with the people of Israel. The Lord allowed the Philistine people and the Ammonite people to defeat them. ⁸In that same year those people destroyed the people of Israel that lived on the east side of the Jordan River, in the area of Gilead. That is the land where the Amorite people had lived. Those people of Israel suffered for 18 years. ⁹The Ammonite people then went across the Jordan River. They went to fight against the people of Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. The Ammonite people brought many troubles to the people of Israel.

¹⁰So the people of Israel cried to the Lord for help. They said, "God, we have sinned against you. We left our God and worshiped the false god Baal.*"

¹¹The Lord answered the people of Israel, "You cried to me when the people of Egypt, the Amorite people, the Ammonite people, and the Philistine people hurt you. I saved you from these people. ¹²You cried to me when the people of Sidon, the Amalekite people, and the Midianite* hurt you. I also saved you from those people. ¹³But you have left me. You have worshiped other gods. So I refuse to save you again. ¹⁴You like worshiping those gods. So go call to them for help. Let those gods save you when you are in trouble."

¹⁵But the people of Israel said to the Lord, "We have sinned. Do whatever you want to do to us. But please save us today." ¹⁶Then the people of Israel threw away the foreign gods. They started worshiping the Lord again. So the Lord felt sorry for them when he saw them suffering.

Jephthah is Chosen as a Leader

¹The Ammonite people gathered together for war. Their camp was in the area of Gilead. The people of Israel gathered together. Their

30 sons rode 30 donkeys This showed these men were important leaders, possibly the mayors of the 30 towns in Gilead.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

Midianite This is the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has, "The Maonite people."

camp was at the city of Mizpah. "The leaders of the people that live in the area of Gilead said, "Who will lead us to attack the people of Ammon? That man will become the head of all the people that live in the area of Gilead."

11 Jephthah was from the family group of Gilead. He was a strong soldier. But Jephthah was the son of a prostitute. His father was a man named Gilead. ²Gilead's wife had several sons. When those sons grew up, they did not like Jephthah. Those sons forced Jephthah to leave his home town. They said to him, "You will not get any of our father's property. You are the son of another woman." ³So Jephthah went away because of his brothers. He lived in the land of Tob. In the land of Tob, some rough men began to follow Jephthah.

⁴After a time the Ammonite people fought with the people of Israel. ⁵The Ammonite people were fighting against Israel, so the elders (*leaders*) in Gilead went to Jephthah. They wanted Jephthah to leave the land of Tob and come back to Gilead.

⁶The elders said to Jephthah, "Come and be our leader so that we can fight the Ammonite people."

⁷But Jephthah said to the elders (*leaders*) of the land of Gilead, "You forced me to leave my father's house. You hate me! So why are you coming to me now that you are having trouble?"

⁸The elders (*leaders*) from Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is the reason that we have come to you now. Please come with us and fight against the Ammonite people. You will be the commander over all the people living in Gilead."

⁹Then Jephthah said to the elders (*leaders*) from Gilead, "If you want me to come back to Gilead and fight the Ammonite people, fine. But if the Lord helps me win, then I will be your new leader."

¹⁰The elders (*leaders*) from Gilead said to Jephthah, "The Lord is listening to everything we are saying. And we promise to do all that you tell us to do."

¹¹So Jephthah went with the elders (*leaders*) from Gilead. Those people made Jephthah their leader and their commander. Jephthah repeated all of his words in front of the Lord at the city of Mizpah.

Jephthah Sends Messengers to the Ammonite King

¹²Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonite people. The messengers gave the king this message: "What is the problem between the Ammonite people and the people of Israel? Why have you come to fight in our land?"

¹³The king of the Ammonite people said to the messengers of Jephthah, "We are fighting Israel because the people of Israel took our land when they came up from Egypt. They took our land from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River to the Jordan River. Now tell the people of Israel to give our land back to us in peace."

¹⁴So the messengers of Jephthah took this message back to Jephthah. ¹⁵Then Jephthah sent the messengers to the king of the Ammonite people again. ¹⁶They took this message:

This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of the people of Moab or the land of the people of Ammon. ¹⁷When the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, the people of Israel went into the desert. The people of Israel went to the Red Sea. Then they went to Kadesh. ¹⁸The people of Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom. The messengers asked for a favor. They said, "Let the people of Israel cross through your land." But the king of Edom didn't let us go through their land. We also sent the same message to the king of Moab. But the king of Moab would not let us go through his land either. So the people of Israel stayed at Kadesh.

So the messengers ... Jephthah This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew text does not have this sentence.

¹⁸Then the people of Israel went through the desert and around the edges of the land of Edom and the land of Moab. The people of Israel traveled east of the land of Moab. They made their camp on the other side of the Arnon River. They did not cross the border of the land of Moab. (The Arnon River was the border of the land of Moab.)

¹⁹Then the people of Israel sent messengers to Sihon the king of the Amorite people. Sihon was the king of the city of Heshbon. The messengers asked Sihon, 'Let the people of Israel pass through your land. We want to go to our land.' ²⁰But Sihon, the king of the Amorite people would not let the people of Israel cross his borders. Sihon gathered all of his people and made a camp at Jahaz. Then the Amorite people fought with the people of Israel. ²¹But the Lord, the God of Israel, helped the people of Israel to defeat Sihon and his army. So the land of the Amorite people became the property of the people of Israel. ²²So the people of Israel got all of the land of the Amorite people. That land went from the Arnon River to the Jabbok River. That land also went from the desert to the Jordan River.

²³It was the Lord, the God of Israel, who forced the Amorite people to leave their land. And the Lord gave the land to the people of Israel. Do you think you can make the people of Israel leave this land? ²⁴Surely you can live in the land which Chemosh* your god has given to you. So we will live in the land that the Lord our God has given to us! ²⁵Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor? He was the king of the land of Moab. Did he argue with the people of Israel? Did he actually fight with the people of

Israel? ²⁶The people of Israel have lived in the city of Heshbon and the towns around it for 300 years. The people of Israel have lived in the city of Aroer and the towns around it for 300 years. The people of Israel have lived in all of the cities along the side of the Arnon River for 300 years. Why have you not tried to take these cities in all that time? ²⁷The people of Israel have not sinned against you. But you are doing a very bad thing against the people of Israel. May the Lord, the true Judge, decide whether the people of Israel are right or the Ammonite people!"

²⁸The king of the Ammonite people refused to listen to this message from Jephthah.

Jephthah's Promise

²⁹Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah. Jephthah passed through the area of Gilead and Manasseh. He went to the city of Mizpah in Gilead. From the city of Mizpah in Gilead, Jephthah passed through to the land of the Ammonite people.

³⁰Jephthah made a promise to the Lord. He said, "If you will let me defeat the Ammonite people, ³¹I will give you the first thing that comes out of my house when I come back from the victory. I will give it to the Lord as a burnt offering."

³²Then Jephthah went to the land of the Ammonite people. Jephthah fought the Ammonite people. The Lord helped him defeat them. ³³He defeated them from the city of Aroer to the city of Minnith. Jephthah captured 20 cities. Then he fought the Ammonite people to the city of Abel Keramim. The people of Israel defeated the Ammonite people. It was a very great defeat for the Ammonite people.

³⁴Jephthah went back to Mizpah. Jephthah went to his house and his daughter came out of the house to meet him. She was playing a tambourine and dancing. She was his only daughter. Jephthah loved her very much. Jephthah did not have any other sons or daughters. ³⁵When Jephthah saw that his

Chemosh The national god of the land of Moab, even though Milcom was the god of the Ammonite people.

Balak son of Zippor See the story of Balak in Numbers 22-24.

daughter was the first thing to come out of his house, he tore his clothes to show his sadness. Then he said, "Oh, my daughter! You have ruined me! You have made me very, very sad! I made a promise to the Lord, and I cannot change it!"

⁹Then his daughter said to Jephthah, "Father, you have made a promise to the Lord. So keep your promise. Do what you said you would do. After all, the Lord did help you defeat your enemies, the Ammonite people."

¹⁰Then Jephthah's daughter said to her father, "But do this one thing for me first. Let me be alone for two months. Let me go to the mountains. I will not marry and have children, so let me and my friends go and cry together."

¹¹Jephthah said, "Go and do that." Jephthah sent her away for two months. Jephthah's daughter and her friends stayed in the mountains. They cried for her because she would not marry and have children.

¹²At the end of two months, Jephthah's daughter returned to her father. Jephthah did what he promised to the Lord. Jephthah's daughter never had sexual relations with anyone. So this became a custom in Israel. "Every year the women of Israel remembered the daughter of Jephthah from Gilead. The women of Israel cried four days every year for Jephthah's daughter."

Jephthah and Ephraim

12 The men from the family group of Ephraim called all their soldiers together. Then they went across the river to the city of Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why didn't you call us to help you fight the Ammonite people? We will burn your house down with you in it."

¹Jephthah answered them, "The Ammonite people have been giving us many problems. So I and my people fought against them. I called you, but you didn't come to help us. ²I saw that you would not help us. So I risked my own life. I went across the river to fight against the Ammonite people. The Lord helped me to defeat them. Now why have you come to fight against me today?"

³Then Jephthah called the men of Gilead together. They fought against the men from the family group of Ephraim. They fought against the men of Ephraim because those men had insulted the men of Gilead. They had said, "You men of Gilead are nothing but survivors of the men of Ephraim. You don't even have your own land! Part of you belong to Ephraim, and part of you belong to Manasseh." The men of Gilead defeated the men of Ephraim.

⁴The men of Gilead captured the places where people cross the Jordan River. Those places led to the country of Ephraim. Any time a survivor from Ephraim came to the river and said, "Let me cross," the men of Gilead would ask him, "Are you from Ephraim?" If he said, "No," they would say, "Say the word 'Shibboleth.'" The men of Ephraim could not say that word correctly. They pronounced the word "Sibboleth." So if the person said, "Sibboleth," then the men of Gilead knew he was from Ephraim. So they would kill him at the crossing place. They killed 42,000 men from Ephraim.

⁵Jephthah was a judge for the people of Israel for six years. Then Jephthah from Gilead died. They buried him in his town in Gilead.

Ibzan, the Judge

¹After Jephthah, a man named Ibzan was a judge for the people of Israel. Ibzan was from the city of Bethlehem. ²Ibzan had 30 sons and 30 daughters. He told his 30 daughters to marry men that were not his relatives. And he found 30 women that were not his relatives, and his sons married these women. Ibzan was a judge for the people of Israel for seven years. ³Then Ibzan died. He was buried in the city of Bethlehem.

Elon, the Judge

¹After Ibzan, a man named Elon was a judge for the people of Israel. Elon was from the family group of Zebulun. He was a judge for the people of Israel for ten years. ²Then Elon from the family group of Zebulun died. He was buried in the city of Aijalon, Zebulun.

Abdon, the Judge

¹³After Elon died, a man named Abdon son of Hillel was a judge for the people of Israel. Abdon was from the city of Pirathon. ¹⁴Abdon had 40 sons and 30 grandsons. They rode on 70 donkeys.* Abdon was a judge for the people of Israel for eight years. ¹⁵Then Abdon son of Hillel died. He was buried in the city of Pirathon. Pirathon is in the land of Ephraim. This is in the hill country where the Amalekite people lived.

The Birth of Samson

13 Again the Lord saw the people of Israel doing evil things. So the Lord allowed the Philistine people to rule over them for 40 years.

¹There was a man from the city of Zorah. The man's name was Manoah. He was from the family group of Dan. Manoah had a wife. But she was not able to have any children. ²The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You have not been able to have children. But you will become pregnant and have a son. ³Don't drink any wine or any other strong drink. Don't eat any food that is unclean.* ⁴Why? Because you are pregnant, and you will have a son. He will be dedicated to God in a special way: He will be a Nazirite.* So you must never cut his hair. He will be God's special person from before he is born. He will save the people of Israel from the power of the Philistine people."

⁵Then the woman went to her husband and told him what had happened. She said, "A man from God came to me. He looked like an angel from God. He made me afraid. I didn't ask him where he was from. He didn't tell me his name. ⁶But he said to me, 'You are pregnant and will have a son. Don't drink any wine or other

strong drink. Don't eat any food that is unclean.* Why? Because the boy will be dedicated to God in a special way. The boy will be God's special person from before he is born until the day he dies.'"

⁷Then Manoah prayed to the Lord. He said, "Lord, I beg you to send the man of God to us again. We want him to teach us what we should do for the boy that will soon be born."

⁸God heard Manoah's prayer. The angel of God came to the woman again. She was sitting in a field and her husband Manoah was not with her. ⁹So the woman ran to tell her husband, "The man is back! The man that came to me the other day is here!"

¹⁰Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he said, "Are you the same man that spoke to my wife before?"

The angel said, "I am."

¹¹So Manoah said, "I hope that what you say will happen. Tell me what kind of life will the boy live? What will he do?"

¹²The angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Your wife must do everything I told her. ¹³She must not eat anything that grows on a grapevine. She must not drink any wine or strong drink. She must not eat any food that is unclean.* She must do everything that I have commanded her to do."

¹⁴Then Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "We would like for you to stay a while. We want to cook a young goat for you to eat."

¹⁵The angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Even if you keep me from leaving, I will not eat your food. But if you want to prepare something, then offer a burnt offering to the Lord." (Manoah did not understand that the man was really the angel of the Lord.)

¹⁶Then Manoah asked the angel of the Lord, "What is your name? We want to know so that we can honor you when what you have said really happens."

¹⁷The angel of the Lord said, "Why do you ask my name? It is too amazing for you to believe.*"

They rode on 70 donkeys This showed they were important leaders, possibly mayors of their towns.

unclean Or, "unacceptable." Not pure or not able to be used in worshiping God. See Leviticus 11-15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

Nazirite A person that made a special promise to God. See Numbers 6:1-21 for the rules about the Nazirite promise.

It is too amazing ... to believe Or, "It is Pelei." This means "amazing," "wonderful." This is like the name, "Wonderful Counselor" in Isaiah 9:6.

¹⁹Then Manoah sacrificed a young goat on a rock. He offered the goat and a grain offering as a gift to the Lord and to the Person Who Does Amazing Things.* ²⁰Manoah and his wife were watching what happened. As the flames went up to the sky from the altar,* the angel of the Lord went up to heaven in the fire!

When Manoah and his wife saw that, they bowed down with their faces to the ground. ²¹Manoah finally understood that the man was really the angel of the Lord. The angel of the Lord did not appear to Manoah again. ²²Manoah said to his wife, "We have seen God! Surely we will die because of this!"

²³But his wife said to him, "The Lord does not want to kill us. If the Lord wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted our burnt offering and grain offering. He would not have shown us all these things. And he would not have told us these things."

²⁴So the woman had a boy. She named him Samson. Samson grew and the Lord blessed him. ²⁵The Spirit of the Lord began to work in Samson while he was in the city of Mahaneh Dan. That city is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol.

Samson's Marriage

14 Samson went down to the city of Timnah. He saw a young Philistine woman there. ¹When he got back home he said to his father and mother, "I saw a Philistine woman in Timnah. I want you to get her for me. I want to marry her."

²His father and his mother answered, "But surely there is a woman from the people of Israel that you can marry. Do you have to marry a woman from the Philistine people? Those people are not even circumcised."^{*}

Lord ... Things Or, "The Lord Who Does Amazing Things." Both of these are names for God, but Manoah didn't know the man was really the Angel of the Lord.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

circumcise(d) Cutting the foreskin from a man. In Israel this was proof that a man had made a special agreement to obey God's laws and teachings.

But Samson said, "Get that woman for me! She is the one I want!" (Samson's parents did not know that the Lord wanted this to happen. The Lord was looking for a way to do something against the Philistine people. The Philistine people were ruling over the people of Israel at that time.)

³Samson went down with his father and mother to the city of Timnah. They went as far as the grape fields near that city. At that place, a young lion suddenly roared and jumped at Samson! ⁴The Spirit of the Lord came on Samson with great power. He tore the lion apart with his bare hands. It seemed easy to him. It was as easy as tearing apart a young goat. But Samson did not tell his father or mother what he had done.

⁵So Samson went down to the city and talked to the Philistine woman. She pleased him. ⁶Several days later, Samson came back to marry the Philistine woman. On his way, he went over to look at the dead lion. He found a swarm of bees in the dead lion's body. They had made some honey. ⁷Samson got some of the honey with his hands. He walked along eating the honey. When he came to his parents, he gave them some of the honey. They ate it too. But Samson did not tell his parents that he had taken the honey from the body of the dead lion.

⁸Samson's father went down to see the Philistine woman. The custom was for the bridegroom to give a party. So Samson gave a party. ⁹When the Philistine people saw that he was having a party, they sent 30 men to be with him.

¹⁰Then Samson said to the 30 men, "I want to tell you a story. This party will last for seven days. Try to find the answer during that time. If you can answer the riddle in that time, I will give you 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes. ¹¹But if you can't find the answer, then you must give me 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes." So the 30 men said, "Tell us your riddle, we want to hear it."

¹²Samson told them this riddle:

Out of the eater came something to eat.

Out of the strong one came something sweet.

The 30 men tried for three days to find the answer, but they couldn't.

¹¹On the fourth day,* the men came to Samson's wife. They said, "Did you invite us here just to make us poor? You must trick your husband into telling us the answer to the riddle. If you don't get the answer for us, we will burn you and all the people in your father's house to death."

¹²So Samson's wife went to him and began crying. She said, "You just hate me! You don't really love me! You told my people a riddle, and you won't tell me the answer."

¹³Samson's wife cried for the rest of the seven days of the party. So he finally gave her the answer to the riddle on the seventh day. He told her because she kept bothering him. Then she went to her people and told them the answer to the riddle.

¹⁴So before the sun went down on the seventh day of the party, the Philistine men had the answer. They came to Samson and said,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

Then Samson said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my cow,
you would not have solved my riddle!"

¹⁵Samson was very angry. The Spirit of the Lord came on Samson with great power. He went down to the city of Ashkelon. In that city he killed 30 Philistine men. Then he took all of the clothes and property from the dead bodies. He brought those clothes back and gave them to the men that had answered his riddle. Then he went to his father's house. ¹⁶Samson did not take his wife. The best man at the wedding kept her.

Samson Makes Trouble for the Philistine People

15 At the time of the wheat harvest, Samson went to visit his wife. He took a young goat with him as a gift. He said, "I am going to my wife's room."

But her father would not let Samson go in. ²Her father said to Samson, "I thought you hated her. So I let her marry the best man at the wedding. Her younger sister is more beautiful. Take her younger sister."

³But Samson said to him, "Now I have a good reason to hurt you Philistine people. No one will blame me now."

⁴So Samson went out and caught 300 foxes. He took two foxes at a time and tied their tails together to make pairs. Then he tied a torch between the tails of each pair of foxes. ⁵Samson lit the torches that were between the foxes' tails. Then he let the foxes run through the grain fields of the Philistine people. In this way, he burned up the plants growing in their fields and the stacks of grain they had cut. He also burned up their fields of grapes and their olive trees.

⁶The Philistine people asked, "Who did this?"

Someone told them, "Samson, the son-in-law of the man from Timnah, did this. He did this because his father-in-law gave Samson's wife to the best man at his wedding." So the Philistine people burned Samson's wife and her father to death.

⁷Then Samson said to the Philistine people, "You did this bad thing to me. So now I will do bad things to you. Then I will be finished with you!"

⁸Then Samson attacked the Philistine people. He killed many of them. Then he went and stayed in a cave. The cave was in a place named the Rock of Etam.

⁹Then the Philistine people went to the land of Judah. They stopped near a place named Lehi. Their army camped there and prepared for war. ¹⁰The men of the family group of Judah asked them, "Why have you Philistine people come here to fight us?"

fourth day This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has, "seventh day."

They answered, "We have come to get Samson. We want to make him our prisoner. We want to punish him for the things he did to our people."

"Then 3000 men from the family group of Judah went to Samson. They went to the cave near the Rock of Etam. They said to him, "What have you done to us? Don't you know that the Philistine people rule over us?"

Samson answered, "I only punished them for the things they did to me."

"Then they said to Samson, "We have come to tie you up. We will give you to the Philistine people."

Samson said to the men from Judah, "Promise me that you yourselves will not hurt me."

"The men from Judah said, "We agree. We will just tie you up and give you to the Philistine people. We promise that we will not kill you." So they tied Samson with two new ropes. They led him up from the cave in the rock.

"When Samson came to the place called Lehi, the Philistine people came to meet him. They were shouting from joy. Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Samson with great power. Samson broke the ropes. The ropes seemed weak like burnt strings. The ropes fell off his arms as if they had melted. Samson found a jawbone of a donkey that had died. He took the jawbone and killed 1,000 Philistine men with it.

"Then Samson said,

With a donkey's jawbone

I killed 1,000 men!

With a donkey's jawbone

I piled* them into a tall pile.

"When Samson finished speaking, he threw the jawbone down. So that place was named Ramath Lehi.*

"Samson was very thirsty. So he cried out to the Lord. He said, "I am your servant. You gave me this great victory. Please don't let me die from thirst now? Please don't let me be

captured by men that are not even circumcised?"

"There is a hole in the ground at Lehi. God made that hole crack open, and water came out. Samson drank that water and felt better. He felt strong again. So he named that water spring En Hakkore.* It is still there in the city of Lehi today.

"So Samson was a judge for the people of Israel for 20 years. That was during the time of the Philistine people.

Samson Goes to the City of Gaza

16 One day Samson went to the city of Gaza. He saw a prostitute there. He went in to stay the night with her. Someone told the people of Gaza, "Samson has come here." They wanted to kill him. So they surrounded that place. They hid and waited for Samson. They stayed near the city gate all night. They were very quiet all that night. They said to each another, "When morning comes, we will kill Samson."

"But Samson only stayed with the prostitute until midnight. Samson got up at midnight. Samson grabbed the doors of the city gate. Samson pulled the doors loose from the wall. Samson took the doors, the two posts, and the bars that lock the door shut. Samson put those things on his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill near the city of Hebron.

Samson and Delilah

"Later, Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. She was from Sorek Valley.

"The rulers of the Philistine people went to Delilah. They said, "We want to know what makes Samson so strong. Try to trick him into telling you his secret. Then we will know how to capture him and tie him up. Then we will be able to control him. If you do this, each one of us will give you 28 pounds* of silver."

"So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me why you are so strong. How could someone tie you up and make you helpless?"

piled In Hebrew, the word "pile" is like the word, "donkey."
Ramath Lehi This name means "Jawbone Heights."

En Hakkore This means "The spring of the one that calls."
28 pounds Literally, "1,100 shekels."

⁷Samson answered, "Someone would have to tie me up with seven new bowstrings that have not been dried yet. If someone did that, I would be weak like any other man."

⁸Then the rulers of the Philistine people brought seven new bowstrings to Delilah. Those bowstrings had not been dried. Delilah tied up Samson with the bowstrings. ⁹Some men were hiding in the next room. Delilah said to Samson, "Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!" But Samson easily broke the bowstrings. They broke like ashes from a piece of string burned in a lamp. So the Philistine people did not find out the secret of Samson's strength.

¹⁰Then Delilah said to Samson, "You lied to me! You made me look foolish. Please tell me the truth, how could someone tie you up?"

¹¹Samson said, "Someone would have to tie me up with new ropes. They would have to tie me with ropes that have not been used before. If someone did that, I would become as weak as any other man."

¹²So Delilah took some new ropes and tied up Samson. Some men were hiding in the next room. Then Delilah called out to him, "Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!" But he broke the ropes easily. He broke them like they were threads.

¹³Then Delilah said to Samson, "You lied to me again! You made me look foolish. Now, tell me how someone could tie you up."

Samson said, "If you use the loom* to weave the seven braids* of hair on my head and tighten it with a pin, I will become as weak as any other man."

Later, Samson went to sleep. So Delilah used the loom to weave the seven braids of hair on his head.* ¹⁴Then Delilah fastened the loom to the ground, with a tent peg. Again she called out to him, "Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!" Samson pulled up the tent peg, the loom,* and the shuttle!*

loom A machine for making cloth from thread.

braids Hair that has been twisted together like a rope.

So Delilah ... head This is found in the ancient Greek translation. It is not in the Hebrew text.

shuttle The tool used to pull the threads back and forth on a loom to make cloth.

¹⁵Then Delilah said to Samson, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you don't even trust me? You refuse to tell me your secret. This is the third time you made me look foolish. You haven't told me the secret of your great strength." ¹⁶She kept bothering Samson day after day. He got so tired of her asking him about his secret that he felt like he was going to die. ¹⁷Finally, Samson told Delilah everything. He said, "I have never had my hair cut. I was dedicated to God before I was born. If someone shaved my head, then I would lose my strength. I would become as weak as any other man."

¹⁸Delilah saw that Samson had told her his secret. She sent a message to the rulers of the Philistine people. She said, "Come back again. Samson has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistine people came back to Delilah. They brought the money that they had promised to give her.

¹⁹Delilah got Samson to go to sleep while he was lying in her lap. Then she called in a man to shave off the seven braids* of Samson's hair. In this way she made Samson weak. Samson's strength left him. ²⁰Then Delilah called out to him, "Samson, the Philistine men are going to capture you!" He woke up and thought, "I will escape like I did before and free myself." But Samson did not know that the Lord had left him.

²¹The Philistine men captured Samson. They tore out his eyes, and took him down to the city of Gaza. Then they put chains on him to keep him from running away. They put Samson in prison and made him work grinding grain. ²²But Samson's hair began to grow again.

²³The rulers of the Philistine people came together to celebrate. They were going to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon.* They said, "Our god helped us defeat Samson our enemy." ²⁴When the Philistine people saw Samson, they praised their god. They said,

"This man destroyed our people!"

Dagon The Canaanite people worshiped this false god hoping he would give them a good harvest of grain. This was probably the most important god for the Philistine people.

This man killed many of our people!
But our god helped us take our
enemy!"

"The people were having a good time at the celebration. So they said, "Bring Samson out. We want him to make fun of him." So they brought Samson from the prison and made fun of him. They made Samson stand between the columns in the temple of the god Dagon. "A servant was holding Samson's hand. Samson said to him, "Put me where I can feel the columns that hold this temple up. I want to lean against them."

"The temple was crowded with men and women. All the rulers of the Philistine people were there. There were about 3,000 men and women on the roof* of the temple. They were laughing and making fun of Samson. "Then Samson said a prayer to the Lord. He said, "Lord All-Powerful, remember me. God, please give me strength one more time. Let me do this one thing to punish these Philistines for tearing out my two eyes!" "Then Samson held the two columns in the center of the temple. These two columns supported the whole temple. He braced himself between the two columns. One column was at his right side and the other at his left side. "Samson said, "Let me die with these Philistines!" Then he pushed as hard as he could. And the temple fell on the rulers and all the people in it. In this way, Samson killed many more Philistine people when he died than when he was alive.

"Samson's brothers and all the people in his father's family went down to get his body. They brought him back and buried him in his father's tomb. That tomb is between the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. Samson was a judge for the people of Israel for 20 years.

Micah's Idols

17 There was a man named Micah that lived in the hill country of Ephraim. "Micah said to his mother, "Do you remember

that someone stole 28 pounds* of silver from you. I heard you say a curse about that. Well, I have the silver. I took it."

His mother said, "The Lord bless you, my son."

"Micah gave the 28 pounds* of silver back to his mother. Then she said, "I will give this silver as a special gift to the Lord. I will give it to my son so he can make a statue and cover it with the silver. So now, son, I give the silver back to you."

"But Micah gave the silver back to his mother. So she took about 5 pounds* of the silver and gave them to a silversmith.* The silversmith used the silver to make a statue covered with silver. The statue was put in Micah's house. "Micah had a temple for worshiping idols. He made an ephod* and some house idols. Then Micah chose one of his sons to be his priest. ("At that time, the people of Israel did not have a king. So each person did what he himself thought was right.)

"There was a young man that was a Levite.* He was from the city of Bethlehem, Judah. He had been living among the family group of Judah. "That young man left Bethlehem, Judah. He was looking for another place to live. As he was traveling, he came to Micah's house. Micah's house was in the hill country of the land of Ephraim. "Micah asked him, "Where have you come from?"

The young man answered, "I am a Levite* from the city of Bethlehem, Judah. I am looking for a place to live."

"Then Micah said to him, "Live with me. Be my father and my priest. I will give you 4 ounces* of silver each year. I will also give you clothes and food."

28 pounds Literally, "1,100 shekels."

5 pounds Literally, "200 shekels."

silversmith A person that makes things from silver.

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

Levite A person from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

4 ounces Literally, "10 shekels."

roof In ancient Israel, a roof was often flat and used like another room.

The Levite* did what Micah asked. "The young Levite agreed to live with Micah. The young man became like one of Micah's own sons. "Micah chose him to be his priest. So the young man became a priest and lived in Micah's house. "And Micah said, "Now I know that the Lord will be good to me. I know this because I have a man from the family group of Levi to be my priest."

The Family Group of Dan Captures the City of Laish

18 At that time, the people of Israel did not have a king. And at that time, the family group of Dan was still looking for a place to live. They did not have their own land yet. The other family groups of Israel already had their land. But the family group of Dan had not taken their land yet.

"So the family group of Dan sent five soldiers to look for some land. They went to search for a good place to live. Those five men were from the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. They were chosen because they were from all the families of Dan. They were told, "Go, look for some land."

The five men came to the hill country of Ephraim. They came to Micah's house and spent the night there. "When the five men came close to Micah's house, they heard the voice of the young Levite man. They recognized his voice, so they stopped at Micah's house. They asked the young man, "Who brought you to this place? What are you doing here? What is your business here?"

"The young man told them about the things Micah had done for him. "Micah hired me," the young man said. "I am his priest."

"So they said to him, "Please ask God something for us. We want to know something: Will our search for a place to live be successful?"

"The priest said to the five men, "Yes. Go in peace. The Lord will lead you on your way."

"So the five men left. They came to the city of Laish. They saw that the people of that city lived in safety. They were ruled by the people of Sidon. Everything was peaceful and quiet. The people had plenty of everything. And they didn't have any enemies nearby to hurt them. Also, they lived a long way from the city of Sidon and they did not have any agreements with the people of Aram.*

"The five men went back to the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. Their relatives asked them, "What did you learn?"

"The five men answered, "We have found some land, and it is very good. We should attack them. Don't wait! Let's go and take that land! "When you come to that place, you will see that there is plenty of land. There is plenty of everything there. You will also see that the people are not expecting an attack. Surely God has given that land to us."

"So 600 men from the family group of Dan left the cities of Zorah and Eshtaol. They were ready for war. "On their way to the city of Laish, they stopped near the city of Kiriath-Jearim in the land of Judah. They set up a camp there. That is why the place west of Kiriath-Jearim is named Mahaneh-Dan* to this very day. "From that place, the 600 men traveled on to the hill country of Ephraim. Then they came to Micah's house.

"So the five men that had explored the land around Laish spoke. They said to their relatives, "There is an ephod* in one of these houses. And there are also household gods, a carved statue, and a silver idol. You know what to do—go get them." "So they stopped at Micah's house, where the young Levite man lived. They asked the young man how he was. "The 600 men from the family group of Dan stood at the entrance of the gate. They all had their weapons and were ready for war. "The five spies went into the house. The priest stood

they did not have ... Aram Or, "they did not have any dealings with people."

Mahaneh-Dan This name means "The Camp of Dan."

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

Levite A person from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

just outside by the gate with the 600 men that were ready for war. The men took the carved idol, the ephod,* the house idols, and the silver idol. The young Levite priest said, "What are you doing?"

¹⁹The five men answered, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us. Be our father and our priest. You must choose. Is it better for you to be a priest for just one man? Or is it better for you to be a priest for a whole family group of Israelite people?"

²⁰This made the Levite man happy. So he took the ephod*, the house idols, and the idol. He went with those men from the family group of Dan.

²¹Then the 600 men from the family group of Dan, with the Levite priest, turned and left Micah's house. They put their little children, their animals, and all their things in front of them.

²²The men from the family group of Dan went a long way from that place. But the people living near Micah met together. Then they began chasing the men of Dan and caught up with them. ²³The men with Micah were shouting at the men of Dan. The men of Dan turned around. They said to Micah, "What's the problem? Why are you shouting?"

²⁴Micah answered, "You men from Dan took my idols. I made those idols for myself. You have also taken my priest. What do I have left now? How can you ask me, 'What's the problem?'"

²⁵The men from the family group of Dan answered, "You had better not argue with us. Some of our men have hot tempers. If you shout at us, those men might attack you. You and your families might get killed."

²⁶Then the men of Dan turned around and went on their way. Micah knew that those men were too strong for him. So he went back home.

²⁷So the men of Dan took the idols that Micah made. They also took the priest that had been with Micah. Then they came to Laish.

They attacked the people living in Laish. Those people were at peace. They were not expecting an attack. The men of Dan killed those people with their swords. Then they burned the city.

²⁸The people that lived in Laish did not have anyone to rescue them. They lived too far from the city of Sidon for those people to help. And the people of Laish did not have any agreements with the people of Aram—so those people did not help them. The city of Laish was in a valley which belonged to the town of Beth Rehob. The people from Dan built a new city in that place. And that city became their home.

²⁹The people of Dan gave that city a new name. In the past, that city was named Laish. But they named the city, Dan. They named the city after their ancestor* Dan. Dan was one of the sons of Israel.

³⁰The people of the family group of Dan set up the idols in the city of Dan. They made Jonathan son of Gershom their priest. Gershom was the son of Moses.* Jonathan and his sons were priests for the family group of Dan until the time when the Israelite people were taken as prisoners to Babylon. ³¹The people of Dan worshiped the idols that Micah had made. They worshiped those idols the whole time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

A Levite Man and His Woman Servant

19 At that time, the people of Israel did not have a king.

There was a Levite* man that lived far back in the hill country of Ephraim. That man had a woman as a servant that was like a wife to him. That woman servant* was from the city of Bethlehem in the country of Judah. ²But his woman servant had an argument with the Levite man. She left him and went back to her father's house in Bethlehem, Judah. She stayed

ancestor Literally, "father." This means a person that people are descended from.

Moses Or, "Manasseh."

Levite A person from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

there for four months. ³Then her husband went after her. He wanted to speak kindly to her so that she would come back to him. He took with him his servant and two donkeys. The Levite man came to her father's house. Her father saw the Levite man and came out to greet him. The father was very happy. ⁴The woman's father led the Levite man into his house. The Levite's father-in-law invited him to stay. So the Levite man stayed for three days. He ate, drank, and slept in his father-in-law's house.

⁵On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning. The Levite* man was getting ready to leave. But the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Eat something first. After you eat, then you can go." ⁶So the Levite man and his father-in-law sat down to eat and drink together. After that, the young woman's father said to the Levite man, "Please stay tonight. Relax and enjoy yourself. Wait until this afternoon to leave." So the two men ate together. ⁷The Levite got up to leave, but his father-in-law persuaded him to stay the night again.

⁸Then, on the fifth day, the Levite man got up early in the morning. He was ready to leave. But the woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Eat something first. Relax and stay until this afternoon." So they both ate together again.

⁹Then the Levite man, his woman servant,* and his servant got up to leave. But the young woman's father said, "It is almost dark. The day is almost gone. So stay the night here and enjoy yourself. Tomorrow morning you can get up early and go on your way."

¹⁰But the Levite man did not want to stay another night. He took his two donkeys and his woman servant.* He traveled as far as the city of Jebus. (Jebus is another name for Jerusalem). ¹¹The day was almost over. They were near the city of Jebus. So the servant said to his master, the Levite* man, "Let's stop at this Jebusite city. Let's stay the night here."

¹²But his master, the Levite man, said, "No. We won't go inside a strange city. Those people are not Israelite people. We will go to the city of Gibeah."¹³ ¹⁴The Levite man said, "Come on. Let's try to make it to Gibeah or Ramah. We can stay the night in one of those cities."

¹⁵So the Levite* man and the people with him traveled on. The sun was going down just as they entered the city of Gibeah. Gibeah is in the area that belongs to the family group of Benjamin. ¹⁶So they stopped at Gibeah. They planned to stay the night in that city. They came to the city square* in the city and sat down there. But no one invited them home to stay the night.

¹⁷That evening an old man came into the city from the fields. His home was in the hill country of Ephraim. But now he was living in the city of Gibeah. (The men of Gibeah were from the family group of Benjamin.) ¹⁸The old man saw the traveler, (the Levite man) in the public square. The old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"

¹⁹The Levite* man answered, "We are traveling from the city Bethlehem, Judah. We are going home. I am from far back in the hill country of Ephraim. I have been to Bethlehem, Judah. And now, I am going to my house." ²⁰We already have straw and food for our donkeys. There is also bread and wine for me, the young woman and my servant. We don't need anything."

²¹The old man said, "You are welcome to stay at my house. I will give you anything you need. Only, don't stay the night in the public square!" ²²Then the old man took the Levite* man and the people with him to his house. He fed their donkeys. They washed their feet. Then they had something to eat and drink.

²³While the Levite* man and those that were with him were enjoying themselves, some of the men from that city surrounded the house.

Levite A person from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

Gibeah Gibeah was a few miles north of Jebus.

square A public place near the city gates. The people of the city had meetings there, and visitors often camped there.

my house This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has, "the Lord's house."

They were very bad men. They began beating on the door. They shouted at the old man that owned the house. They said, "Bring out the man that came to your house. We want to have sex with him."

"The old man went outside and spoke to those bad men. He said, "No, my friends, don't do such bad things! That man is a guest in my house.* Don't do this terrible sin." "Look, here is my daughter. She has never had sex before. I will bring her out to you now. You can use her any way you want. But don't do such a terrible sin against this man."

"But those bad men would not listen to the old man. So the Levite* man took his woman servant* and put her outside with those evil men. Those evil men hurt her and raped her all night long. Then, at dawn, they let her go. "At dawn, the woman came back to the house where her master was staying. She fell down at the front door. She lay there until it was daylight.

"The Levite* man got up early the next morning. He wanted to go home. He opened the door to go outside. And a hand fell across the threshold of the door. There was his woman servant.* She had fallen down against the door. "The Levite man said to her, "Get up, let's go!" But she did not answer—she was dead..

The Levite man put his woman servant* on his donkey and went home. "When he arrived at his house, he took a knife and cut his woman servant* into 12 parts. Then he sent those 12 parts of the woman to all the areas where the people of Israel lived. "Everyone that saw this said, "Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel before. We haven't seen anything like this from the time we came out of Egypt. Discuss this and tell us what to do."

Than man ... my house At this time, it was a custom that if you invited people to be your guests, then you had to protect and care for those people.

Levite A person from the tribe of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

The War Between Israel and Benjamin

20 So all the people of Israel joined together. They all came together to stand before the Lord in the city of Mizpah. People came from everywhere in Israel.* Even the Israelite people from Gilead* were there. "The leaders of all the family groups of Israel were there. They took their places in the public meeting of God's people. There were 400,000 soldiers with swords in that place. "The people from the family group of Benjamin heard that the people of Israel were meeting together in Mizpah. The people of Israel said, "Tell us how this terrible thing happened."

"So the husband of the woman that had been murdered told them the story. He said, "My woman servant* and I came to the city of Gibeah in the area of Benjamin. We spent the night there. "But during the night the leaders of the city of Gibeah came to the house where I was staying. They surrounded the house, and they wanted to kill me. They raped my woman servant,* and she died. "So I took my woman servant* and cut her into pieces. Then I sent one piece to each of the family groups of Israel. I sent the 12 pieces to the lands we have received. I did that because the people of Benjamin have done this terrible thing in Israel. "Now, all you men of Israel, speak up. Give your decision about what we should do."

"Then all the people stood up at the same time. They said together, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will go back to his house. "Now this is what we will do to the city of Gibeah: We will throw lots* to let God show us what to do to those people. "We will choose ten men from every 100 from all the family groups of Israel. And we will choose 100 men from every 1,000. We will choose 1,000 men from every 10,000. Those men we have chosen will get supplies for the army. Then the army will go to the city of Gibeah in the area of Benjamin. The army will punish those people

from everywhere in Israel Literally, "from Dan to Beersheba.

Gilead This area was east of the Jordan River.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

for the terrible thing they did among the people of Israel."

"So all the men of Israel gathered together at the city of Gibeah. They were all agreed to what they were doing. "The family groups of Israel sent men to the family group of Benjamin with a message. The message was: "What about this terrible thing that some of your men have done? "Send those bad men from the city of Gibeah to us. Give us those men so that we can put them to death. We must remove the evil from among the people of Israel."

But the people from the family group of Benjamin would not listen to the messengers from their relatives, the other people of Israel. "The people from the family group of Benjamin left their cities and went to the city of Gibeah. They went to Gibeah to fight against the other family groups of Israel. "The people from the family group of Benjamin got 26,000 soldiers together. All those soldiers were trained for war. They also had 700 trained soldiers from the city of Gibeah. "There were also 700 trained soldiers that were left-handed. Each one of them could use a sling* with great skill. They all could use a sling to throw a stone at a hair and not miss!

"All the family groups of Israel, except Benjamin, gathered together 400,000 fighting men. Those 400,000 men had swords. Each one was a trained soldier. "The people of Israel went up to the city of Bethel. At Bethel they asked God, "Which family group will be first to attack the family group of Benjamin?"

The Lord answered, "The family group of Judah will go first."

"The next morning the people of Israel got up. They made a camp near the city of Gibeah. "Then the army of Israel went out to fight the army of Benjamin. The army of Israel got ready for a battle against the army of Benjamin at the city of Gibeah. "Then the army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah. The army of Benjamin killed 22,000 men in the army of Israel during the battle that day.

²²"The people of Israel went to the Lord. They cried until evening. They asked the Lord, "Should we go to fight the people of Benjamin again? Those people are our relatives."

The Lord answered, "Go fight against them." The men of Israel encouraged each other. Then they again went out to fight, like they did the first day.

²³Then the army of Israel came near the army of Benjamin. This was the second day of the war. "The army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah to attack the army of Israel on the second day. This time, the army of Benjamin killed another 18,000 men from the army of Israel. All of those men in the army of Israel were trained soldiers.

²⁴Then all the people of Israel went up to the city of Bethel. At that place they sat down and cried to the Lord. They did not eat anything all day, until evening. They also offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord. "The men of Israel asked the Lord a question. (In those days God's Box of the Agreement* was there at Bethel. "Phinehas was the priest that served God there. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the son of Aaron.) The people of Israel asked, "The people of Benjamin are our relatives. Should we again go to fight against them? Or should we stop fighting?"

The Lord answered, "Go. Tomorrow I will help you to defeat them."

²⁵Then the army of Israel hid some men all around the city of Gibeah. "The army of Israel went to fight against the city of Gibeah on the third day. They got ready for battle, like they did before. "The army of Benjamin came out of the city of Gibeah to fight the army of Israel. The army of Israel backed up and let the army of Benjamin chase them. In this way, the army of Benjamin was tricked into leaving the city far behind them.

The army of Benjamin began to kill some of the men in the army of Israel, like they did

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

sling A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

before. They killed about 30 men from Israel. They killed some of those men in the fields, and they killed some of those men on the roads. One road led to the city of Bethel. The other road led to the city of Gibeah. ²⁸"The men of Benjamin said, "We are winning like before!"

The men of Israel were running away, but it was a trick. They wanted to lead the men of Benjamin away from their city and onto the roads. ²⁹"So all the men ran away. They stopped at a place named Baal Tamar. Some of the men of Israel were hiding west of Gibeah. They ran from their hiding places, and attacked Gibeah. ³⁰"10,000 of Israel's best trained soldiers attacked the city of Gibeah. The fighting was very heavy. But the army of Benjamin did not know what terrible thing was going to happen to them.

³¹"The Lord used the army of Israel and defeated the army of Benjamin. On that day, the army of Israel killed 25,100 soldiers from Benjamin. All those soldiers had been trained for war. ³²"So the people of Benjamin saw that they were defeated.

The army of Israel had moved back. They moved back because they were depending on the surprise attack. They had men hiding near Gibeah. ³³"The men that were hiding rushed into the city of Gibeah. They spread out and killed everyone in the city with their swords. ³⁴"Now the men of Israel had made a plan with the men that were hiding. The men that were hiding were supposed to send a special signal. The men were supposed to make a big cloud of smoke.

³⁵⁻⁴⁰"The army of Benjamin had killed about 30 Israelite soldiers. So the men of Benjamin were saying, "We are winning, like before." But then a big cloud of smoke began to rise from the city. The men of Benjamin turned around and saw the smoke. The whole city was on fire. Then the army of Israel stopped running away. They turned around and began to fight. The men of Benjamin were afraid. Now they knew what terrible thing had happened to them.

⁴¹"So the army of Benjamin ran away from the army of Israel. They ran toward the desert.

But they could not escape the fighting. And the men of Israel came out of the cities and killed them. ⁴²"The men of Israel surrounded the men of Benjamin and began chasing them. They did not let them rest. They defeated them in the area east of Gibeah. ⁴³"So 18,000 brave and strong fighters from the army of Benjamin were killed.

⁴⁴"The army of Benjamin turned around and ran toward the desert. They ran to a place called the Rock of Rimmon. But the army of Israel killed 5,000 soldiers from Benjamin along the roads. They kept chasing the men of Benjamin. They chased them as far as a place named Gidom. The army of Israel killed 2,000 more men from Benjamin in that place.

⁴⁵"On that day, 25,000 men of the army of Benjamin were killed. All those men fought bravely with their swords. ⁴⁶"But 600 men from Benjamin ran into the desert. They went to the place called the Rock of Rimmon. They stayed in that place for four months. ⁴⁷"The men of Israel went back to the land of Benjamin. They killed the people in every city they came to. They also killed all the animals. They destroyed everything they could find. They burned every city they came to.

Getting Wives for the Men of Benjamin

21 At Mizpah, the men of Israel made a promise. This was their promise: "Not one of us will let his daughter marry a man from the family group of Benjamin."

¹"The people of Israel went to the city of Bethel. There they sat before God until evening. They cried loudly as they sat there. ²"They said to God, "Lord, you are the God of the people of Israel. Why has this terrible thing happened to us? Why has one family group of the people of Israel been taken away?"

³"Early the next day, the people of Israel built an altar.* They put burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to God on that altar. ⁴"Then the people of Israel said, "Are there any family groups of Israel that did not come here to meet

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

with us before the Lord?" They asked this question because they had made a serious promise. They had promised that anyone that did not come together with the other family groups at the city of Mizpah would be killed.

"Then the people of Israel felt sorry for their relatives, the people of Benjamin. They said, "Today, one family group has been separated from Israel. 'We made a promise before the Lord. We promised not to allow our daughters to marry a man from Benjamin. How can we make sure that the men of Benjamin will have wives?"

"Then the people of Israel asked, "Which one of the family groups of Israel did not come here to Mizpah? We have come together before the Lord. Surely one family was not here!" Then they found that no one from the city of Jabesh Gilead had met together with the other people of Israel. "The people of Israel counted everyone to see who was there and who was not. They found that no one from Jabesh Gilead was there. "So the people of Israel sent 12,000 soldiers to the city of Jabesh Gilead. They told those soldiers, "Go to Jabesh Gilead, and use your swords to kill every person that lives there, even the women and children. "You must do this! You must kill every man in Jabesh Gilead. Also kill every woman that has had sexual relations with a man. But do not kill any woman that has never had sex with a man." So the soldiers did those things.* "Those 12,000 soldiers found 400 young women in the city of Jabesh Gilead, that had never had sex with a man. The soldiers brought those women to the camp at Shiloh. Shiloh is in the land of Canaan.

"Then the people of Israel sent a message to the men of Benjamin. They offered to make peace with the men of Benjamin. The men of Benjamin were at the place named the Rock of

Rimmon. "So the men of Benjamin came back to Israel. The people of Israel gave them the women from Jabesh Gilead that they had not killed. But there were not enough women for all the men of Benjamin.

"The people of Israel felt sorry for the men of Benjamin. They felt sorry for them because the Lord had separated them from the other family groups of Israel. "The elders (*leaders*) of the people of Israel said, "The women of the family group of Benjamin have been killed. Where can we get wives for the men of Benjamin that are still alive? "The men of Benjamin that are still alive must have children to continue their families. This must be done so that a family group in Israel will not die out. "But we cannot allow our daughters to marry the men of Benjamin. We have made this promise: 'Anyone that gives a wife to a man of Benjamin is under a curse.' "We have an idea. This is the time for the festival of the Lord at the city of Shiloh. This festival is celebrated every year there." (The city of Shiloh is north of the city of Bethel, and east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem. And it is also to the south of the city of Lebonah.)

"So the elders (*leaders*) told the men of Benjamin about their idea. They said, "Go and hide in the vineyards. "Watch for the time during the festival when the young women from Shiloh come out to join the dancing. They run out from where you are hiding in the vineyards. Each of you should take one of the young women from the city of Shiloh. Take those young women to the land of Benjamin and marry them. "The fathers or brothers of those young women will come and complain to us. But we will say, 'Be kind to the men of Benjamin. Let them marry those women. They took women from you, but they did not make war against you. They took the women, so you didn't break your promise to God. You promised that you would not give them women to marry—you did not give the women to the men of Benjamin, they took the women from you! So you did not break your promise.' "

"So that is what the men of the family group of Benjamin did. While the young

women were dancing, each man caught one of them. They took those young women away and married them. They went back to their land. The men of Benjamin built cities again in that land, and they lived in those cities. ²⁴Then the

people of Israel went home. They went to their own land and family group.

²⁵In those days the people of Israel did not have a king. Everyone did what he thought was right.

Ruth

Famine in Judah

1 Long ago, during the time the judges* ruled, there was a bad time when there was not enough food to eat. A man named Elimelech left Bethlehem, Judah. He, his wife and his two sons moved to the hill country of Moab.* 'The man's wife was named Naomi and his two sons were named Mahlon and Kilion. These people were from the Ephrathah family of Bethlehem, Judah. The family traveled to the hill country of Moab and stayed there.

'Later, Naomi's husband, Elimelech, died. So only Naomi and her two sons were left. 'Her sons married women from the country of Moab. One wife's name was Orpah, and the other wife's name was Ruth. They lived in Moab about ten years, 'and Mahlon and Kilion also died. So Naomi was left alone without her husband or her two sons.

Naomi Goes Home

'While Naomi was in the hill country of Moab, she heard that the Lord had helped his people. He had given food to his people in Judah. So Naomi decided to leave the hill country of Moab and go back home. Her daughters-in-law also decided to go with her. 'They left the place they had been living and started walking back to the land of Judah.

'Then Naomi told her daughters-in-law, "Each of you should go back home to your mother. You have been very kind to me and my dead sons. So I pray the Lord will be just as kind to you. 'I pray that the Lord helps each of you to find a husband and a nice home." Naomi kissed her daughters-in-law. And they all started crying.

"Then the daughters said, "But we want to come with you and go to your family."

"But Naomi said, "No, daughters, go back to your own homes. Why should you go with me? I cannot help you. I don't have any more sons in me to be your husbands. "Go back home! I am too old to have a new husband. Even if I thought I could be married again, I could not help you. If I became pregnant tonight and had two sons, it would not help. "You would have to wait until they grew to become men before you could marry them. I can't make you wait that long for husbands. That would make me very sad! And I am already sad enough—the Lord has done many things to me!"

"So the women cried very much again. Then Orpah kissed Naomi and left. But Ruth hugged her and stayed.

"Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her own people and her own gods. So you should do the same thing."

"But Ruth said, "Don't force me to leave you! Don't force me to go back to my own people. Let me go with you. Every place you go, I will go. Every place you sleep, I will sleep. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God. "And where you die, I

judges Special leaders that God sent to help and protect the people of Israel. This was before there were kings in Israel.

Moab A country east of Israel.

will die. And that is where I will be buried. I ask the Lord to punish me if I do not keep this promise: Only death will separate us.**

The Homecoming

¹Naomi saw that Ruth wanted very much to go with her. So Naomi stopped arguing with her. ²Naomi and Ruth traveled until they came to the town of Bethlehem. When the two women entered Bethlehem, all the people were very excited. They said, "Is this Naomi?"

³But Naomi told the people, "Don't call me Naomi,* call me Marah.* Use this name because God, All-Powerful has made my life very sad. ⁴I had everything I wanted when I left. But now, the Lord brings me home with nothing. The Lord has made me sad, so why should you call me 'Happy'?* God, All-Powerful has given much trouble to me."

⁵So Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth (the woman from Moab) came back from the hill country of Moab. These two women came to Bethlehem, Judah at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Ruth Meets Boaz

2 There was a strong and powerful man living in Bethlehem. His name was Boaz. Boaz was one of Naomi's close relatives* from Elimelech's family.

¹One day Ruth (the woman from Moab) said to Naomi, "I think I will go to the fields. Maybe I can find someone that would be kind to me and let me gather the grain he leaves in his field."

²Naomi said, "O.K., daughter, go ahead."

I ask the Lord ... separate us Literally, "May the Lord do this to me, and even more, unless death separates us!"

Naomi This name means "Happy" or "Pleasant."

Marah This name means "Bitter" or "Sad."

Happy This is the name Naomi.

close relatives In ancient Israel, if a man died without children, one of his close relatives would take the dead man's wife so she could have children. The close relative would care for this family, but this family, and their property would not belong to him. Everything would still be in the dead man's name.

So Ruth went to the fields. She followed the workers that were cutting the grain, and she gathered the grain that was left.* It happened that part of the field belonged to Boaz, the man from Elimelech's family.

⁴Later, Boaz came to the field from Bethlehem. Boaz greeted his workers. He said, "The Lord be with you!"

And the workers answered, "And may the Lord bless you!"

⁵Then Boaz spoke to his servant that was in charge of the workers. He asked, "Whose girl is that?"

⁶The servant answered, "She is that Moabite woman that came with Naomi from the hill country of Moab. ⁷She came early this morning and asked me if she could follow the workers and gather the grain that was left on the ground. And she has been working ever since. That is her house over there."*

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, child. Stay here in my field to gather grain for yourself. There is no need for you to go to any other person's field. Continue following behind my women workers. ⁹Watch to see which fields they go to, and follow them. I have warned the young men not to bother you. When you are thirsty, go and drink from the same water jug my men drink from."

¹⁰Then Ruth bowed very low to the ground. She said to Boaz, "I am surprised you even noticed me! I am a stranger, but you have been very kind to me."

¹¹Boaz answered her, "I know about all the help you have given to Naomi, your mother-in-law. I know you helped her even after your husband died. And I know that you left your father and mother and your own country and came here to this country. You did not know any people from this country, but you came here with Naomi. ¹²The Lord will reward

gathered the grain that was left There was a law that a farmer must leave some grain in his field during harvest. This grain was left so the poor people could find something to eat. See Leviticus 19:9; 23:22.

That is her house over there Literally, "She only took a short rest in the shelter," or "She only rested a short time in that shelter."

you for all the good things you have done. You will be paid in full by the Lord, the God of Israel. You have come to him for safety,* and he will protect you.”

¹¹Then Ruth said, “You are very kind to me, sir. I am only a servant. I am not even equal to one of your servants. But you have said kind words to me and comforted me.”

¹⁴At lunch time, Boaz told Ruth, “Come here! Eat some of our bread. Here, dip your bread in our vinegar.”

So Ruth sat down with the workers. Boaz gave her some roasted grain. Ruth ate until she was full, and there was some food left. ¹⁵Then Ruth got up and went back to work.

Then Boaz told his servants, “Let Ruth gather even around the piles of grain. Don’t stop her. ¹⁶And make her work easier by dropping some full heads of grain for her. Let her gather that grain. Don’t tell her to stop.”

Naomi Hears About Boaz

¹⁷Ruth worked in the fields until evening. Then she separated the grain from the chaff.* There was about 1/2 bushel* of barley. ¹⁸Ruth carried the grain into town to show her mother-in-law what she had gathered. She also gave her the food that was left from lunch.

¹⁹Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you gather all this grain? Where did you work? Bless the man that noticed you.”

Then Ruth told her who she had worked with. She said, “The man I worked with today is a man named Boaz.”

Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “Lord bless him! The Lord continues to be kind to all people; the living and the dead.” ²⁰Then Naomi told her daughter-in-law, “Boaz is one of our relatives. Boaz is one of our protectors.”**

You have come to him for safety Literally, “You have come under his wings for safety.”

chaff Parts of grain a farmer throws away. Farmers cracked the hulls from seeds and let the wind blow these hulls (chaff) away.

^{1/2 bushel} Literally, “One Ephah.”

protectors Or, “Redeemers.” A person that cared for and protected the family of a dead relative. Often this person bought back (redeemed) the poor relatives from slavery, making them free again.

²¹Then Ruth said, “Boaz also told me to come back and continue working. Boaz said: that I should work closely with his servants, until the harvest is finished.”

²²Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Ruth, “It is good for you to continue working with his women servants. If you work in another field, some man might hurt you.” ²³So Ruth continued working closely with the women servants of Boaz. She gathered grain until the barley harvest was finished. She also worked there through the end of the wheat harvest. Ruth continued living with Naomi, her mother-in-law.

The Threshing Floor

3 Then Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law, said to her, “My daughter, maybe I should find a husband and, a nice home for you. That would be good for you. ²Maybe Boaz is the right man., Boaz is our close relative.* You worked with his women servants. Tonight he will be working at the threshing floor.* ³Go wash and get dressed. Put on a nice dress, and go down to the threshing floor. But don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating supper. ⁴After he eats, he will lie down to rest. Watch him so that you will know where he lies down. Go there and lift the cover off his feet.* Then lie down there with Boaz. He will tell you what you should do about marriage.”

⁵Then Ruth answered, “I will do the thing you say.”

⁶So Ruth went down to the threshing floor.*⁷ Ruth did everything that her mother-in-law told her to do. ⁸After eating and drinking, Boaz was very satisfied. Boaz went to lie down near the pile of grain. Then Ruth went to him very quietly and lifted the cover from his feet. Ruth lay down by his feet.

close relative This is a close relative that could marry Ruth, so she could have children. This man would care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth’s dead husband.

threshing floor The place where workers beat grain to separate the seeds of grain from the chaff.

lift the cover off his feet Literally, “uncover his legs.” This showed Ruth was asking the man to be her Protector or Redeemer.

¹About midnight, Boaz rolled over in his sleep and woke up. He was very surprised. There was a woman lying near his feet. Boaz said, "Who are you?"

She said, "I am Ruth, your servant girl. Spread your cover over me.* You are my protector.*

²Then Boaz said, "May the Lord bless you, young woman. You have been very kind to me. Your kindness to me is greater than the kindness you showed to Naomi in the beginning. You could have looked for a young man to marry, rich or poor. But you did not.

³Now, young woman, don't be afraid. I will do the things you ask. All the people in our town know that you are a very good woman. ⁴And it is true, I am a close relative.* But there is a man that is a closer relative to you than I. ⁵Stay here tonight. In the morning we will see if he will help* you. If he decides to help you, then that is fine. If he refuses to help, then I promise, as the Lord lives, I will marry you and buy back Elimelech's land for you.* So lie here until morning."

⁶So Ruth lay near Boaz's feet until morning. She got up while it was still dark.

Boaz said to her, "We will keep it a secret that you came here to me last night." ⁷Then Boaz said, "Bring me your coat. Now, hold it open."

So Ruth held her coat open, and Boaz measured about a bushel of barley* as a gift to Naomi, her mother-in-law. Boaz then wrapped it in Ruth's coat, and put it on her back. Then he went to the city.

Spread ... me Or, "Spread your wing over me." This showed Ruth was asking for help and protection. See Ruth 2:12.

protector, close relative This is a close relative that could marry Ruth, so she could have children. This man would care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth's dead husband.

help Or, "redeem." This meant the close relative would care for and protect the dead man's family and property, but that property would not be his.

I will marry ... land for you Literally, "I will redeem you."

bushel of barley Literally, "six measures of barley."

⁸Ruth went to the home of her mother-in-law, Naomi. Naomi went to the door and asked, "Who's there?"

Ruth went in the house, telling Naomi everything that Boaz did for her. ⁹She said, "Boaz gave me this barley as a gift for you. Boaz said that I must not go home without bringing a gift for you."

¹⁰Naomi said, "Daughter, be patient until we hear what happens. Boaz will not rest until he has finished doing what he should do. We will know what will happen before the day is ended."

Boaz and the Other Relative

4 Boaz went to the place where people gather near the city gates. Boaz sat there until the close relative* Boaz had mentioned passed by. Boaz called to him, "Come here, friend! Sit here!"

¹Then Boaz gathered some witnesses. Boaz gathered ten of the elders* of the city. He told them, "Sit here!" So they sat down.

²Then Boaz spoke to the close relative.* He said, "Naomi came back from the hill country of Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ³I decided to tell you about this in front of the people living here and in front of the elders* of my people. If you want to buy back the land, then buy it! If you don't want to redeem the land, then tell me. I know that I am the next person after you that can redeem the land. If you don't buy the land back, then I will."

⁴Then Boaz said, "If you buy the land from Naomi, you also get the dead man's wife, Ruth the Moabite woman. ⁵When Ruth has a child, the child will get the land. That way, the land will stay in the dead man's family."

⁶The close relative* answered, "I cannot buy back the land. That land should belong to me. But I cannot buy it. If I do, I might lose my own land. So you can buy the land." ⁷(Long

elders Older men who were city leaders; they helped make decisions for the people.

ago in Israel, when people bought or redeemed property, one person took off his shoe and gave it to the other person. This was their proof of purchase.) ⁹So the close relative* said, "Buy the land." And then the close relative took off his shoe, and gave it to Boaz.

¹⁰Then Boaz said to the elders* and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon. ¹¹I am also buying Ruth to be my wife. I am doing this so the dead man's property will stay with his family. This way, the dead man's name will not be separated from his family and his land. You are witnesses this day."

¹²So all the people and elders* that were near the city gates were witnesses. They said,

This woman will be coming into your home.

May the Lord make her like Rachel and Leah.

Rachel and Leah built the house of Israel.*

We pray you will become powerful in Ephrathah!*

May you become famous in Bethlehem!

¹³ Tamar gave birth to Judah's son Perez.* And his family became great.

In the same way, may the Lord give you many children through Ruth.

And may your family be great like his.

¹⁴So Boaz married Ruth. The Lord allowed Ruth to become pregnant, and she had a son. ¹⁵The women of the town told Naomi,

Bless the Lord who gave you this protector.*

And may he become famous in Israel.

¹⁶ May he give you strength and care for you in your old age.

This happened because of your daughter-in-law.

She loves you.

And she is better for you than seven sons."

¹⁷Naomi took the boy, held him in her arms, and cared for him. ¹⁸The neighbors gave the boy his name. These women said, "This boy was born for Naomi." The neighbors named him Obed. Obed was Jesse's father. And Jesse was the father of King David.

Ruth and Boaz's Family

¹⁹This is the family history of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron.

²⁰ Hezron was the father of Ram.

Ram was the father of Amminadab.

²¹ Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.

Nahshon was the father of Salmon.

²² Salmon was the father of Boaz.

Boaz was the father of Obed.

Obed was the father of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of David.

close relative, protector This is a close relative that could marry Ruth, so she could have children. This man would care for this family, but this family and their property would not belong to him. They would belong to Ruth's dead husband.

elders Older men who were city leaders; they helped make decisions for the people.

built ... Israel The Hebrew word "built" is like the word meaning "gave birth to sons."

Ephrathah Another name for Bethlehem.

Perez One of Boaz's ancestors.

1 Samuel

Elkanah and His Family Worship at Shiloh

1 There was a man named Elkanah. He was from Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. Elkanah was from the Zuph family. Elkanah was the son of Jeroham.* Jeroham was Elihu's son. Elihu was Tohu's son. And Tohu was the son of Zuph, from the family group of Ephraim.

¹Elkanah had two wives. One was named Hannah. The other was named Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

²Every year Elkanah left his town Ramah and went up to Shiloh. Elkanah worshiped the Lord All-Powerful at Shiloh and offered sacrifices* to the Lord there. Shiloh was where Hophni and Phinehas served as priests of the Lord. Hophni and Phinehas were the sons of Eli. ³Every time Elkanah offered his sacrifices, he always gave one share of the meat to his wife Peninnah. Elkanah also gave shares of the meat to Peninnah's children. ⁴Elkanah always gave an equal share* of the meat to Hannah. Elkanah did this even though the Lord did not let Hannah have any children. Elkanah did this because Hannah was the wife he really loved.

Peninnah Upsets Hannah

⁵Peninnah always made Hannah feel bad and upset. Peninnah did this because Hannah

was not able to have children. ⁶This happened every year. Every time their family went to the Lord's house at Shiloh, Peninnah made Hannah upset. One day Elkanah was giving sacrifices.* Hannah became upset and began to cry. Hannah would not eat anything. ⁷Her husband, Elkanah, said to her, "Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why are you sad? You have me—I am your husband. You should think I am better than ten sons."

Hannah's Prayer

⁸After eating and drinking, Hannah got up quietly and went to pray to the Lord. Eli the priest was sitting on a chair near the door of the Lord's holy Building.* ⁹Hannah was very sad. She cried very much. She prayed to the Lord. ¹⁰She made a special promise to God. She said, "Lord All-Powerful, see how very sad I am. Remember me! Don't forget me. If you will give me a son, then I will give him to you all his life. This son will be a Nazirite. He will not drink wine or strong drink.* ¹¹And no one will ever cut his hair with a razor.*"

¹²While Hannah kept praying, Eli saw her mouth. ¹³Hannah was praying in her heart. Her lips moved, but she did not use her voice. Eli

holy Building This could mean the Holy Tent at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord or a larger building where they put the Holy Tent.

This ... drink This is in the ancient Greek translation and one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran, but not in the standard Hebrew text.

And ... razor People who made special promises not to cut their hair and not to drink wine were called Nazirites. See Numbers 6:5. These people gave their lives to the Lord.

Jeroham Or, "Jerahmeel."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

equal share Or, "double share."

thought Hannah was drunk. ¹⁴Eli said to Hannah, "You have had too much to drink! It is time to put away the wine!"

¹⁵Hannah answered, "Sir, I have not drunk any wine or beer. I am deeply troubled. I was telling the Lord about all my problems. ¹⁶Don't think I am a bad woman. I have been praying so long because I have so many troubles and I am very sad."

¹⁷Eli answered, "Go in peace. May the God of Israel give you the things you asked."

¹⁸Hannah said, "I hope you are happy with me." Then Hannah left and ate something. She was not sad any more.

¹⁹Early the next morning Elkanah's family got up. They worshiped the Lord and then went back home to Ramah.

Samuel's Birth

Elkanah had sexual relations with his wife Hannah. The Lord remembered Hannah. ²⁰Hannah became pregnant and had a son. Hannah named her son Samuel.* She said, "His name is Samuel because I asked the Lord for him."

²¹That year Elkanah went to Shiloh, to offer sacrifices and to keep the promises he made to God. He took his family with him. ²²But Hannah did not go. She told Elkanah, "When the boy is old enough to eat solid food, I will take him to Shiloh. Then I will give him to the Lord. He will become a Nazirite.** He will stay there at Shiloh."

²³Hannah's husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what you think is best. You may stay home until the boy is old enough to eat solid food. May the Lord do what you have said." So Hannah stayed at home to nurse her son until

he was old enough to eat solid food.

Hannah Takes Samuel to Eli at Shiloh

²⁴When the boy was old enough to eat solid food, Hannah took him to the Lord's house at Shiloh. Hannah also took a bull that was three years old, 20 pounds* of flour, and a bottle of wine.

²⁵They went before the Lord. Elkanah killed the bull as a sacrifice to the Lord like he usually did.* Then Hannah brought the boy to Eli. ²⁶Hannah said to Eli, "Pardon me, sir, I am the same woman that stood near you praying to the Lord. I promise that I am telling the truth."

²⁷I prayed for this child. And the Lord answered my prayer. The Lord gave me this child. ²⁸And now I give this child to the Lord. He will belong to the Lord all his life."

Then Hannah left the boy there* and worshiped the Lord.

Hannah Gives Thanks

2 Hannah said:
 "My heart is happy in the Lord!
 I feel very strong* in my God!
 I defeated all my enemies.*
 I am very happy in my victory!"

- ² "There is no Holy God like the Lord.
 There is no God but you!
 There is no Rock* like our God.
- ³ Don't continue bragging!

20 pounds Literally, "an Ephah."

They went ... he usually did This is from the ancient Greek translation and one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran. It is not in the standard Hebrew text.

left the boy there This is from one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran. It is not in the standard Hebrew text.

strong Literally, "In the Lord my horn is lifted high." The horn is a symbol of strength.

I defeated all my enemies Literally, "My mouth is wide open over my enemies."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Samuel This name means "His name is El (God)." But in Hebrew, if you take away one letter, it is like the word "ask" or the name "Saul." There are many places in 1 Samuel where there are word plays with the names Saul and Samuel and the word "ask."

Nazirite A person that has made a special promise to God. This name is from the Hebrew word meaning "to separate from."

He will become a Nazirite This is not in the standard Hebrew text, but it is in the ancient Greek translation and in one of the Hebrew scrolls from Qumran.

Don't speak proud words!
Why? Because the Lord God knows
everything,

God leads and judges people.

- ⁴ The bows of strong soldiers break!
And weak people become strong!

- ⁵ People who had plenty of food in the
past,
must now work to get food.

But people who were hungry in the past,
now grow fat on food!

The woman who was not able to have
children

now has seven children!

But the woman who had many children is
sad

because her children are gone.

- ⁶ The Lord causes people to die,
and he causes them to live.

The Lord brings people down to Sheol,
(the place of death),
and he raises them to life again.

- ⁷ The Lord makes people poor,
and he makes people rich.

The Lord makes people humble,
and he makes people great.

- ⁸ The Lord raises poor people from the
dust.

The Lord picks the poor people from the
ashes.

The Lord lets the poor people sit with
princes.

The Lord lets the poor people sit on a
throne of honor.

The whole world,
even to its foundations,
belongs to the Lord.

The Lord set the world on those pillars.

- ⁹ The Lord protects his holy people.
He keeps them from stumbling.
But bad people will be destroyed.
They will fall in the darkness.

Their power will not help them win.

- ¹⁰ The Lord destroys his enemies.
God Most-High will thunder in heaven
against people.

The Lord will judge all the earth.

The Lord will give power to his king.
He will make his special king strong."

"Elkanah and his family went home to
Ramah. The boy stayed in Shiloh and served
the Lord under Eli the priest.

Eli's Evil Sons

"Eli's sons were bad men. They did not care
about the Lord. "They did not care about how
priests were supposed to treat people. This is
what priests should do for people: Every time a
person brings a sacrifice, the priests should boil
the meat in a pot. The priest's servant should
come with a special fork in his hand. The fork
has three points. "The priest's servant should
put the fork into the pot or the kettle. Whatever
the fork takes out of the pot—that meat should
belong to the priest. That is what the priests
should have done for all the Israelites that came
to offer sacrifices, at Shiloh.

"But Eli's sons did not do that. Even
before the fat was burned on the altar, their
servants would go to the people offering
sacrifices. The priest's servant would say,
"Give the priest some meat to roast. The priest
won't accept boiled meat from you."

"Maybe the man offering the sacrifice
would say, "Burn the fat* first, and then you
can take anything you want." If that happened,
the priest's servant would answer: "No, give
me the meat now. If you don't give it to me, I'll
take it from you!"

"In this way, Hophni and Phinehas showed
that they did not respect the offerings made to
the Lord. This was a very bad sin!

"But Samuel served the Lord. Samuel wore
a special linen apron. "Every year Samuel's
mother made a little robe for Samuel. She took
the little robe to Samuel when she went up to
Shiloh, with her husband for the sacrifice every
year.

Burn the fat The fat was the part of the animal that
belonged only to God. The priests were supposed to burn the
fat on the altar as a gift to God.

²⁰Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife. Eli said, "May the Lord repay you with children through Hannah. These children will take the place of the boy Hannah prayed for, and gave to the Lord."

Then Elkanah and Hannah went home, and ²¹the Lord was kind to Hannah. She had three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew up near the Lord.

Eli Fails to Control His Evil Sons

²²Eli was very old. He heard again and again about the things his sons were doing to all the Israelites at Shiloh. Eli also heard about his sons sleeping with the women who served at the door of the Meeting Tent.

²³Eli said to his sons, "The people here told me about the bad things you have done. Why do you do these bad things? ²⁴Sons, don't do these bad things. The Lord's people are saying bad things about you. ²⁵If a person sins against another person, God may help him. But if a person sins against the Lord, then who can help that person?"

But Eli's sons refused to listen to Eli. So the Lord decided to kill Eli's sons.

²⁶The boy Samuel kept growing. He pleased God and the people.

The Terrible Prophecy About Eli's Family

²⁷A man of God came to Eli. The man of God said, "The Lord says these things, 'Your ancestors* were slaves of Pharaoh's family. But I appeared to your ancestors* at that time. ²⁸I chose your family group from all the family groups of Israel. I chose your family group to be my priests. I chose them to offer sacrifices on my altar. I chose them to burn incense* and wear the Ephod.* I also let your family group have the meat from the sacrifices that the people of Israel give to me. ²⁹So why don't you respect those sacrifices and gifts. You honor

your sons more than me. You become fat on the best parts of the meat—and the people of Israel bring that meat to me.'

³⁰"The Lord God of Israel promised that your father's family would serve him forever. But now the Lord says this, 'That will never be! I will honor people that honor me. But bad things will happen to people that refuse to respect me. ³¹The time is coming when I will destroy all your descendants.* No one in your family will live to be an old man. ³²Good things will happen to Israel, but you will see bad things happening at home.* No one in your family will live to be an old man. ³³There will be one man that I will save to serve as priest, at my altar. He will live to be very old. He will live until his eyes wear out and his strength is gone. The rest of your descendants* will die by the sword. ³⁴I will give you a sign to show these things will come true. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will die on the same day. ³⁵I will choose a faithful priest for myself. This priest will listen to me and do what I want. I will make this priest's family strong. He will always serve before my chosen king.* ³⁶Then all the people who are left in your family will come and bow down before this priest. These people will beg for a little money or a piece of bread. They will say, 'Please give me a job as priest so I can have food to eat.'"

God Calls Samuel

3 The boy Samuel served the Lord under Eli. At that time, the Lord did not speak directly to people very often. There were very few visions.*

¹Eli's eyes were so weak he was almost blind. One night he lay down in bed. ²Samuel

ancestors Literally, "father's house." This means the people that a person is descended from.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

but ... home This phrase is not in the ancient Greek translation or the Hebrew scrolls from Qumran.

chosen king Literally, "anointed one."

visions Like dreams. God gave messages to his people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

lay in bed in the Lord's Holy Building.* God's Holy Box* was in that Holy Building. The Lord's lamp was still burning. The Lord called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am."¹ Samuel thought Eli was calling him. So, Samuel ran to Eli. Samuel said to Eli, "Here I am. You called me."

But Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed."

Samuel went back to bed. "Again the Lord called, 'Samuel!'" Again Samuel ran to Eli. Samuel said, "Here I am. You called me."

Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed."

²Samuel did not yet know the Lord. The Lord had not spoken directly to him yet.*

³The Lord called Samuel the third time. Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. Samuel said, "Here I am. You called me."

Then Eli understood that the Lord was calling the boy. Eli told Samuel, "Go to bed. If he calls you again, say, 'Speak, Lord. I am your servant, and I am listening.'"

So Samuel went back to bed. "The Lord came and stood there. He called as he did before. He said, 'Samuel, Samuel!'"

Samuel said, "Speak. I am your servant, and I am listening."

⁴The Lord said to Samuel, "I will soon do something in Israel. This thing will shock people who hear about it. I will do everything I said I would do against Eli and his family. I will do everything from the beginning to the end. I told Eli I would punish his family forever. I will do this because Eli knew that his sons said and did bad things against God. And Eli failed to control them. That is why I promised Eli's family that sacrifices and grain offering will never take away their sins."

⁵Samuel lay down in bed until the morning came. He got up early and opened the doors of the Lord's house. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli

about the vision.*

"But Eli said to Samuel, 'Samuel, my son!'"

Samuel answered, "Yes, sir."

⁶Eli asked, "What did the Lord say to you? Don't hide it from me. God will punish you if you hide anything from the message God spoke to you."

⁷So Samuel told Eli everything. Samuel did not hide anything from Eli.

Eli said, "He is the Lord. Let him do what he thinks is good."

⁸The Lord was with Samuel while he grew up. The Lord did not let any of Samuel's messages prove false. ⁹Then all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew Samuel was a true prophet of the Lord. ¹⁰And the Lord continued to appear to Samuel at Shiloh. The Lord revealed himself to Samuel as the word of the Lord.*

4 News about Samuel spread through all of Israel. Eli was very old. His sons kept doing bad things before the Lord.*

The Philistines Defeat the Israelites

At that time, the Philistines gathered for war against Israel. The Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites made their camp at Ebenezer. The Philistines made their camp at Aphek. ²The Philistines prepared to attack Israel. The battle began.

The Philistines defeated the Israelites. The Philistines killed about 4,000 soldiers from Israel's army. ³The Israelite soldiers came back to their camp. The elders (*leaders*) of Israel asked, "Why did the Lord let the Philistines defeat us? Let's bring the Lord's Box of the Agreement* from Shiloh. In this way, God will go with us into battle. He will save us

vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

word ... Lord Sometimes this means simply, "a message from God." But sometimes it seems that this means a special way or form that God used when he spoke with his prophets.

Eli ... Lord This phrase is in the ancient Greek translation, but not in the Hebrew.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Holy Building This could mean the Holy Tent at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord, or a larger building where they put the Holy Tent.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them.

He ... yet Literally, "The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him."

from our enemies."

"So the people sent men to Shiloh. The men brought back the Lord All-Powerful's Box of the Agreement.* On top of the Box are the Cherub angels. And they are like the throne that the Lord sits on. Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, came with the Box.

"When the Lord's Box of the Agreement* came into the camp, all the Israelites gave a great shout. That shout made the ground shake. "The Philistines heard Israel's shout. They asked, "Why all this shouting in the Hebrew* camp?"

Then the Philistines learned that the Lord's Holy Box* was brought to Israel's camp. "The Philistines became afraid. The Philistines said, "Gods have come to their camp! We're in trouble. This has never happened before! "We are worried. Who can save us from these powerful gods? These gods are the same gods that gave the Egyptians those diseases and terrible sicknesses. "Be brave, Philistines! Fight like men! In the past, the Hebrew people were our slaves. So fight like men or you will become their slaves!"

"The Philistines fought hard and defeated the Israelites. Every Israelite soldier ran away to his tent. It was a terrible defeat for Israel. 30,000 Israelite soldiers were killed. "The Philistines took God's Holy Box.* And they killed Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas.

"That day a man from the family group of Benjamin ran from the battle. He tore his clothes and put dust on his head to show his great sadness. "Eli was sitting on a chair when this man came to Shiloh. Eli was on a chair near the city gates. He was worried about God's Holy Box,* so he was sitting there watching. Then the Benjamite man entered Shiloh and told the bad news. All the people in town cried loudly. "Eli was 98 years old and blind. Eli heard the sound of the crying. Eli asked, "Why all this loud noise?"

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant," the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Hebrew Or, "Israelite."

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement.

The Benjamite man ran to Eli and told him what happened. "The Benjamite man told Eli, "I ran away from the battle today."

Eli asked, "What happened, son?"

"The Benjamite man answered, "Israel ran away from the Philistines. The Israelite army has lost many soldiers. Your two sons are both dead. And the Philistines took God's Holy Box.*"

"When the Benjamite man mentioned God's Holy Box,* Eli fell backward off his chair near the gate and broke his neck. Eli was old and fat, so he died. Eli had led Israel for 20 years.*

The Glory Is Gone

"Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant. It was nearly time for her baby to be born. She heard the news that God's Holy Box* was taken. She also heard that Eli, her father-in-law, and Phinehas, her husband, were both dead. As soon as she heard the news, her pain started. And she began giving birth to her baby. "The women who were helping her said, "Don't worry! You have given birth to a son."

But Eli's daughter-in-law did not answer or pay attention. Eli's daughter-in-law said, "Israel's glory is gone!"* So she named the baby Ichabod.* And then she died. "She named her baby Ichabod because God's Holy Box* was taken and because both her father-in-law and husband were dead. "She said, "Israel's glory is gone." She said that because the Philistines took God's Holy Box.

God's Holy Box Causes Trouble

5 After the Philistines had taken God's Holy Box,* they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. "The Philistines carried God's Holy

20 years This is from the ancient Greek translation and Josephus. The standard Hebrew text has "40 years."

Eli's ... gone This phrase is not in the ancient Greek translation.

Ichabod This name means "No glory!"

Box into Dagon's* temple. They put God's Holy Box next to Dagon. ³The people of Ashdod got up the next morning. They found Dagon lying on his face. Dagon had fallen down before the Lord's Box.

The people of Ashdod put the statue of Dagon* back into its place. ⁴But the next morning, when the people of Ashdod got up, they found Dagon on the ground again! Dagon had fallen down before the Lord's Holy Box.* Dagon's head and hands were broken off and lying on the threshold.* Only Dagon's body was still in one piece. ⁵That is why, even today, Dagon's priests or other people who enter Dagon's Temple at Ashdod refuse to walk on the threshold.

⁶The Lord made life hard for the people of Ashdod and their neighbors. The Lord gave them much trouble. He caused them to get tumors.* The Lord also sent mice to them. The mice ran all over their ships and their land. The people in the city were very afraid. ⁷The people of Ashdod saw what was happening. They said, "The Holy Box* of the God of Israel can't stay here! God is punishing us and Dagon* our god."

⁸The people of Ashdod called the five Philistine rulers together. The people of Ashdod asked the rulers, "What must we do with the Holy Box* of the God of Israel?"

The rulers answered, "Move the Holy Box* of the God of Israel to Gath." So the Philistines moved God's Holy Box.

⁹But after the Philistines had moved God's Holy Box* to Gath, the Lord punished that city. The people became very scared. God caused many troubles for all the people—young and old. God caused the people in Gath to have tumors.* ¹⁰So the Philistines sent God's Holy Box to Ekron.

Dagon The Canaanite people worshiped this false god hoping he would give them a good harvest of grain. This was probably the most important god for the Philistine people.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

threshold The floor where a door opens.

tumors Bad growths on the skin.

But when God's Holy Box* came into Ekron, the people of Ekron complained. They said, "Why are you bringing the Box of the God of Israel to our city Ekron? Do you want to kill us and our people?" ¹¹The people of Ekron called all the Philistine rulers together. The people of Ekron said to the rulers, "Send the Box of the God of Israel back to its place before it kills us and our people!"

The people of Ekron were very scared! God made life very hard for them in that place. ¹²Many people died. And the people that did not die, had tumors.* The people of Ekron cried loudly to heaven.

God's Holy Box Is Sent Back Home

6 The Philistines kept the Holy Box* in their land seven months. ²The Philistines called their priests and magicians. The Philistines said, "What must we do with the Lord's Box? Tell us how to send the Box back home!"

³The priests and magicians answered, "If you send back the Holy Box* of the God of Israel, don't send it away empty. You must offer gifts so the God of Israel will take away your sins. Then you will be healed. You will be made pure. You should do these things so God will stop punishing you."*

⁴The Philistines asked, "What kind of gifts should we send for Israel's God to forgive us?"

The priests and magicians answered, "There are five Philistine leaders. One leader for each city. All of you people and your leaders had the same problems. So you must make five gold models to look like five tumors. And you must make five gold models to look like five mice. ⁵So, make models of the tumors. And make models of the mice that are ruining the country. Give these gold models to the God of Israel as payment. Then maybe the God of Israel will stop punishing you, your gods, and your land. ⁶Don't be stubborn like Pharaoh and the Egyptians. God punished the Egyptians.

You should do ... punishing you This is from the ancient Greek translation and one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran. The standard Hebrew has "Then you will know why God did not stop punishing you."

That is why the Egyptians let the Israelites leave Egypt.

⁷"You must build a new wagon and get two cows that just had calves. These must be cows that never have worked in the fields. Tie the cows to the wagon and take the calves back home. Put the calves in their pen. Don't let them follow their mothers.* 'Put the Lord's Holy Box* on the wagon. You must put the golden models in the bag beside the Box. The golden models are your gifts for God to forgive your sins. Send the wagon straight on its way. ⁸Watch the wagon. If the wagon goes toward Beth Shemesh in Israel's own land, then the Lord has given us this great sickness. But if the cows don't go to Beth Shemesh, then we know Israel's God has not punished us. We will know our sickness just happened.

⁹The Philistines did what the priests and magicians said. The Philistines took two cows that had just had calves. The Philistines tied the cows to the wagon. The Philistines kept the calves at home in pens. ¹⁰Then the Philistines put the Lord's Holy Box* on the wagon. They also put the bag with the golden models of the tumors and mice on the wagon. ¹¹The cows went straight to Beth Shemesh. The cows stayed on the road, mooing all the way. The cows did not turn right or left. The Philistine rulers followed the cows as far as the city limits of Beth Shemesh.

¹²The people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley. They looked up and saw the Holy Box.* They were very happy to see the Box again. They ran to get it. ¹³The wagon came to the field that belonged to Joshua of Beth Shemesh. In this field the wagon stopped near a large rock. The people of Beth Shemesh cut up the wagon. Then they killed the cows. They sacrificed the cows to the Lord.

Don't ... their mothers The Philistines thought that if the cows did not try to find their calves but went straight to Beth Shemesh, then this would prove that God was leading them. This would show God accepted the gifts.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

The Levites* took down the Lord's Holy Box.* They also took down the bag that had the golden models. The Levites put the Lord's Box and the bag on the large rock. That day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings to the Lord.

¹⁴The five Philistine rulers watched the people of Beth Shemesh do all these things. Then the five Philistine rulers went back to Ekron that same day.

¹⁵In this way, the Philistines sent golden models of tumors as gifts for their sins to the Lord. They sent one golden model of a tumor for each Philistine town. These Philistine towns were Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. ¹⁶And the Philistines also sent golden models of mice. The number of these golden mice was the same number as the towns that belonged to the five Philistine rulers. These towns had walls around them. And each town had villages around it.

The people of Beth Shemesh put the Lord's Holy Box* on a rock. That rock is still in the field of Joshua from Beth Shemesh. ¹⁷But there were no priests there when the men of Beth Shemesh saw the Holy Box of the Lord. So God killed 70 men from Beth Shemesh. The people of Beth Shemesh cried because the Lord punished them so severely. ¹⁸So the people of Beth Shemesh said, "Where is a priest that can care for this Holy Box? Where should the Box go from here?"

¹⁹There was a priest at Kiriath Jearim. The people of Beth Shemesh sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim. The messengers said, "The Philistines have brought back the Lord's Holy Box.* Come down and take it to your city."

7 The men of Kiriath Jearim came and took the Lord's Holy Box.* They took the Lord's Box to Abinadab's house on the hill. They did a special ceremony to prepare Abinadab's son, Eleazar, to guard the Lord's Box. ²The Box stayed at Kiriath Jearim a long time. It stayed there 20 years.

Levites People from the family group of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

The Lord Saves the Israelites

The people of Israel began to follow the Lord again. ¹Samuel told the people of Israel, "If you are really coming back to the Lord—with all your heart—then you must throw away your foreign gods. You must throw away your idols of Astarte.* And you must give yourselves fully to the Lord. You must serve only the Lord! Then the Lord will save you from the Philistines."

²So the Israelites threw away their statues of Baal* and Astarte.* The Israelites served only the Lord.

³Samuel said, "All Israel must meet at Mizpah. I will pray to the Lord for you."

⁴The Israelites met together at Mizpah. They got water and poured it out before the Lord. In this way, they began a time of fasting. They did not eat any food that day and they confessed their sins. They said, "We have sinned against the Lord." So Samuel served as a judge of Israel at Mizpah.

⁵The Philistines heard that the Israelites were meeting at Mizpah. The Philistine rulers went to fight against the Israelites. The Israelites heard the Philistines were coming, and they became afraid. ⁶The Israelites said to Samuel, "Don't stop praying to the Lord our God for us! Ask the Lord to save us from the Philistines!"

⁷Samuel took a baby lamb. He burned the lamb as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Samuel prayed to the Lord for Israel. The Lord answered Samuel's prayer. ⁸While Samuel was burning the sacrifice, the Philistines came to fight Israel. But the Lord caused loud thunder near the Philistines. This confused the Philistines. The thunder scared the Philistines, and they became confused. Their leaders were not able to control them. So the Israelites defeated the Philistines in battle. ⁹The men of Israel ran out of Mizpah and chased the

Philistines. They chased them all the way to Beth Car. They killed Philistine soldiers all along the way.

Peace Comes to Israel

¹After this, Samuel set up a special stone. He did this to help people remember the things God did. Samuel put the stone between Mizpah and Shen. Samuel named the stone "Stone of Help."* Samuel said, "The Lord helped us all the way to this place!"

²The Philistines were defeated. They did not enter the land of Israel again. The Lord was against the Philistines during the rest of Samuel's life. ³The Philistines had taken towns from Israel. The Philistines took the towns in the area from Ekron to Gath. But the Israelites won back those towns. And Israel also took back the land around these towns.

There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

⁴Samuel led Israel all his life. ⁵Samuel went from place to place judging the people of Israel. Every year he traveled around the country. He went to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. So he judged and ruled the people of Israel in all these places. ⁶But Samuel's home was in Ramah. So Samuel always went back to Ramah. Samuel judged and ruled Israel from that town. And Samuel built an altar to the Lord in Ramah.

Israel Asks for a King

8 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges* for Israel. ²Samuel's first son was named Joel. His second son was named Abijah. Joel and Abijah were judges in Beersheba. ³But Samuel's sons did not live the same way he did. Joel and Abijah accepted bribes. They took money secretly and changed their decisions in court. They cheated people in court. ⁴So all the elders (leaders) of Israel met together. They went to Ramah to meet with

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Stone of Help Or, "Ebenezer."

judge(s) Special people that had the work of leading, judging, and protecting the people of Israel. This was before there were kings in Israel.

Samuel. ⁷The elders (*leaders*) said to Samuel, "You're old, and your sons don't live right. They are not like you. Now, give us a king to rule us like all the other nations."

⁸So, the elders (*leaders*) asked for a king to lead them. Samuel thought this was a bad idea. So Samuel prayed to the Lord. ⁹The Lord told Samuel, "Do what the people tell you. They have not rejected you. They have rejected me! They don't want me to be their king! ¹⁰They are doing the same thing they have always done. I took them out of Egypt. But they left me and served other gods. They are doing the same to you. ¹¹So listen to the people, and do what they say. But give them a warning. Tell the people what a king will do to them! Tell them how a king rules people."

¹²Those people asked for a king. So Samuel told those people everything the Lord said. ¹³Samuel said, "If you have a king ruling over you, this is what he will do: He will take away your sons. He will force your sons to serve him. He will force them to be soldiers—they must fight from his chariots and become horse soldiers in his army. Your sons will become guards running in front of the king's chariot. ¹⁴A king will force your sons to become soldiers. Some of them will become officers over 1,000 men. And others will become officers over 50 men. A king will force some of your sons to plow his fields and gather his harvest. He will force some of your sons to make weapons for war. He will force them to make things for his chariots!

¹⁵"A king will take your daughters. He will force some of your daughters to make perfume for him. And he will force some of your daughters to cook and bake for him.

¹⁶"A king will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves. He will take those things from you and give them to his officers. ¹⁷He will take one-tenth of your grain and grapes. He will give these things to his officers and servants. ¹⁸This king will take your men and women servants. He will take your best cattle and your donkeys. He will use them all for his own work. ¹⁹And he will take one-tenth of your flocks.

"And you yourselves will become slaves of this king. ²⁰When that time comes, you will cry because of the king you chose. But the Lord will not answer you at that time."

²¹But the people would not listen to Samuel. They said, "No! We want a king to rule over us. ²²Then we will be the same as all the other nations. Our king will lead us. He will go with us and fight our battles."

²³After Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated their words to the Lord. ²⁴The Lord answered, "Listen to them! Give them a king."

Then Samuel told the people of Israel, "Alright! You will have a new king. Now, all of you people go back home."

Saul Looks for His Father's Donkeys

9 Kish was an important man from the family group of Benjamin. Kish was the son of Abiel. Abiel was the son of Zeror. Zeror was the son of Becorath. Becorath was the son of Aphiah, a man from Benjamin.

²Kish had a son named Saul. Saul was a handsome young man. There was no one more handsome than Saul. Saul stood a head taller than any other man in Israel.

³One day, Kish's donkey became lost. So Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants and go look for the donkeys." ⁴Saul began looking for the donkeys. Saul walked through the hills of Ephraim. Then Saul walked through the area around Shalisha. But Saul and the servant could not find Kish's donkeys. So Saul and the servant went to the area around Shalim. But the donkeys were not there either. So Saul traveled through the land of Benjamin. But he and the servant still could not find the donkeys.

⁵Finally, Saul and the servant came to the town named Zuph. Saul said to his servant, "Let's go back. My father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

⁶But the servant answered, "A man of God is in this town. People respect him. All the things he says come true. So let's go into this town. Maybe this man of God will tell us where we should go next."

⁷Saul said to his servant, "We can go into town. But what can we give the man? The food in our bags is gone. We have no gift to give the man of God. What do we have to give him?"

⁸Again the servant answered Saul. "Look, I have a little bit of money.* Let's give it to the man of God. Then he will tell us where we should go."

⁹"Saul said to his servant, "Good idea! Let's go!" They went to the town where the man of God was.

Saul and the servant were walking up the hill to the town. On the way they met some young women. The young women were coming out to get water. Saul and the servant asked the young women, "Is the seer here?" (In the past, people in Israel called a prophet a "seer." So if they wanted to ask something from God, they would say, "Let's go to the seer.")

¹⁰The young women answered, "Yes, the seer* is here. He is just up the road. He came to town today. Some people are meeting together today to share in a fellowship offering at the place for worship.* ¹¹Go into town and you will find him. If you hurry, you can find him before he goes up to eat at the place for worship. The seer* blesses the sacrifice. So the people will not begin eating until he gets there. So, if you hurry, you can find the seer."

¹²Saul and the servant started walking up the hill to town. Just as they entered the town, they saw Samuel walking toward them. Samuel was just coming out of town on his way to the place for worship.*

¹³The day before, the Lord had told Samuel, ¹⁴"Tomorrow at about this same time I will send a man to you. He will be from the family group of Benjamin. You must anoint* him. Then he will become the new leader over my people Israel. This man will save my people from the Philistines. I have seen the suffering

of my people. I have listened to the cries from my people."

¹⁵Samuel saw Saul and the Lord said to him, "This is the man I told you about. He will control my people."

¹⁶Saul came to Samuel near the gate. Saul asked Samuel, "Please tell me, where is the seer's* house."

¹⁷Samuel answered, "I am the seer.* Go ahead of me to the place for worship.* You and your servant will eat with me today. I will let you go home tomorrow morning. I will answer all your questions. ¹⁸And don't worry about the donkeys that you lost three days ago. They have been found. Now, all of Israel wants you. They want you and all of the people in your father's family."

¹⁹Saul answered, "But I am a member of the family group of Benjamin. It is the smallest family group in Israel. And my family is the smallest in the family group of Benjamin. Why do you say Israel wants me?"

²⁰Then Samuel took Saul and his servant to the eating area. About 30 people had been invited to eat together, and share the sacrifice. Samuel gave Saul and his servant the most important place at the table. ²¹Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the meat I gave you. It is the share I told you to save."

²²The cook took the thigh* and put it on the table in front of Saul. Samuel said, "This is the meat I saved for you. Eat it because it was saved for you for this special time." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

²³After they finished eating, they came down from the place for worship* and went back to town. Samuel made a bed for Saul on the roof* and Saul slept. ²⁴Early the next morning, Samuel shouted to Saul on the roof. Samuel said, "Get up. I will send you on your way." Saul got up, and then he went out of the house with Samuel. ²⁵Saul, his servant, and

a little bit of money Literally, "¼ shekel of silver."

This was about 1/16 ounce of silver.

seer Another name for a prophet. This shows prophets often saw their message from God in some special way.

place for worship Literally, "high place."

anoint To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

thigh This was probably the left thigh that was reserved for important guests. The right thigh was reserved for the priest that sacrificed the animal. This priest helped kill the animal and put the fat from the animal on the altar as a gift to God.

roof In Israel the roofs were flat, and people used them to store things.

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Samuel Anoints Saul

10 Samuel took a jar of the special oil. Samuel poured the oil on Saul's head. Samuel kissed Saul and said, "The Lord has anointed (*chosen*) you to be the leader over the people that belong to him. You will control the Lord's people. You will save them from the enemies that are all around them. The Lord has anointed (*chosen*) you to be ruler over his people. Here is a sign that will prove this is true: * ²After you leave me today, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah. The two men will say to you, 'Someone found the donkeys you were looking for. Your father stopped worrying about his donkeys. Now he is worrying about you. He is saying: What will I do about my son?'"

³Samuel said, "Then you will go until you come to the large oak tree at Tabor. Three men

will meet you there. Those three men will be on their way to worship God at Bethel. One man will be carrying three young goats. The second man will be carrying three loaves of bread. And the third man will have a bottle of wine. 'These three men will say 'Hello' to you. They will offer you two loaves of bread. You will accept those two loaves of bread from them.' "Then you will go to Gibeath-Elohim. There is a Philistine fort in that place. When you come to this town, a group of prophets will come out. These prophets will come down from the place for worship.* They will be prophesying.* They will be playing harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. "Then Lord's Spirit will come on you with great power. You will be changed. You will be a different man. You will begin to prophesy with these prophets. 'After these things happen, then do whatever you choose to do. God will be with you.

"Go before me to Gilgal. I will come to you in that place. Then I will offer burnt offering and fellowship offerings. But you must wait seven days. Then I will come to you and tell you what to do."

Saul Becomes Like the Prophets

Just as Saul turned to leave Samuel, God turned Saul's life around. All those things happened that day. ¹⁰Saul and his servant went to Gibeath-Elohim. At that place, Saul met a group of prophets. God's Spirit came on Saul with great power, and Saul prophesied with the prophets. ¹¹People who knew Saul before saw him prophesying with the prophets. These people asked each other, "What has happened to Kish's son? Is Saul also one of the prophets?"

¹²A man living in Gibeath-Elohim said "Yes! And it seems that he is their leader!" That is why this became a famous saying: "Is Saul also one of the prophets?"

thigh This was probably the left thigh that was reserved for important guests. The right thigh was reserved for the priest that sacrificed the animal. This priest helped kill the animal and put the fat from the animal on the altar as a gift to God.

place for worship Literally, "high place."

roof In Israel the roofs were flat, and people used them to store things.

You will control ... true These lines are from the ancient Greek translation. They are not in the Hebrew text.

prophesying Usually, this means "speaking for God." But here this probably means that some power took control of the person.

Yes! ... leader! Literally, "And who is their father?" Of the man that taught and led other prophets was called "father."

Samuel Announces Saul as King

¹"Samuel told all the people of Israel to meet together with the Lord at Mizpah. ²"Samuel said, "The Lord, the God of Israel says, 'I led Israel out of Egypt. I saved you from Egypt's control and from other kingdoms that tried to hurt you.' ³"But today you have rejected your God. Your God saves you from all your troubles and problems. But you said, 'No, we want a king to rule us.' Now come, stand before the Lord in your families and family groups."

⁴"Samuel brought all the family groups of Israel near. Then Samuel began to choose the new king. First, the family group of Benjamin was chosen. ⁵"Samuel told each family in the family group of Benjamin to pass by. Matri's family was chosen. Then Samuel told each man in Matri's family to walk by. Saul son of Kish was chosen.

But when the people looked for Saul, they could not find him. ⁶"Then they asked the Lord, "Has Saul come here yet?"

The Lord said, "Saul is hiding behind the supplies."

⁷"The people ran and took Saul out from behind the supplies. Saul stood up among the people. Saul was a head taller than any other person.

⁸"Samuel said to all the people, "See the man the Lord has chosen. There is no person like Saul among the people."

Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

⁹"Samuel explained the rules of the kingdom to the people. He wrote the rules in a book. He put the book before the Lord. Then Samuel told the people to go home.

¹⁰"Saul also went to his home in Gibeah. God touched the hearts of brave men, and these brave men began to follow Saul. ¹¹"But some troublemakers said, "How can this man save us?" They said bad things about Saul and refused to bring gifts to him. But Saul said nothing.

Nahash, King of the Ammonites

Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had been hurting the family groups of Gad and Reuben. Nahash poked out the right eye of each of the men. Nahash did not allow anyone to help them. Nahash king of the Ammonites poked out the right eye of every Israelite man living in the area east of the Jordan River. But 7,000 Israelite men ran away from the Ammonites and came to Jabesh Gilead.*

11 About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite and his army surrounded Jabesh Gilead. All the people of Jabesh said to Nahash, "If you will make a treaty with us, we will serve you."

²But Nahash the Ammonite answered, "I will make a treaty with you people only if I can poke out the right eye of each person. Then all Israel will be ashamed!"

³The leaders of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Let us have seven days. We will send messengers through all Israel. If no one comes to help us, we will come up to you and surrender to you."

Saul Saves Jabesh Gilead

⁴The messengers came to Gibeah where Saul lived. They told the news to the people. The people cried loudly. ⁵Saul had been out in the field with his cows. Saul came in from the field and heard the people crying. Saul asked, "What's wrong with the people? Why are they crying?"

Then the people told Saul what the messengers from Jabesh said. ⁶Saul heard their story. Then God's Spirit came on Saul with great power. Saul became very angry. ⁷Saul took a pair of cows and cut them in pieces. Then he gave the pieces of those cows to messengers. He ordered the messengers to carry the pieces through all the land of Israel. He told them to give this message to the people of Israel: "Come follow Saul and Samuel. If any person does not come and help them, then

Nahash ... Gilead This part is not in the standard Hebrew text, but is found in some ancient translations and in one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran.

this same thing will happen to his cows!"

A great fear from the Lord came on the people. They all came together like one person. Saul gathered the men together at Bezek. There were 300,000 men from Israel and 30,000 men from Judah.

Saul and his army told the messengers from Jabesh, "Tell the people at Jabesh in Gilead that by noon tomorrow, you will be saved."

The messengers told Saul's message to the people at Jabesh. The people at Jabesh were very happy. Then the people of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, "Tomorrow we will come to you. Then you can do anything you want to us."

The next morning Saul separated his soldiers into three groups. At sunrise, Saul and his soldiers entered the Ammonite camp. Saul attacked while they were changing guards that morning. Saul and his soldiers defeated the Ammonites before noon. The Ammonite soldiers all ran away in different directions—no two soldiers stayed together.

Then the people said to Samuel, "Where are the people that said they didn't want Saul to rule as king? Bring those people and we will kill them!"

But Saul said, "No! Don't kill anyone today! The Lord saved Israel today!"

Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let's go to Gilgal. At Gilgal we will again make Saul the king."

All the people went to Gilgal. There, before the Lord, the people made Saul king. They offered fellowship offerings to the Lord. Saul and all the Israelites had a great celebration.

Samuel Talks to the Israelites

12 Samuel said to all Israel: "I have done everything you wanted me to do. I have put a king over you. Now you have a king to lead you. I am old and gray. My sons are with you. I have been your leader since I was young boy. Here I am. If I have done anything wrong, you must tell those things to the Lord and his chosen king. Did I steal anyone's cow or donkey? Did I hurt or cheat

anyone? Did I ever take money, or even a pair of shoes, to do something wrong? If I did any of these things, then I will make it right."

The Israelites answered, "No! You never did anything bad to us. You never cheated us or took things from us!"

Samuel said to the Israelites, "The Lord is witness to what you said. The Lord's chosen king is also witness today. They are both witnesses that you did not find wrong in me." The people answered, "Yes! The Lord is witness!"

Then Samuel said to the people, "The Lord is witness. He chose Moses and Aaron. He brought your ancestors* out of Egypt. Now, stand there and I will tell you about the good things the Lord did for you and your ancestors. Jacob went to Egypt. Later, the Egyptians made life hard for his descendants.* So they cried to the Lord for help. The Lord sent Moses and Aaron. Moses and Aaron took your ancestors out of Egypt and led them to live in this place.

But your ancestors* forgot the Lord their God. So the Lord let them become the slaves of Sisera. Sisera was the commander of the army at Hazor. Then the Lord let them become the slaves of the Philistines and the king of Moab. They all fought against your ancestors. But your ancestors cried to the Lord for help. They said, 'We have sinned. We left the Lord, and we served the false gods Baal* and Astarte.*' But now save us from our enemies, and we will serve you."

So the Lord sent Jerub Baal (*Gideon*), Barak, Jephthah and Samuel. The Lord saved you from your enemies around you. And you lived in safety. But then you saw Nahash king of the Ammonites coming to fight against you.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

You said, 'No! We want a king to rule over us!' You said that, even though the Lord your God was already your king! ¹³Now, here is the king you chose. The Lord put this king over you. ¹⁴The Lord your God will continue to save you. But God will save you only if you do these things: You must honor the Lord and serve him. You must not fight against his commands. And you and the king ruling over you must follow the Lord your God. If you do those things, then God will save you. ¹⁵But if you don't obey the Lord and if you fight against his commands, then he will be against you. The Lord will destroy you and your king!

¹⁶"Now stand still and see the great thing the Lord will do before your eyes. ¹⁷Now is the time of the wheat harvest.* I will pray to the Lord. I will ask him to send thunder and rain. Then you will know you did a very bad thing against the Lord when you asked for a king."

¹⁸So Samuel prayed to the Lord. That same day the Lord sent thunder and rain. And the people became very afraid of the Lord and Samuel. ¹⁹All the people said to Samuel, "Pray to the Lord your God for us, your servants. Don't let us die! We have sinned many times. And now we have added to those sins—we have asked for a king."

²⁰Samuel answered, "Don't be afraid. It is true! You did all those bad things. But don't stop following the Lord. Serve the Lord with all your heart. ²¹Idols are only statues—they can't help you! So don't worship them. Idols can't help you or save you. They are nothing!

²²"But the Lord won't leave his people. No, the Lord was pleased to make you his own people. So, for his own good name, he won't leave you. ²³It would be very wrong for me to stop praying for you. If I stopped praying for you, then I would be sinning against the Lord. I will teach you the way that is good and right. ²⁴But you must honor the Lord. You must truly serve the Lord with all your heart. Remember the wonderful things he did for you! ²⁵But if you are stubborn and do evil, then God will

throw you and your king away—like sweeping out dirt with a broom."

Saul Makes His First Mistake

13 At that time, Saul had been king one year. After Saul had ruled over Israel two years, ²he chose 3,000 men from Israel. There were 2,000 men that stayed with him at Micmah in the hill country of Bethel. There were 1,000 men that stayed with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul sent the other men in the army back home.

³Jonathan defeated the Philistines at their camp in Geba. The Philistines heard about this. They said, "The Hebrews have rebelled."

Saul said, "Let the Hebrew people hear what happened." So Saul told the men to blow trumpets through all the land of Israel. ⁴All the Israelites heard the news. They said, "Saul has killed the Philistine leader. Now the Philistines really hate the Israelites!"

The Israelite people were called to join Saul at Gilgal. ⁵The Philistines gathered to fight Israel. The Philistines had 3,000* chariots and 6,000 horse soldiers. There were as many Philistine soldiers as sand on the shore. The Philistines camped at Micmah. (Micmah is east of Beth-Aven.)

⁶The Israelites saw that they were in trouble. They felt trapped. They ran away to hide in caves and cracks in the rock. They hid among the rocks, in wells, and in other holes in the ground. ⁷Some Hebrews even went across the Jordan River to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul was still at Gilgal. All the men in his army were shaking with fear.

⁸Samuel said he would meet Saul at Gilgal. Saul waited there seven days. But Samuel had not yet come to Gilgal, and the soldiers began to leave Saul. ⁹So Saul said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then Saul offered the burnt offering. ¹⁰As soon as Saul finished offering that sacrifice, Samuel arrived. Saul went out to meet him.

¹¹Samuel asked, "What have you done?"

Now is the time ... harvest This time was a dry time and no rains fell then.

3,000 The Hebrew has, "30,000."

Saul answered, "I saw the soldiers leaving me, and you were not here on time, and the Philistines were gathering at Micmash. ¹¹I thought to myself, 'The Philistines will come here and attack me at Gilgal. And I haven't asked the Lord to help us yet! So I forced myself, and I offered the burnt offering.'"

¹²Samuel said, "You did a foolish thing! You did not obey the command from the Lord your God! If you had obeyed God's command, then God would have let your family rule Israel forever. ¹³But now your kingdom will not continue. The Lord was looking for a man who wanted to obey him! The Lord has found that man—and the Lord will choose him to become the new leader of his people. You didn't obey the Lord's command, so the Lord will choose a new leader." Then Samuel got up and left Gilgal.

The Battle at Micmash

¹⁴Saul and the rest of his army left Gilgal. They went to Gibeah in Benjamin. Saul counted the men that were still with him. There were about 600 men. ¹⁵Saul, his son Jonathan, and the soldiers went to Geba in Benjamin.

The Philistines were camped at Micmash. ¹⁷The Philistines decided to punish the Israel people living in that area. So their powerful army left that place to begin the attack. The Philistine army split into three groups. One group went north, on the road to Ophrah in the area of Shual. ¹⁸The second group went southeast, on the road to Beth Horon. And the third group went east, on the road to the border. That road looks over the Valley of Zeboim toward the desert.

¹⁹None of the Israelite people could make things from iron. There weren't any blacksmiths* in Israel. The Philistines did not teach the Israelites how to make things from iron because the Philistines were afraid the Israelites would make iron swords and spears. ²⁰Only the Philistines could sharpen iron tools. So if the Israelites needed to sharpen their plows, hoes, axes, or sickles, they had to go to

the Philistines. ²¹The Philistine blacksmiths charged $\frac{1}{3}$ ounce* of silver, for sharpening plows and hoes. And they charged $\frac{1}{6}$ ounce* of silver, for sharpening picks, axes, and the iron tip on oxgoads.* ²²So, on the day of battle, none of the Israelite soldiers with Saul had iron, swords or spears. Only Saul and his son Jonathan had iron, weapons.

²³A group of Philistine soldiers guarded the mountain pass at Micmash.

Jonathan and His Helper Attack the Philistines

14 That day, Saul's son Jonathan was talking with the young man that carried his weapons. Jonathan said, "Let's go to the Philistine camp on the other side of the valley." But Jonathan did not tell his father.

²Saul was sitting under a pomegranate* tree in Migron at the edge of the hill.* This was near the threshing floor* at that place. Saul had about 600 men with him. ³One man was named Ahijah. Eli had been the Lord's priest at Shiloh. Now Ahijah was the priest—Ahijah now wore the ephod.* Ahijah was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub. Ichabod was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas was the son of Eli.

⁴There was a large rock on each side of the pass. Jonathan planned to go through that pass and go to the Philistine camp. The large rock on one side was named Bozez. The large rock on the other side was named Seneh. ⁵One large rock stood looking north toward Micmash. The other large rock stood looking south toward Geba.

⁶Jonathan said to his young helper who carried his weapons, "Come, let's go to the:

$\frac{1}{3}$ ounce Literally, "1 pim."

$\frac{1}{6}$ ounce Literally, " $\frac{1}{12}$ shekel."

oxgoads A sharp stick used to make animals go the right way.

pomegranate A red fruit with many small seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with the soft, juicy part of the fruit.

edge of the hill Or, "the edge of Gibeah."

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

blacksmiths Workers that make things from iron.

camp of those foreigners.* Maybe the Lord will use us to defeat these people! Nothing can stop the Lord—it doesn't matter if we have many soldiers or just a few soldiers."

The young man who carried Jonathan's weapons said to him, "Do what you think is best. I am with you all the way."

Jonathan said, "Let's go! We'll cross the valley, and go to those Philistine guards. We'll let them see us. If they say to us, 'Stay there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are. We won't go up to them. But if the Philistine men say, 'Come up to us,' we'll climb up to them. Why? Because that will be a sign from God. That will mean that the Lord will allow us to defeat them."

So Jonathan and his helper let the Philistines see them. The Philistine guards said, "Look! Hebrews are coming out of the holes they were hiding in!" The Philistines in the fort shouted to Jonathan and his helper, "Come up to us. We'll teach you a lesson!"

Jonathan said to his helper, "Follow me up the hill. The Lord has given the Philistines to Israel!"

So Jonathan used his hands and feet to climb the hill. His helper climbed just behind him. Jonathan and his helper defeated those Philistines. In the first attack, they killed 20 Philistines in an area about the size of one-half acre. Jonathan fought the men that attacked from the front. And Jonathan's helper came behind him and killed the men that were only wounded.

All the Philistine soldiers became scared—the soldiers in the field, the soldiers in the camp, and the soldiers at the fort. Even the bravest soldiers were scared. The ground began to shake and the Philistine soldiers became terribly frightened!

Saul's guards at Gibeah in the land of Benjamin saw the Philistine soldiers running away in different ways. Saul said to the army with him, "Count the men. I want to know who left camp."

They counted the men. Jonathan and his helper were gone.

Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring God's Holy Box!" (At that time God's Holy Box was there with the Israelites.) Saul was talking to Ahijah the priest. Saul was waiting for advice from God. But the noise and confusion in the Philistine camp was growing and growing. Saul was becoming impatient. Finally, Saul said to Ahijah the priest, "That's enough! Put your hand down and stop praying!"

Saul gathered his army together and went to the battle. The Philistine soldiers were really confused! They were even fighting each other with their swords! There were Hebrews who served the Philistines in the past and who stayed in the Philistine camp. But now these Hebrews joined the Israelites with Saul and Jonathan. All the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard the Philistine soldiers were running away. So these Israelites also joined in the battle and began chasing the Philistines.

So the Lord saved the Israelites that day. The battle moved on past Beth Aven. The whole army was with Saul—he had about 10,000 men. The battle spread to every city in the hill country of Ephraim.*

Saul Makes Another Mistake

But Saul made a big mistake that day.* The Israelites were tired and hungry. This was because Saul forced the people to make this promise: Saul said, "If any man eats food before evening comes and before I finish defeating my enemies, then that man will be punished!" So no Israelite soldier ate any food.

Because of the fighting, the people went into some woods. They saw a honeycomb on the ground. The Israelites came to the place

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement, the box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

The whole army ... Ephraim These words are in the ancient Greek translation, but not in the Hebrew.

But Saul ... that day These words are in the ancient Greek translation, but not in the Hebrew.

foreigners Literally, "uncircumcised." This showed these people were not Israelites and had not shared in their special agreement with God.

where the honeycomb was. (The men were hungry,) but they didn't eat any of that honey. They were afraid to break that promise. ²⁷But Jonathan didn't know about that promise. Jonathan didn't hear his father force the people to make that promise. Jonathan had a walking stick in his hand. He dipped the end of the stick into the honeycomb. He pulled out some honey and ate it. And he felt much better.

²⁸One of the soldiers told Jonathan, "Your father forced the soldiers to make a special promise. Your father said any man who eats today will be punished! (So the men have not eaten anything.) That is why the men are weak."

²⁹Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the land! See how much better I feel after just tasting a little of this honey! ³⁰It would have been much better for the men to eat the food that they took from their enemies today. We could have killed many more Philistines!"

³¹That day the Israelites defeated the Philistines. They fought them all the way from Micmash to Ajialon. So the people were very tired and hungry. ³²They had taken sheep, cows, and calves from the Philistines. Now the people of Israel were so hungry they killed the animals on the ground and ate them. And the blood was still in the animals!

³³A person said to Saul, "Look! The men are sinning against the Lord. They're eating meat that still has blood in it!"

Saul said, "You have sinned! Roll a large stone over here now!" ³⁴Then Saul said, "Go to the men and tell them each person must bring his bull and sheep to me. Then the men must kill their bulls and sheep here. Don't sin against the Lord! Don't eat meat that still has blood in it."

That night every person brought his animals and killed them there. ³⁵Then Saul built an altar for the Lord. Saul himself began building that altar for the Lord!

³⁶Saul said, "Let's go after the Philistines tonight. We will take everything from them! We will kill them all!"

The army answered, "Do whatever you think is best."

But the priest said, "Let's ask God."

³⁷So Saul asked God, "Should I go chase the Philistines? Will you let us defeat the Philistines?" But God did not answer Saul that day.

³⁸So Saul said, "Bring all the leaders to me! Let's find who did the sin today. ³⁹By the Lord that saves Israel, I make this promise. Even if my own son Jonathan did the sin, he must die." No one in the army said a word.

⁴⁰Then Saul said to all the Israelites, "You stand on this side. I and my son Jonathan will stand on the other side."

The soldiers answered, "As you wish, sir!"

⁴¹Then Saul prayed, "Lord, God of Israel, I am your servant. Why didn't you answer me today? If I or my son Jonathan sinned, Lord God of Israel, give Urim.* If your people Israel have sinned, give Thummim.*"

Saul and Jonathan were chosen, and the people went free. ⁴²Saul said, "Throw them again to show who is guilty-me, or my son Jonathan." Jonathan was chosen.

⁴³Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

Jonathan told Saul, "I only tasted a little honey from the end of my stick. Should I die for doing that?"

⁴⁴Saul said, "I hope God does many bad things to me if I don't keep my promise! Jonathan must die!"

⁴⁵But the soldiers said to Saul, "Jonathan led Israel to a great victory today! Must Jonathan die? Never! We promise by the living God that not even one hair of Jonathan's head will fall to the ground! God helped Jonathan fight against the Philistines today!" So the people saved Jonathan. He was not put to death.

⁴⁶Saul did not chase the Philistines. The Philistines went back to their place.

Urim, Thummim Used by the priest to learn God's answer to questions. They were probably like lots-stones sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

Saul Fights Israel's Enemies

"Saul took full control of Israel and showed he was king. Saul fought all the enemies that lived around Israel. Saul fought Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the king of Zobah, and the Philistines. Everywhere Saul went, he defeated Israel's enemies. "Saul was very brave. He defeated the Amalekites. Saul saved Israel from the enemies who tried to take things from the people of Israel.

"Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. Saul's older daughter was named Merab. Saul's younger daughter was named Michal. "Saul's wife was named Ahinoam. Ahinoam was the daughter of Ahimaaz.

The commander of Saul's army was named Abner son of Ner. Ner was Saul's uncle. "Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

"All Saul's life he was brave and fought hard against the Philistines. Any time Saul saw a man who was strong or brave, he took this man and put him into the group of soldiers that stayed near the king and protected him.

Saul Destroys the Amalekites

15 One day, Samuel said to Saul, "The Lord sent me to anoint* you king over his people Israel. Now listen to the Lord's message. "The Lord All-Powerful says: "When the Israelites came out of Egypt, the Amalekites tried to stop them from going to Canaan. I saw what the Amalekites did. "Now, go fight against the Amalekites. You must completely destroy the Amalekites and everything that belongs to them. Don't let anything live; you must kill all the men and women. You must kill all the children and little babies. You must kill all their cows and sheep and all their camels and donkeys."

"Saul gathered the army together at Telaim. There were 200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 other men. That includes the men from Judah. "Then Saul went to the city of Amalek, and

waited in the valley. "Saul said to the Kenite people, "Go away, leave the Amalekites. Then I won't destroy you with the Amalekites. You showed kindness to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt." So the Kenite people left the Amalekites.

"Saul defeated the Amalekites. He fought them all the way from Havilah to Shur, at the border of Egypt. "Saul took Agag alive. Agag was the king of the Amalekites. Saul killed all the men in Agag's army. "But Saul and the Israelite soldiers let Agag live. They also kept the best sheep and fat cows and lambs. They kept everything that was worth keeping. And they destroyed everything that was worth nothing.

Samuel Tells Saul About His Sin

"The Lord's word came to Samuel. "The Lord said, "Saul has stopped following me. So I am sorry that I made Saul king. He is not doing the things I tell him." Samuel was upset. He cried and prayed to the Lord all night.

"Samuel got up early the next morning and went to meet Saul. But the people told Samuel, "Saul went to the town in Judah named, Carmel. Saul went there to set up a stone monument to honor himself. Then Saul traveled around to several places and finally went down to Gilgal."

So Samuel went to the place where Saul was. Saul had just offered the first part of the things that he took from the Amalekites. Saul was offering them as a burnt offering to the Lord.* "Samuel went to Saul. Saul said, "Hello! May the Lord bless you! I have obeyed the Lord's commands."

"But Samuel said, "Then what is that sound I hear? Why do I hear sheep and cattle?"

"Saul answered, "The soldiers took them from the Amalekites. The soldiers saved the best sheep and cattle to burn as sacrifices* to the Lord your God. But we destroyed

Saul had just offered ... Lord This is from the ancient Greek Translation. It is not in the standard Hebrew text.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

anoint To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

everything else."

"Samuel said to Saul, "Stop! Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night."

Saul answered, "Tell me."

"Samuel said, "In the past, you thought you were not important. But then you became the leader of the family groups of Israel. The Lord chose you to be king over Israel. "The Lord sent you on a special mission. The Lord said, 'Go and destroy all those bad people, the Amalekites. Destroy them! Fight them until they are finished!' "But you didn't listen to the Lord! Why? You wanted to keep those things! So you did what the Lord said is bad!"

"Saul said, "But I did obey the Lord! I went where the Lord sent me. I destroyed all the Amalekites! I only brought back their king Agag. "And the soldiers took the best sheep and cattle to sacrifice* to the Lord your God at Gilgal!"

"But Samuel answered, "Which pleases the Lord more: burnt offerings and sacrifices,* or people obeying the Lord's command? It is better to obey God than to offer sacrifices to him. It is better to listen to God than to offer the fat from rams. "Refusing to obey is like the sin of sorcery.* Being stubborn and doing what you want is like the sin of worshiping idols. You refused to obey the Lord's command. For this reason, the Lord now refuses to accept you as king."

"Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I did not obey the Lord's commands, and I did not do what you told me. I was afraid of the people, and I did what they said. "Now I beg you, forgive my sin. Come back with me, so I may worship the Lord."

"But Samuel said to Saul, "I won't go back with you. You refused the Lord's command, and now the Lord refuses you as king of Israel."

"When Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught Samuel's robe. The robe tore. "Samuel said to Saul, "You tore my robe. In the same way, the

Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today. The Lord has given the kingdom to one of your friends. This man is a better person than you. "The Lord is the God of Israel. The Lord lives forever. The Lord does not lie or change his mind. The Lord is not like a man that changes his mind."

"Saul answered, "Alright, I sinned! But please come back with me. Show me some respect in front of the leaders and the people of Israel. Come back with me so I may worship the Lord your God." "Samuel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.

"Samuel said, "Bring Agag, the king of the Amalekites, to me."

Agag came to Samuel. Agag was tied with chains. Agag thought, "Surely he won't kill me."

"But Samuel said to Agag, "Your sword took babies from their mothers. So now, your mother will have no children." And Samuel cut Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal.

"Then Samuel left and went to Ramah. And Saul went up to his home in Gibeah. "After that Samuel never saw Saul again all his life. Samuel was very sad for Saul. And the Lord was very sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel.

Samuel Goes to Bethlehem

16 The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you feel sorry for Saul? I refused Saul as king of Israel. Fill your horn* with oil and go. I am sending you to a man named Jesse. Jesse lives in Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be the new king."

"But Samuel said, "If I go, Saul will hear the news. Then he will try to kill me."

The Lord said, "Go to Bethlehem. Take a young calf with you. Say, 'I have come to make a sacrifice* to the Lord.' "Invite Jesse to the sacrifice. Then I will show you what to do. You must anoint* the person I show you."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

sorcery When a person tries to use the power of demons and bad spirits to do magic.

horn A hollow horn from an animal was often used like a bottle.

anoint To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

⁴Samuel did what the Lord told him to do. Samuel went to Bethlehem. The elders (*leaders*) of Bethlehem shook with fear. They met Samuel and asked, "Do you come in peace?"

⁵Samuel answered, "Yes, I come in peace. I come to make a sacrifice* to the Lord. Prepare yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Samuel prepared Jesse and his sons. Then Samuel invited them to come and share the sacrifice.

⁶When Jesse and his sons arrived, Samuel saw Eliab. Samuel thought, "Surely that is the person that the Lord chose! He is standing here in front of the Lord."

⁷But the Lord said to Samuel, "Eliab is handsome. But don't think about that. Eliab is tall. But don't think about that. God does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outside of a person, but the Lord looks at the heart. Eliab is not the right man."

⁸Then Jesse called his second son, Abinadab. Abinadab walked by Samuel. But Samuel said, "No, this is not the person that the Lord chose."

⁹Then Jesse told Shammah to walk by Samuel. But Samuel said, "No, the Lord did not choose this person, either."

¹⁰Jesse showed seven of his sons to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord did not choose any of these men."

¹¹Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

Jesse answered, "No, I have another son—my youngest, but he is taking care of the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him. Bring him here. We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."

¹²Jesse sent someone to get his youngest son. This son was a good-looking, red-haired* young man. He was very handsome.

The Lord said to Samuel, "Get up and anoint* him. He is the one."

¹³Samuel took the horn* with the oil in it, and poured the special oil on Jesse's youngest son in front of his brothers. The Lord's Spirit came on David with great power from that day on.

Samuel went back to Ramah.

A Bad Spirit Bothers Saul

¹⁴The Lord's Spirit left Saul. Then the Lord sent a bad spirit to Saul. It caused him much trouble. ¹⁵Saul's servants said to him, "A bad spirit from God is bothering you. ¹⁶Give us the command, and we will look for someone who can play the harp. If the bad spirit from the Lord comes on you, this person will play. Then the bad spirit will leave you alone and you will feel better."

¹⁷So Saul said to his servants, "Find a person that plays well, and bring him to me."

¹⁸One of the servants said, "There is a man named Jesse living in Bethlehem. I saw Jesse's son. He knows how to play the harp. He is also a brave man and fights well. He is smart. He is handsome. And the Lord is with him."

¹⁹So Saul sent messengers to Jesse. They told Jesse what Saul said: "You have a son named David. He cares for your sheep. Send him to me."

²⁰So Jesse got some things as a gift for Saul. Jesse got a donkey, some bread and a bottle of wine, and a young goat. Jesse gave those things to David, and sent him to Saul. ²¹So David went to Saul, and stood in front of him. Saul loved David very much. David became the helper who carried Saul's weapons. ²²Saul sent a message to Jesse. "Let David stay and serve me. I like him very much."

²³Any time the bad spirit from God came on Saul, David would take his harp and play it. The bad spirit would leave Saul and he would begin to feel better.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

red-haired Or, "tanned." The Hebrew word means "red."

anoint To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

horn A hollow horn from an animal was often used like a bottle.

Goliath Challenges Israel

17 The Philistines gathered their armies together for war. They met at Socoh in Judah. Their camp was between Socoh and Azekah, at a town called Ephes Dammim.

¹Saul and the Israelite soldiers also gathered together. Their camp was in the Valley of Elah. Saul's soldiers were lined up and ready to fight the Philistines. ²The Philistines were on one hill, and the Israelites were on the other hill. The valley was between these two hills.

³The Philistines had a champion fighter named Goliath. Goliath was from Gath. Goliath was over 9 feet* tall. Goliath came out of the Philistine camp. ⁴He had a bronze helmet on his head. He wore a coat of scale armor. This armor was made of bronze and weighed about 125 pounds.* ⁵Goliath wore bronze protectors on his legs. He had a bronze javelin* tied on his back. ⁶The wooden part of Goliath's spear was like a weaver's rod. The spear's blade weighed 15 pounds.* Goliath's helper walked in front of him carrying Goliath's shield.

⁷Goliath came out and shouted to the Israelite soldiers. He said, "Why are all of your soldiers lined up ready for battle? You are Saul's servants. I am a Philistine. So choose one man and send him to fight me. ⁸If this man kills me, then we Philistines will become your servants. But if I win and kill your man, then you will become our servants. Then you will serve us!"

⁹The Philistine also said, "Today I stand and make fun of the army of Israel! Let me have one of your men to fight!"

¹⁰Saul and the Israelite soldiers heard the things Goliath said. And they were very afraid.

David Comes to the Valley of Elah

¹¹David was the son of Jesse. Jesse was from the Ephrath family, in Bethlehem, Judah. Jesse had eight sons. In Saul's time Jesse was an old man. ¹²Jesse's three oldest sons went with Saul to the war. The first son was Eliab. The second son was Abinadab. And the third son was Shamamah. ¹³David was the youngest son. The three oldest sons were in Saul's army. ¹⁴But David left Saul from time to time to take care of his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

¹⁵The Philistine (Goliath) came out every morning and evening and stood before the Israelite army. Goliath made fun of Israel like this for 40 days.

¹⁶One day, Jesse said to his son David, "Take this basket* of cooked grain and these ten loaves of bread to your brothers in the camp. ¹⁷Also take these ten pieces of cheese for the officer who commands your brothers' group of 1,000 soldiers. See how your brothers are doing. Bring back something to show me: your brothers are all right. ¹⁸Your brothers are with Saul and all the Israelite soldiers in the Valley of Elah. They are fighting against the Philistines."

¹⁹Early in the morning, David let another shepherd take care of the sheep. David took the food and left as Jesse had told him to. David drove their wagon to the camp. The soldiers were going out to their battle positions just as David arrived. The soldiers began shouting their war cry. ²⁰The Israelites and Philistines were gathering their men to meet each other in battle.

²¹David left the food and things with the man who kept supplies. David ran to the place where the Israelite soldiers were. David asked about his brothers. ²²David began talking with his brothers.

David Offers to Fight Goliath

At that time, the Philistine champion fighter named Goliath from Gath, came out from the Philistine army. Goliath shouted things against

over 9 feet Literally, "6 cubits and 1 span." Josephus, the ancient Greek translation, and one of the ancient Hebrew scrolls from Qumran all have "4 cubits and 1 span," or about 6 feet 9 inches.

125 pounds Literally, "5,000 shekels."

javelin A small spear.

15 pounds Literally, "600 shekels."

basket Literally, "ephah."

Israel as usual. David heard. ²⁴"The Israelite soldiers saw Goliath and ran away. They were all scared of him.

²⁵"One of the Israelite men said, "Did you see that guy! Look at him! Goliath comes out and makes fun of Israel again and again. Whoever kills that guy will get rich! King Saul will give him much money. Saul will also give his daughter in marriage to this man who kills Goliath. And Saul will make this man's family free in Israel."

²⁶David asked the men standing near him, "What did he say? What is the reward for killing this Philistine and taking away this shame from Israel? Who is this Goliath anyway? He is only some foreigner.* Goliath is nothing but a Philistine. Why does he think he can speak against the army of the living God?"

²⁷So the Israelite told David about the reward for killing Goliath. ²⁸David's oldest brother Eliab heard David talking with the soldiers. Eliab became angry at David. Eliab asked David, "Why did you come here? Who did you leave those few sheep with in the desert? I know why you came down here! You didn't want to do what you were told to do. You just wanted to come down here to watch the battle!"

²⁹David said, "What did I do now? I didn't do anything wrong! I was only talking."

³⁰David turned to some other people and asked them the same questions. They gave David the same answers as before.

³¹Some men heard David talking. They told Saul about David. Saul ordered the men to bring David to him. ³²David said to Saul, "Don't let any person be discouraged. I am your servant. I will go fight this Philistine!"

³³Saul answered, "You can't go out and fight against this Philistine (*Goliath*). You're not even a soldier!* And Goliath has been fighting in wars since he was a boy."

³⁴But David said to Saul, "I am your servant. And I have been keeping my father's sheep. If a lion or bear came and took a sheep from the flock, ³⁵then I chased it. I attacked that wild animal and took the sheep from its mouth. If it attacked me, I caught it by its fur, fought it and killed it. ³⁶I have killed a lion and a bear! I will kill that foreigner,* Goliath, the same way! Goliath will die because he made fun of the army of the living God. ³⁷The Lord saved me from the lion and the bear. The Lord will also save me from this Philistine (*Goliath*)."

Saul said to David, "Go and may the Lord be with you." ³⁸Saul put his own clothes on David. Saul put a bronze helmet on David's head and armor* on David's body. ³⁹David put on the sword and tried to walk around. So David tried to wear Saul's uniform. But David was not used to all those heavy things.

David said to Saul, "I can't fight in these things. I'm not used to them." So David took them all off. ⁴⁰David took his walking stick in his hand. David chose five smooth stones from the valley. He put the five stones in his shepherd's bag. He held his sling* in his hand. Then he went to meet the Philistine (*Goliath*).

David Kills Goliath

⁴¹The Philistine (*Goliath*) slowly walked closer and closer to David. Goliath's helper walked in front of him, carrying the shield. ⁴²Goliath looked at David and laughed. Goliath saw that David was not a soldier. David was only a handsome, red-haired* young man. ⁴³Goliath said to David, "What is that stick for? Did you come to chase me away like a dog?" Then Goliath used the names of his gods to say curses against David. ⁴⁴Goliath said to David, "Come here, and I'll feed your body to the birds and wild animals!"

⁴⁵David said to the Philistine (*Goliath*), "You come to me using sword, spear, and javelin.* But I come to you in the name of the

Foreigner Literally, "uncircumcised." This shows Goliath was a foreigner and did not share in the agreement God made with the people of Israel.

You're not even a soldier! Or, "You are only a boy!" The Hebrew word for "boy" often means "servant" or "the helper that carries a soldier's weapons."

armor The heavy clothes made from leather and metal that a soldier wore to protect himself.

sling A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

red-haired Or, "tanned" The Hebrew word means "red."

javelin A small spear.

Lord All-Powerful, the God of the armies of Israel! You have said bad things about him. "Today the Lord will let me defeat you! I will kill you. Today I will cut off your head and feed your body to the birds and wild animals. We will do that to all the other Philistines too! Then all the world will know there is a God in Israel! All the people gathered here will know that the Lord does not need swords or spears to save people. The battle belongs to the Lord! And the Lord will help us defeat all of you Philistines."

"Goliath the Philistine came near to attack David. David ran quickly to meet Goliath. David took out a stone from his bag. He put it in his sling* and swung the sling. The stone flew from the sling and hit Goliath in the forehead. The stone sank deep into his head, and Goliath fell to the ground—face down.

"So David defeated the Philistine with only a sling* and one stone! He hit the Philistine and killed him. David did not have a sword. So David ran and stood beside the Philistine. David took Goliath's own sword out of its sheath.* And David used the sword to cut off Goliath's head. And that is the way David killed the Philistine.

When the other Philistines saw their hero was dead, they turned and ran. The soldiers of Israel and Judah shouted and started chasing the Philistines. The Israelites chased the Philistines all the way to the city limits of Gath and to the gates of Ekron. They killed many of the Philistines. Their bodies lay on the Shaaraim road all the way to Gath and Ekron. After chasing the Philistines, the Israelites came back to the Philistine camp. The Israelites took many things from that camp.

"David took the Philistine's head to Jerusalem. David kept the Philistine's weapons and put them in his own tent.

Saul Begins to Fear David

"Saul watched David go out to fight Goliath. Saul spoke to Abner, commander of

the army. "Abner, who is that young man's father?"

Abner answered, "I swear I don't know, sir."

"King Saul said, "Find out who that young man's father is."

"When David came back after killing Goliath, Abner brought him to Saul. David was still holding the Philistine's head.

"Saul asked him, "Young man, who is your father?"

David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse, from Bethlehem."

David and Jonathan Become Close Friends

18 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became very close to David. Jonathan loved David as he loved himself.

"Saul kept David with him from that day on. Saul did not let David go home to his father.

"Jonathan loved David very much. Jonathan made an agreement with David. Jonathan took off the coat he was wearing and gave it to David. Jonathan also gave David his uniform. Jonathan even gave David his bow, his sword, and his belt.

Saul Notices David's Success

"Saul sent David to fight in different battles. David was very successful. Then Saul put David over the soldiers. This pleased everyone, even Saul's officers! David would go out to fight against the Philistines. After the battle, he would come back home. And women in every town in Israel would come out to meet David. They laughed and danced and played drums and lutes.* They did this right in front of Saul! The women sang,

"Saul has killed thousands of enemies.

David has killed tens of thousands of enemies!"

"The women's song upset Saul and he became very angry. Saul thought, "The women

sling A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

sheath The case for carrying swords.

lutes A musical instrument with strings like a harp.

say David killed tens of thousands of enemies. And they say I killed only thousands of enemies. So Saul watched David closely from then on.

Saul Is Afraid of David

¹⁰The next day, a bad spirit from God took a powerful hold on Saul. Saul became wild* in his house. David played the harp like he usually did. ¹¹But Saul had a spear in his hand. Saul thought, "I'll pin David to the wall." Saul threw the spear two times. But David escaped.

¹²The Lord was with David. And the Lord had left Saul. So Saul was afraid of David. ¹³Saul sent David away from him. Saul made David a commander over 1,000 soldiers. David led the soldiers in battle. ¹⁴The Lord was with David. So David was successful in everything. ¹⁵Saul saw that David was very successful. And Saul became more afraid of David.

¹⁶But all the people of Israel and Judah loved David. They loved him because he led them into battle and fought for them.

Saul Wants His Daughter to Marry David

¹⁷But Saul wanted to kill David. Saul thought of a way to trick David. Saul said to David, "Here is my oldest daughter, Merab. I will let you marry her. Then you can become a powerful soldier. You will be like a son to me! Then you go and fight the Lord's battles!" This was a trick. Saul was really thinking, "Now I won't have to kill David. I will let the Philistines kill him for me!"

¹⁸But David said, "I am not from an important family! And I am not an important man! I can't marry the king's daughter."

¹⁹So when the time came for Saul's daughter Merab to marry David, Saul let her marry Adriel from Meholah.

²⁰Saul's other daughter Michal loved David. The people told Saul that Michal loved David. This made Saul happy. ²¹Saul thought, "I will

use Michal to trap David. I will let Michal marry David. And then I will let the Philistines kill him." So Saul said to David a second time, "You can marry my daughter today."

²²Saul gave an order to his officers. Saul told them, "Speak to David in private. Say, 'Look, the king likes you. His officers like you. You should marry his daughter.'"

²³Saul's officers said those things to David. But David answered, "Do you think it is easy to become the king's son-in-law? I don't have the money to pay for the king's daughter! I am just a poor, ordinary man."

²⁴Saul's officers told Saul what David said. ²⁵Saul told them, "Say this to David, 'David, the king doesn't want you to pay money for his daughter! Saul wants to get even with his enemy. So the price for marrying his daughter is 100 Philistine foreskins.' That was Saul's secret plan. Saul thought the Philistines would kill David."

²⁶Saul's officers told those things to David. David wanted to become the king's son-in-law, so he did something immediately. ²⁷David and his men went out to fight the Philistines. They killed 200* Philistines. David took these Philistine foreskins and gave them to Saul. David did this because he wanted to become the king's son-in-law.

²⁸Saul let David marry his daughter Michal. ²⁹Saul saw the Lord was with David. But Saul also saw that his daughter, Michal, loved David. ³⁰So Saul became even more afraid of David. Saul was against David all that time.

³¹The Philistine commanders continued to go out to fight the Israelites. But every time, David defeated them. David was Saul's best officer! David became famous.

Jonathan Helps David

19 Saul told his son Jonathan and his officers to kill David. But Jonathan liked David very much. ²Jonathan warned David. "Be careful! Saul is looking for a

wild Or, "prophesied." The Hebrew word means that the person lost control of the things he said and did. Usually this meant that God was using the person to give a special message to other people.

money for his daughter In Bible times, when a man married, he usually had to pay something to the bride's father.

200 The ancient Greek translation has "100."

chance to kill you. In the morning, go into the field and hide. I will go out into the field with my father. We will stand in the field where you are hiding. I will talk to my father about you. Then I will tell you what I learn."

"Jonathan talked to Saul his father. Jonathan said good things about David. Jonathan said, "You are the king. David is your servant. David hasn't done anything wrong to you. So don't do anything wrong to him. David has always been good to you. "David risked his life when he killed the Philistine (*Goliath*). The Lord won a great victory for all Israel. You saw it, and you were happy. Why do you want to hurt David? He's innocent. There is no reason to kill him!"

"Saul listened to Jonathan. Saul made a promise. Saul said, "As surely as the Lord lives, David won't be put to death."

"So Jonathan called David. Then he told David everything that was said. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul. So David was with Saul like before.

Saul Again Tries to Kill David

"War came again. And David went out to fight the Philistines. He defeated the Philistines and they ran away from him. "But a bad spirit from the Lord came on Saul. Saul was sitting in his house. Saul had his spear in his hand. David was playing the harp. "Saul tried to throw his spear into David's body and pin him to the wall. But the spear missed David and hit the wall. David jumped out of the way and the spear stuck in the wall. That night, David ran away.

"Saul sent men to David's house. The men watched David's house. They stayed there all night. They were waiting to kill David in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him. She said, "You must run away tonight and save your life. If you don't, then you will be killed tomorrow." "Then Michal let David down out of a window. David escaped and ran away. "Michal took the household god and lay it on the bed. Michal put clothes on that statue. She also put goats' hair on its head.

"Saul sent messengers to take David prisoner. But Michal said, "David is sick."

"The men went and told Saul, but he sent the messengers back to see David. Saul told these men, "Bring David to me! Bring him lying on his bed if you must! And I will kill him."

"The messengers went to David's house. They went inside to get David, but they saw it was only a statue on the bed. And they saw its hair was only goat's hair.

"Saul said to Michal, "Why did you trick me this way? You let my enemy escape! David has run away!"

Michal answered Saul, "David told me he would kill me if I didn't help him escape!"

David Goes to the Camps at Ramah

"David escaped. David ran away to Samuel at Ramah. David told Samuel everything that Saul had done to him. Then David and Samuel went to the camps, where the prophets stayed. David stayed there.

"Saul heard that David was there in the camps near Ramah. "Saul sent men to arrest David. But when those men came to the camps, there was a group of prophets prophesying.* Samuel was standing there leading the group. God's Spirit came on Saul's messengers and they began prophesying.

"Saul heard about this, so he sent other messengers. But they also began prophesying. So Saul sent messengers a third time. And they also began prophesying. "Finally, Saul himself went to Ramah. Saul came to the big well by the threshing floor* at Secu. Saul asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"

The people answered, "In the camps near Ramah."

"Then Saul went out to the camps near Ramah. God's Spirit also came on Saul, and Saul began prophesying.* Saul prophesied more and more all the way to the camps at Ramah. "Then Saul took off his clothes. So even Saul was prophesying there in front of

prophesying Usually, this means "speaking for God." But here this probably means that some power took control of the person.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Samuel. Saul lay there naked all day and all night.

That is why people say, "Is Saul also one of the prophets?"

David and Jonathan Make an Agreement

20 David ran away from the camps near Ramah. David went to Jonathan and asked him, "What have I done wrong? What is my crime? Why is your father trying to kill me?"

¹Jonathan answered, "My father isn't trying to kill you! My father doesn't do anything without first telling me. It doesn't matter if it is very important or just a small thing, my father always tells me. Why would my father refuse to tell me he wants to kill you? No, it is not true!"

²But David answered, "Your father knows very well that I am your friend. Your father has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know about it. If he knows, he will tell David.' But surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I am very close to death!"

³Jonathan said to David, "I will do anything you want me to do."

⁴Then David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon Celebration.* I am supposed to eat with the king. But let me hide in the field until the evening. ⁵If your father notices I am gone, tell him, 'David wanted to go home to Bethlehem. His family is having its own feast for this monthly sacrifice. David asked me to let him run down to Bethlehem and join his family.' ⁶If your father says, 'Fine,' then I am safe. But if your father becomes angry, then you know that he wants to hurt me. ⁷Jonathan, be kind to me. I am your servant. You have made an agreement with me before the Lord. If I am guilty, then you yourself may kill me! But don't take me to your father."

⁸Jonathan answered, "No, never! If I learn that my father plans to hurt you, then I will warn you."

⁹David said, "Who will warn me if your father says bad things to you?"

¹⁰Then Jonathan said, "Come, let's go out into the field." So Jonathan and David went together into the field.

¹¹Jonathan said to David, "I make this promise before the Lord, the God of Israel. I promise that I will learn how my father feels about you. I will learn if he feels good about you or not. Then, in three days, I will send a message to you in the field. ¹²If my father wants to hurt you, I will let you know. I will let you leave in safety. May the Lord punish me if I don't do this. May the Lord be with you as he has been with my father. ¹³Be kind to me as long as I live. And after I die, ¹⁴don't ever stop showing your kindness to my family. The Lord will destroy all your enemies from the earth. ¹⁵If at that time Jonathan's family must be separated from David, then let it happen. May the Lord punish David's enemies."

¹⁶Then Jonathan asked David to repeat his promise of love for him. Jonathan did this because he loved David the same as he loved himself.

¹⁷Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the New Moon Feast. Your seat will be empty, so my father will see that you are gone. ¹⁸On the third day, go to the same place you hid when this trouble began. Wait by that hill. ¹⁹On the third day, I will go to that hill and act like I am shooting at a target. I will shoot some arrows. ²⁰Then I will tell the boy to go find the arrows. If everything is fine, then I will tell the boy, 'You went too far! The arrows are closer to me. Come back and get them.' If I say that, then you can come out of hiding. I promise, as surely as the Lord lives, you are safe. There is no danger. ²¹But if there is trouble, then I will say to the boy, 'The arrows are farther away. Go get them.' If I say that, then you must leave. The Lord is sending you away. ²²Remember this agreement between you and me. The Lord is our witness forever!"

²³Then David hid in the field.

New Moon Celebration The first day of the Jewish month. This was a special day of rest and worship.

Saul's Attitude at the Feast

The time for the New Moon Feast* came, and the king sat down to eat. ²⁵The king sat where he usually sat, near the wall. Jonathan sat across from Saul. Abner sat next to Saul. But David's place was empty. ²⁶That day Saul said nothing. He thought, "Maybe something happened to David so that he is not clean."[†]

²⁷On the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why didn't Jesse's son come to the New Moon Feast yesterday or today?"

²⁸Jonathan answered, "David asked me to let him to go to Bethlehem. ²⁹He said, 'Let me go. Our family is having a sacrifice* in Bethlehem. My brother ordered me to be there. Now if I am your friend, please let me go and see my brothers.' That is why David has not come to the king's table."

³⁰Saul was very angry with Jonathan. He said to Jonathan, "You are the son of a slave woman that refuses to obey. And you are just like her. I know you are on David's side! You bring shame to yourself and to your mother. ³¹As long as Jesse's son lives, you'll never be king and have a kingdom. Now, bring David to me! He is a dead man!"

³²Jonathan asked his father, "Why should David be killed? What wrong did he do?"

³³But Saul threw his spear at Jonathan and tried to kill him. So Jonathan knew that his father wanted very much to kill David. ³⁴Jonathan became angry and left the table. Jonathan was so upset and angry at his father that Jonathan refused to eat any food on the second day of the feast. Jonathan was angry because Saul humiliated him and because Saul wanted to kill David.

New Moon Feast The first day of the Jewish month was a special day of rest and worship. This feast is probably like the fellowship offerings in Lev. 7:16-21.

clean Or, "acceptable." Pure or able to be used in worshiping God. See Leviticus 11-15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

David and Jonathan Say Good-bye

³⁵The next morning Jonathan went out to the field. He went to meet David as they had agreed. Jonathan brought a little boy with him. ³⁶Jonathan said to the boy, "Run. Go find the arrows I shoot." The boy began to run, and Jonathan shot the arrows over his head. ³⁷The boy ran to the place where the arrows fell. But Jonathan called, "The arrows are farther away!" ³⁸Then Jonathan shouted, "Hurry! Go get them! Don't just stand there!" The boy picked up the arrows and brought them back to his master. ³⁹The boy knew nothing about what went on. Only Jonathan and David knew. ⁴⁰Jonathan gave his bow and arrows to the boy. Then Jonathan told the boy, "Go back to town."

⁴¹The boy left. And David came out from the place he was hiding on the other side of the hill. David bowed with his face to the ground in front of Jonathan. David bowed three times. Then David and Jonathan kissed each other. They both cried together, but David cried more than Jonathan.

⁴²Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace. We used the Lord's name and promised to be friends. We said that the Lord will be the witness between us and our descendants* forever."

David Goes to See Ahimelech the Priest

21 Then David went away, and Jonathan went back to the town. ²David went to the town named Nob to see Ahimelech the priest.

Ahimelech went out to meet David. Ahimelech was shaking with fear. Ahimelech asked David, "Why are you alone? Why is no person with you?"

³David answered Ahimelech, "The king gave me a special order. He told me, 'Don't let anyone know about this mission. No person must know what I told you to do.' I told my men where to meet me. 'Now, what food do you have with you? Give me five loaves of bread, or anything you can find.'"

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

⁵The priest said to David, "I don't have any plain bread here. But I do have some Holy Bread* here. Your officers can eat it if they have not had sexual relations with any women."^{*}

⁶David answered the priest, "We have not been with any women. My men keep their bodies holy every time we go out to fight, even on ordinary missions.* And this is especially true today, when our work is so special."

⁷There was no bread except the Holy Bread.* So the priest gave David that bread. This was the bread that the priests put on the holy table before the Lord. Each day they took this bread away and put fresh bread in its place.

⁸One of Saul's officers was there that day. He was Doeg the Edomite. Doeg had been kept there before the Lord.* Doeg was the leader of Saul's shepherds.*

⁹David asked Ahimelech, "Do you have a spear or sword here? The king's business is very important. I had to leave quickly, and I didn't bring my sword or any other weapon."

¹⁰The priest answered, "The only sword here is the sword of Goliath the Philistine. It is the sword you took from him when you killed him in the Valley of Elah. That sword is behind the ephod,* wrapped in a cloth. You may take it if you want to."

David said, "Give it to me. There is no sword like Goliath's sword!"

Holy Bread This was the special bread that was put in the Holy Tent. It is also called, "showbread" or "the bread of the Presence." Normally, only the priests should eat this bread. See Lev. 24:5-9.

sexual ... women This would make the men unclean and not able to eat any food that had been made holy by offering it to God. See, for example, Lev. 7:21.

My men ... missions See 2 Sam. 11:11 and the rules in Deut. 23:9-14.

kept there before the Lord This might mean that Doeg was there as part of a special promise to God or some other religious reason. Or it might mean he was being held there because of some crime, such as accidentally killing a man.

shepherds Or, "messengers."

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special coat like the one worn by the high priest.

David Goes to Gath

¹¹That day David ran away from Saul. David went to Achish king of Gath. ¹²Achish's officers did not like this. They said, "This is David, the king of the land of Israel. He is the person the Israelites sing about. They sing and dance for him. The Israelites sing this song:

"Saul has killed thousands of enemies.

David has killed tens of thousands of enemies!"

¹³David remembered these things. David was very much afraid of Achish, king of Gath. ¹⁴So David pretended to be crazy in front of Achish and his officers. While David was with them he acted like a crazy man. He spat on the doors of the gate. He let spit fall down his beard.

¹⁵Achish said to his officers, "Look at the man! He is crazy! Why did you bring him to me?" ¹⁶I have enough crazy men. I don't need you to bring this man to my house to act crazy in front of me! Don't let this man come into my house again!"

David Goes to Different Places

22 David left Gath. David ran away to the cave* of Adullam. David's brothers and relatives heard that David was at Adullam. They went to see David there. ²Many people joined David. All the men who were in trouble, or in debt, or not satisfied, gathered around David. And David became their leader. David had about 400 men with him.

³David left Adullam and went to Mizpah in Moab. David said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God is going to do to me." ⁴David left his parents with the king of Moab. David's parents stayed with the king of Moab as long as David was in the fort.

⁵But the prophet Gad said to David, "Don't stay in the fort. Go to the land of Judah." So David left and went to Hereth Forest.

cave Or possibly, "fortress."

Saul Destroys Ahimelech's Family

"Saul heard that the people had learned about David and his men. Saul was sitting under the tree on the hill at Gibeah. Saul had his spear in his hand. All Saul's officers were standing around him. 'Saul said to his officers that were standing around him, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Do you think the son of Jesse (*David*) will give you fields and vineyards? Do you think David will promote you and make you officers over 1,000 men and officers over 100 men? 'You men are plotting against me! You made secret plans. Not one of you told me about my son Jonathan. Not one of you told me that he made an agreement with the son of Jesse! Not one of you cares about me! Not one of you told me that my son Jonathan encouraged David. Jonathan told my servant David to hide and attack me! And that is what David is doing now!"

"Doeg the Edomite was standing there with Saul's officers. Doeg said, "I saw Jesse's son (*David*) at Nob. David came to see Ahimelech son of Ahitub. "Ahimelech prayed to the Lord for David. Ahimelech also gave David food. And Ahimelech gave David the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

"Then King Saul ordered some men to bring the priest to him. Saul told them to bring Ahimelech son of Ahitub and all his relatives. Ahimelech's relatives were priests at Nob. All of them came to the king. "Saul said to Ahimelech, "Listen now, son of Ahitub."

Ahimelech answered, "Yes, sir."

"Saul said to Ahimelech, "Why did you and Jesse's son (*David*) make secret plans against me? You gave David bread and a sword! You prayed to God for him. And right now, David is waiting to attack me!"

"Ahimelech answered, "David is very faithful to you. Not one of your other officers is as faithful as David. David is your own son-in-law. And David is the captain of your bodyguards. Your own family respects David. "That was not the first time I prayed to God for David. Not at all. Don't blame me or any of my relatives. We are your servants. I know nothing about what is happening."

"But the king said, "Ahimelech, you and all your relatives must die!" "Then the king told the guards at his side, "Go and kill the priests of the Lord. Do this because they are on David's side also. They knew David was running away, but they didn't tell me!"

But the king's officers refused to hurt the priests of the Lord.

"So the king gave the order to Doeg. Saul said, "Doeg, you go kill the priests." So Doeg the Edomite went and killed the priests. That day Doeg killed 85 men priests. * "Nob was the city of the priests. Doeg killed all the people of Nob. Doeg used his sword and killed men, women, children, and small babies. And Doeg killed their cows, donkeys, and sheep.

"But Abiathar escaped. Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech. Ahimelech was the son of Ahitub. Abiathar ran away and joined David. "Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests. "Then David told Abiathar, "I saw Doeg the Edomite at Nob that day. And I knew he would tell Saul! I am responsible for the death of your father's family. "The man (*Saul*) who wants to kill you also wants to kill me. Stay with me. Don't be afraid. You will be safe with me."

David at Keilah

23 People told David, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah. They are robbing grain from the threshing floors.*

"David asked the Lord, "Should I go and fight these Philistines?"

The Lord answered David, "Go and attack the Philistines. Save Keilah."

"But David's men said to him, "Look, we are here in Judah and we are scared. Just think how scared we will be if we go to where the Philistine army is."

"David again asked the Lord. And the Lord answered David, "Go down to Keilah. I will help you defeat the Philistines." "So David and:

priests Literally, "men that wore the linen ephod."

threshing floors Places where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

his men went to Keilah. David's men fought the Philistines. David's men defeated the Philistines and took their cows. In this way, David saved the people of Keilah. (When Abiathar ran away to David, Abiathar took an ephod* with him.)

⁷People told Saul that David was now at Keilah. Saul said, "God has given David to me! David has trapped himself. He went into a town that has gates and bars to lock the gates." ⁸Saul called all his army together for battle. They prepared to go down to Keilah to attack David and his men.

⁹David learned Saul was making plans against him. David then said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod."^{*}

¹⁰David prayed, "Lord God of Israel, I have heard that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. ¹¹Will Saul come to Keilah? Will the people of Keilah give me to Saul? Lord God of Israel, I am your servant! Please tell me!"

The Lord answered, "Saul will come."

¹²Again David asked, "Will the people of Keilah give me and my men to Saul?"

The Lord answered, "They will."

¹³So David and his men left Keilah. There were about 600 men who went with David. David and his men kept moving from place to place. Saul learned that David escaped from Keilah. So Saul did not go to that city.

Saul Chases David

¹⁴David went to the desert and stayed in the fortresses* there. David also went to the hill country in the Desert of Ziph. Every day Saul looked for David, but the Lord didn't let Saul take David.

¹⁵David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph. He was afraid because Saul was coming to kill him. ¹⁶But Saul's son Jonathan went to see David at Horesh. Jonathan helped David to have a stronger faith in God. ¹⁷Jonathan told

David, "Don't be afraid. My father Saul won't hurt you. You will become the king of Israel. And I will be second to you. Even my father knows this."

¹⁸Jonathan and David both made an agreement before the Lord. Then Jonathan went home. And David stayed at Horesh.

The People of Ziph Tell Saul About David

¹⁹The people from Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah. They told Saul, "David is hiding in our area. He is at the fortresses* of Horesh. He is on Hakilah hill, south of Jeshimon. ²⁰Now, King, come down any time you want. It is our duty to give David to you."

²¹Saul answered, "The Lord bless you for helping me. ²²Go and learn more about him. Find where David is staying. Find who has seen David there. Saul thought 'David is clever.' ²³Find all the hiding places David uses. And come back to me and tell me everything. Then I will go with you. If David is in the area, I will find him. I will find him even if I must look through all the families* in Judah."

²⁴Then the people from Ziph went back to Ziph. Saul went there later.

David and his men were in the Desert of Maon. They were in the desert area south of Jeshimon. ²⁵Saul and his men went to look for David. But people warned David. They told him that Saul was looking for him. David then went down to "The Rock" in the Desert of Maon. Saul heard that David had gone to the Desert of Maon. So Saul went to that place to find David.

²⁶Saul was on one side of the mountain. David and his men were on the other side of the same mountain. David was hurrying to get away from Saul. Saul and his soldiers were going around the mountain to capture David and his men.

²⁷But a messenger came to Saul. The messenger said, "Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking us!"

²⁸So Saul stopped chasing David and went to fight the Philistines. That is why people call

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

families Or, "thousands of people."

this place "Slippery Rock."* ²⁹David left the Desert of Maon and went to the fortresses* near En Gedi.

David Shames Saul

24 After Saul had chased the Philistines away, people told Saul, "David is in the desert area near En Gedi."

¹So Saul chose 3,000 men from all over Israel. Saul took these men and began looking for David and his men. They looked near Wild Goat Rocks. ³Saul came to the sheep pens beside the road. There was a cave near there. Saul went into the cave to relieve himself. David and his men were hiding far back in the cave. ⁴The men said to David, "Today is the day the Lord talked about! The Lord told you, 'I will give your enemy to you, then you can do anything you want with your enemy.'"

Then David crawled near Saul. David cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Saul did not see David. ⁵Later, David felt bad about cutting off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁶David said to his men, "May the Lord stop me from doing anything like this to my master! Saul is the Lord's chosen king. I should not do anything against Saul—he is the Lord's chosen king!" ⁷David said these things to stop his men. David did not let his men attack Saul.

Saul left the cave and went his way. ⁸David came out of the cave. David shouted to Saul, "My lord the king!"

Saul looked back. David bowed with his face to the ground. ⁹David said to Saul, "Why do you listen when people say, 'David plans to hurt you'? ¹⁰I don't want to hurt you! You can see that with your own eyes! The Lord let me have you today in the cave. But I refused to kill you. I was merciful to you. I said, 'I won't hurt my master. Saul is the Lord's chosen king!'"

¹¹Look at this piece of cloth in my hand. I cut off the corner of your robe. I could have killed you, but I didn't! Now, I want you to understand this. I want you to know that I am

not planning anything against you! I did nothing wrong to you! But you are hunting me and trying to kill me. ¹²Let the Lord be the judge! The Lord might punish you for the wrong you did me. But I myself won't fight you. ¹³There is an old saying:

'Bad things come from bad people.'

I haven't done anything bad! I am not a bad person! So I won't hurt you. ¹⁴Who are you chasing? Who is the king of Israel coming to fight against? You are not chasing someone who will hurt you! It is like you are chasing a dead dog or a flea. ¹⁵Let the Lord be the judge. Let him decide between you and me. The Lord will support me and show that I am right. The Lord will save me from you."

¹⁶David finished saying these words. And Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" Then Saul began to cry. Saul cried very much. ¹⁷Saul said, "You are right, and I am wrong. You have been good to me. But I have been bad to you. ¹⁸You told me about the good things you did. The Lord brought me to you, but you did not kill me. ¹⁹If a man catches his enemy, he doesn't let him go! He doesn't do good things for his enemy. May the Lord reward you because you were good to me today. ²⁰I know that you will become the new king. You will rule the kingdom of Israel. ²¹Now make a promise to me. Use the Lord's name and promise that you will not kill my descendants.* Promise me that you won't destroy my name from my father's family."

²²So David made a promise to Saul. David promised that he would not kill Saul's family. Then Saul went back home. David and his men went up to the fort.

David and Nabal

25 Samuel died. All the Israelites met together and showed their sadness about Samuel's death. They buried Samuel at his home in Ramah.

Slippery Rock Or "Sela Hammahlekoth."

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Then David moved to the Desert of Paran.

¹There was a man that lived in Maon. This man was very rich. He had 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats. He was in Carmel taking care of some business. He was in Carmel cutting the wool from his sheep. ²This man's name was Nabal.* His wife was named Abigail. Abigail was a wise and beautiful woman. But Nabal was cruel and mean. Nabal was from Caleb's family.

³David was in the desert, and he heard that Nabal was cutting the wool from his sheep. ⁴So David sent ten young men to talk to Nabal. David told them, "Go to Carmel. Find Nabal and tell him 'Hello' for me." ⁵David gave them this message for Nabal, "I hope you and your family are fine. I hope that everything you own is fine. ⁶I heard that you are cutting wool from your sheep. Your shepherds were with us for a while. And we did nothing wrong to them. We never took anything from your shepherds while they were at Carmel. ⁷Ask your servants and they will tell you this is true. Please be kind to my young men. We come to you now, at this happy time. Please give these young men anything you can. Please do this for me, your friend* David."

⁸David's men went to Nabal. They gave David's message to Nabal. ⁹But Nabal was mean to them. Nabal said, "Who is David? Who is this son of Jesse? There are many slaves that have run away from their masters these days! ¹⁰I have bread and water. And I have the meat I killed for my servants who cut the wool from my sheep. But I won't give them to men I don't even know!"

¹¹David's men went back and told David everything that Nabal said. ¹²Then David said to his men, "Put on your swords!" So David and his men put on their swords. About 400 men went with David. And 200 men stayed with the supplies.

Abigail Prevents Trouble

¹³One of Nabal's servants spoke to Nabal's wife Abigail. The servant said, "David sent messengers from the desert to meet our master (*Nabal*). But Nabal was mean to David's messengers. ¹⁴These men were very good to us. We were out in the fields with the sheep. David's men were with us the whole time. And they never did anything wrong to us! They did not steal anything from us the whole time! ¹⁵David's men protected us night and day! They were like a wall around us—they protected us while we were with them caring for the sheep. ¹⁶Now think about it and decide what you can do. Nabal was foolish to say the things he did! Terrible trouble is coming to our master (*Nabal*) and all his family."

¹⁷Abigail hurried and took 200 loaves of bread, two full winebags, five cooked sheep, about a bushel* of cooked grain, about 2 quarts* of raisins, and 200 cakes of pressed figs. She put them on donkeys. ¹⁸Then Abigail told her servants, "Go on. I will follow you." But she did not tell her husband.

¹⁹Abigail rode her donkey and came down to the other side of the mountain. She met David and his men coming from the other direction.

²⁰Before David met Abigail, David was saying, "I protected Nabal's property in the desert. I made sure none of his sheep were missing. I did all that for nothing! I did good things to him, but he has been bad to me. ²¹May God punish me if I let just one man in Nabal's family live till tomorrow morning."

²²But when Abigail saw David, she quickly got off her donkey. She bowed down before David. She bowed her face to the ground. ²³Abigail lay at David's feet. She said, "Sir, please let me talk to you. Listen to what I say. Blame me for what happened. ²⁴I didn't see the men you sent. Sir, don't pay any attention to that worthless man (*Nabal*). He is the same as his name. His name means 'Foolish,' and he is truly foolish. ²⁵The Lord has kept you from killing innocent people. Surely as the Lord

Nabal This name means "foolish."
friend Literally, "son."

about a bushel Literally, "5 seahs."
2 quarts Literally, "1 omer."

lives, and surely as you live, I hope your enemies and all people who want to harm you become like Nabal. "Now, I am bringing this gift to you. Please give these things to the men that follow you. "Please forgive me for doing wrong. I know the Lord will make your family strong – many kings will come from your family! The Lord will do this because you fight his battles. People will never find anything bad about you as long as you live! "If a person chases you to kill you, the Lord your God will save your life! But the Lord will throw away your enemies' lives like a stone from a sling!" "The Lord promised to do many good things for you. And the Lord will keep all his promises! God will make you leader over Israel. "And you won't fall into this trap. You won't be guilty of doing bad things! You won't be guilty of killing innocent people! Please remember me at the time the Lord brings you success."

"David answered Abigail, "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel. God sent you to meet me. "God bless you for your good judgment. You kept me from killing innocent people today. "Surely as the Lord, the God of Israel lives, if you hadn't come quickly to meet me, then not one man in Nabal's family would have lived until tomorrow morning."

"Then David accepted Abigail's gifts. David told her, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words, and I will do what you have asked."

Nabal's Death

"Abigail went back to Nabal. Nabal was in the house. Nabal had been eating like a king. Nabal was drunk and feeling good. So Abigail told Nabal nothing until the next morning. "The next morning, Nabal was sober. So his wife told him everything. And Nabal had a heart attack. He became as stiff as a rock! "About ten days later, the Lord caused Nabal to die.

"David heard that Nabal was dead. David said, "Praise to the Lord! Nabal said bad things

about me, but the Lord supported me. The Lord kept me from doing wrong. And the Lord caused Nabal to die because he did wrong."

Then David sent a message to Abigail. David asked her to become his wife. "David's servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David sent us to get you. David wants you to become his wife."

"Abigail bowed her face to the ground. She said, "I am your woman servant. I am ready to serve you. I am ready to wash the feet of my master's (*David's*) servants."

"Abigail quickly got on a donkey and went with David's messengers. Abigail brought five maids with her. She became David's wife.

"David also had married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Both Ahinoam and Abigail were David's wives. "Saul's daughter, Michal, was also David's wife. But Saul had given her to Palti son of Laish from Gallim.

David and Abishai Enter Saul's Camp

26 The people of Ziph went to see Saul at Gibeah. They said to Saul, "David is hiding on the hill of Hakilah. This hill is across from Jeshimon."

"Saul went down to the desert of Ziph. Saul took the 3,000 soldiers he had chosen from all over Israel. Saul and these men looked for David in the desert of Ziph. "Saul put up his camp on the hill of Hakilah. The camp was beside the road across from Jeshimon.

David was staying in the desert. David learned that Saul had followed him there. "David then sent out spies.* And David learned that Saul had come to Hakilah.

"Then David went to the place where Saul had put up his camp. David saw where Saul and Abner were sleeping. (Abner son of Ner was the commander of Saul's army.) Saul was sleeping in the middle of the camp. All the army was around Saul.

wash ... servants In David's time when a person washed the feet of people, it was a sign the person was humble.

spies People who secretly go to learn about the enemy's strengths and weaknesses.

sling A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

"David talked to Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah. (Abishai was Joab's brother.) He asked them, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?"

Abishai answered, "I will go with you."

"Night came. David and Abishai went into Saul's camp. Saul was asleep in the middle of the camp. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the army were asleep around Saul. "Abishai said to David, "Today God has let you defeat your enemy. Let me pin Saul to the ground with his spear. I will only do it once!"

"But David said to Abishai, "Don't kill Saul! Any person that hurts the Lord's chosen king must be punished! "Surely as the Lord lives, the Lord himself will punish Saul. Maybe Saul will die naturally, or maybe Saul will be killed in battle. "But I pray that the Lord never lets me hurt the Lord's chosen king! Now pick up the spear and water jug that are near Saul's head. Then let's go."

"So David took the spear and water jug that were near Saul's head. Then David and Abishai left Saul's camp. No person saw it happen. No person knew about it. Not one person even woke up! Saul and all of his soldiers slept because the Lord put them into a deep sleep.

David Shames Saul Again

"David crossed over to the other side. David stood on top of the mountain across the valley from Saul's camp. David and Saul's camp were far apart. "David shouted to the army and to Abner son of Ner. "Answer me, Abner!"

Abner answered, "Who are you? Why are you calling the king?"

"David said, "You are a man, aren't you? And you are better than any other man in Israel. Is that right? Then why didn't you guard your master, the king? An ordinary man came into your camp to kill your master, the king. "You made a big mistake! Surely as the Lord lives, you and your men should die. Why? Because you didn't protect your master, the Lord's chosen king. Look for the king's spear and the water jug that was near Saul's head? Where are

they?"

"Saul knew David's voice. Saul said, "Is that your voice, David my son?"

David answered, "Yes, it is my voice, my master and king." "David also said, "Sir, why are you chasing me? What wrong have I done? What am I guilty of? "My master and king, listen to me! If the Lord caused you to be angry against me, then let him accept an offering. But if men caused you to be angry against me, then let the Lord cause bad things to happen to them. Men have forced me to leave the land the Lord gave me. Men have told me, 'Go live with the foreigners. Go and serve other gods.' "Now don't make me die far from the Lord's presence. The king of Israel has come out looking for a flea. You are like a man hunting a partridge in the mountains!"

"Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Today you showed me that my life is important to you. So I will not try to hurt you. I have acted foolishly. I have made a big mistake."

"David answered, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of your young men come here and get it. "The Lord pays every man for the things he does—he rewards him if he does right, and he punishes him if he does wrong. The Lord let me defeat you today, but I wouldn't hurt the Lord's chosen king. "Today I showed you that your life is important to me! In the same way, the Lord will show that my life is important to him! The Lord will save me from every trouble."

"Then Saul said to David, "God bless you, David my son. You will do great things and you will succeed."

David went on his way, and Saul went back home.

David Lives with the Philistines

27 But David thought to himself, "Saul will catch me someday. The best thing

man ... mountains When men hunted partridges in the mountains, they chased them until the birds became too tired to go on. Then they killed the birds. Saul was chasing David the same way. This is also a word play. The Hebrew word for "partridge" is like the word for "calling" in verse 14.

I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up looking for me in Israel. That way I will escape from Saul."

³So David and his 600 men left Israel. They went to Achish son of Maach. Achish was king of Gath. ⁴David, his men, and their families lived in Gath with Achish. David had his two wives with him. They were Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel. Abigail was the widow* of Nabal. ⁵People told Saul that David had run away to Gath. And Saul stopped looking for him.

⁶David said to Achish, "If you are pleased with me, then give me a place in one of the country towns. I am only your servant. I should live there, not here with you in this royal city."

⁷That day Achish gave David the town of Ziklag. And Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. ⁸David lived with the Philistines one year and four months.

David Fools King Achish

¹David and his men went to fight the Amalekites and the people living in Geshur. David's men defeated them and took their wealth. People lived in the area from Telem near Shur all the way to Egypt. ²David fought the people in that area. David didn't leave any person alive. David took all their sheep, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothes. Then he brought it back to Achish.

³David did this many times. Each time Achish asked David where he fought and took those things. David said, "I fought against the southern part of Judah," or "I fought against the southern part of Jerahmeel," or "I fought against the southern part of the Kenizzites."⁴

⁵David never brought a man or woman alive to Gath. David thought, "If we let any person live, that person might tell Achish what I really did!"

David did this all the time he lived in the Philistine land. ⁶Achish began to trust David.

Achish said to himself, "Now David's own people hate him. The Israelites hate David very much. Now David will serve me forever."

The Philistines Prepare for War

28 Later the Philistines gathered their armies to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "Do you understand that you and your men must go with me to fight against Israel?"

²David answered, "Certainly! Then you can see for yourself what I can do!"

Achish said, "Fine, I will make you my bodyguard. You will protect me forever."

Saul and the Woman at Endor

¹Samuel died. All the Israelites showed their sadness about Samuel's death. They buried Samuel in Ramah, his home town. Earlier, Saul had forced the mediums* and fortune-tellers to leave Israel.

²The Philistines prepared for war. They came to Shunem and made their camp at that place. Saul gathered all the Israelites and made his camp at Gilboa. ³Saul saw the Philistine army, and he was scared. His heart pounded with fear. ⁴Saul prayed to the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him. God did not talk to Saul in dreams. God did not use the Urim,* to give him an answer. And God did not use prophets to speak to Saul. ⁵Finally, Saul said to his officers, "Find me a woman who is a medium.* Then I can go ask her what will happen in this war."

His officers answered, "There is a medium* in Endor."

⁶Saul put on different clothes. Saul did this so no person would know who he was. At night, Saul went with two of his men to see the woman. Saul said to the woman, "Show the future for me through a ghost. Call up the person I name."

widow A woman whose husband has died.

Judah, Jerahmeel, Kenizzites All these places belonged to Israel. David made Achish think he had fought against his own people, the Israelites.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

Urim Urim and Thummim: In some way people were able to get answers from God through them. It is not clear how this happened. See Numbers 27:20-22.

⁹But the woman said to Saul, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has forced the mediums* and fortune-tellers to leave the land of Israel. You are trying to trap me and kill me."

¹⁰Saul used the Lord's name and made a promise to the woman. "Surely as the Lord lives, you won't be punished for doing this."

¹¹The woman asked, "Who do you want me to bring up for you?"

Saul answered, "Bring up Samuel."

¹²And it happened! The woman saw Samuel and screamed loudly. She said to Saul, "You tricked me! You are Saul."

¹³The king said to the woman, "Don't be afraid! What do you see?"

The woman said, "I see a spirit coming up out of the ground.*"

¹⁴Saul asked, "What does he look like?"

The woman answered, "He looks like an old man wearing a robe."

Then Saul knew it was Samuel. Saul bowed down. His face touched the ground. ¹⁵Samuel said to Saul, "Why did you bother me? Why did you bring me up?"

Saul answered, "I am in trouble! The Philistines have come to fight against me, and God left me. God won't answer me any more. He won't use prophets or dreams to answer me. That's why I called you. I want you to tell me what to do!"

¹⁶Samuel said, "The Lord left you. Now he is with your neighbor. So why do you call on me?" ¹⁷The Lord did what he said he would do. He used me to tell you about those things. The Lord pulled the kingdom from your hands. And he gave the kingdom to one of your neighbors. That neighbor is David. ¹⁸You did not obey the Lord. You did not destroy the Amalekites and show them how angry the Lord was at them. That is why the Lord did this to you today. ¹⁹The Lord will give you and Israel to the Philistines. The Lord will let the Philistines defeat the army of Israel. And tomorrow, you and your sons will be here with me!"

²⁰Saul quickly fell to the ground and lay there. Saul was afraid because of the things Samuel said. Saul was also very weak because he did not eat any food all that day and night.

²¹The woman came to Saul. She saw Saul was really scared. She said, "Look, I am your servant. I have obeyed you. I risked my life and did what you told me to do. ²²Now please listen to me. Let me give you some food. You must eat. Then you will have enough strength to go on your way."

²³But Saul refused. He said, "I won't eat."

Saul's officers joined the woman and begged him to eat. Finally, Saul listened to them. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed. ²⁴The woman had a fat calf at the house. She quickly killed the calf. She took some flour and pressed it with her hands. Then she baked some bread without yeast. ²⁵The woman put the food before Saul and his officers. Saul and his officers ate. Then that same night they got up and left.

The Philistine Rulers Refuse David's Help

29 The Philistines gathered all their soldiers at Aphek. The Israelites camped by the spring at Jezreel. ²The Philistine rulers were marching with their groups of 100 men and 1,000 men. David and his men were marching at the back with Achish.

³The Philistine captains asked, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"

Achish told the Philistine captains, "This is David. David was one of Saul's officers. David has been with me for a long time. I found nothing wrong in David since the time he left Saul and came to me."

⁴But the Philistine captains were angry with Achish. They said, "Send David back! David must go back to the city you gave him. He can't go with us into battle. If he is here, then we will have an enemy in our own camp. He would please his king (Saul) by killing our own men. ⁵David is the same person the Israelites sing and dance about in this song:

"Saul has killed thousands of enemies.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

ground Or, "Sheol, the place of death."

David has killed tens of thousands of enemies!"

"So Achish called David. Achish said, 'Surely as the Lord lives, you are loyal to me. I would be pleased to have you serve in my army. Since the day you came to me, I have found nothing wrong in you. Also the Philistine, rulers think you are a good man.*' Go back in peace. Don't do anything against the Philistine rulers."

"David asked, 'What wrong have I done? What evil have you found in me from the day I came to you until now. Why won't you allow me to fight the enemies of my lord the king?'"

"Achish answered, 'I know that I like you. You are like an angel from God. But the Philistine captains still say, 'David can't go with us into battle.' Early in the morning, you and your men should go back. Go back to the city I gave you. Don't pay attention to the bad things the captains say about you. You are a good man. So leave as soon as the sun comes up."

"So David and his men got up early in the morning. They went back to the country of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

The Amalekites Attack Ziklag

30 On the third day, David and his men arrived at Ziklag. They saw that the Amalekites had attacked Ziklag. The Amalekites invaded the Negev area. They attacked Ziklag and burned the city. They took the women in Ziklag as prisoners. They took all the people, both young and old. They did not kill any of the people. They only took them away.

"David and his men came to Ziklag. And they found the city burning. Their wives, sons, and daughters were gone. The Amalekites took them. David and the other men in his army cried loudly until they were too weak to cry any more. The Amalekites had taken David's two

wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow* of Nabal from Carmel.

"All the men in the army was sad and angry because their sons and daughters were taken as prisoners. The men were talking about killing David with stones. This made David very upset. But David found strength in the Lord his God. David said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod.'"

"Then David prayed to the Lord. 'Should I chase the people who took our families? Will I catch them?'"

The Lord answered, "Chase them. You will catch them. You will save your families."

David and His Men Find the Egyptian Slave

"David took the 600 men with him and went to Besor Ravine. Some of the men stayed at this place. There were 200 men that stayed there because they were too tired and weak to continue. So David and 400 men continued to chase the Amalekites.

"David's men found an Egyptian in a field. They took the Egyptian to David. They gave the Egyptian some water to drink and some food to eat. They gave the Egyptian a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins. He felt better after eating. He had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and nights.

"David asked the Egyptian, 'Who is your master? Where do you come from?'"

The Egyptian answered, 'I am an Egyptian. I am the slave of an Amalekite. Three days ago I became sick and my master left me. We had attacked the Negev where the Kerethites* live. We attacked the land of Judah, and in the Negev area where Caleb's people live. We also burned Ziklag."

"David asked the Egyptian, 'Will you lead me to the people that took our families?'"

The Egyptian answered, 'You promise before God that you won't kill me or give me back to my master. If you do that, then I will help you find them."

Philistine ... man The Philistine rulers are pleased with David. It is the Philistine commanders of the army who are against him.

widow A woman whose husband has died.

ephod This was probably the special robe worn by priests.

Kerethites Or "people from Crete." This is probably the Philistines.

David Defeats the Amalekites

¹⁶The Egyptian led David to the Amalekites. They were lying around on the ground, eating and drinking. They were celebrating with the many things they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. ¹⁷David defeated them and killed them. They fought from sunrise until the evening of the next day. None of the Amalekites escaped, except 400 young men that jumped onto their camels and rode away.

¹⁸David got his two wives back. David also got back everything the Amalekites had taken. ¹⁹Nothing was missing. They found all the children and old people. They found all their sons and daughters. And they found all their valuable things. They got back everything the Amalekites had taken. David brought everything back. ²⁰David took all the sheep and cattle. David's men made these animals go in front. David's men said, "They are David's prize."

All Men Will Share Equally

²¹David came to the 200 men that had stayed at Besor Ravine. These were the men that were too tired and weak to follow David. These men came out to meet David and the soldiers that went with him. The men at the Besor Ravine greeted David and his army as they came near. ²²But there were bad men and trouble-makers in the group that went with David. Those trouble-makers said, "These 200 men didn't go with us. So we won't give any of them the things we took. These men may only take their wives and children."

²³David answered, "No, my brothers. Don't do that! Think about what the Lord gave us! The Lord let us defeat the enemy that attacked us. ²⁴No one will listen to what you say! The share will be the same for the man who stayed with the supplies and for the man who went into battle. Everyone will share alike." ²⁵David made this an order and rule for Israel. This rule continues even today.

²⁶David arrived in Ziklag. Then he sent some of the things he took from the Amalekites, to his friends, the leaders of Judah.

David said, "Here is a present for you from the things we took from, the Lord's enemies."

²⁷David sent some of those things from the Amalekites to the leaders in Bethel, Ramoth in the Negev, Jattir, ²⁸Arzer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, ²⁹Racal, the cities of the Jerahmeelites and the cities of the Kenites, ³⁰Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach, ³¹and Hebron. David sent some of those things to the leaders in all the other places where David and his men had been.

The Death of Saul

31 The Philistines fought against Israel, and the Israelites ran away from the Philistines. Many Israelites were killed at Mount Gilboa. ²The Philistines fought hard against Saul and his sons. The Philistines killed Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua.

³The battle became worse against Saul. The archers* shot arrows at Saul, and Saul was hurt very badly. ⁴Saul said to the servant that carried his armor, "Take your sword and kill me. Then those foreigners won't come to hurt me and make fun of me." But Saul's armor carrier refused. Saul's helper was very scared.

So Saul took his own sword and killed himself. ⁵The armor carrier saw that Saul was dead. So he also killed himself with his own sword. He died there with Saul. ⁶So Saul, his three sons, and his armor carrier all died together that day.

The Philistines Find Saul's Body

⁷The Israelites, that lived, on the other side of the valley saw the Israelite army running away. They saw that Saul and his sons were dead. So those Israelites left their cities and ran away. Then the Philistines came and took those cities.

⁸The next day, the Philistines came to take things from the dead bodies. They found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. ⁹The Philistines cut off Saul's head and took his

archers Soldiers that used bows and arrows.

armor. They carried the news to the Philistine people and to the temple of their idols.* ¹⁰They put Saul's armor in the temple of Astarte.* The Philistines also hung Saul's body on the wall of Beth Shan.

¹¹The people living in Jabesh Gilead heard about the things that the Philistines did to Saul.

¹²So all the soldiers of Jabesh went to Beth Shan. They marched all night! Then they took

Saul's body off the wall at Beth Shan. They also took down the bodies of Saul's sons. Then they took those bodies to Jabesh. There the people of Jabesh burned the bodies of Saul and his three sons. ¹³Then these people took the bones of Saul and his three sons, and buried them under the tree in Jabesh. Then the people of Jabesh showed their sadness. The people of Jabesh did not eat for seven days.*

idols Statues of false gods.

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

The ... days This was a way to show their deep sorrow at the death of Saul. They never forgot that Saul saved their city. See 1 Samuel 11.

2 Samuel

David Learns About Saul's Death

1 After David had defeated the Philistines, he came back to Ziklag and stayed there two days. This happened after Saul died. ²On the third day, a young man came to Ziklag. This man came from the camp where Saul was. The man's clothes were torn, and he had dirt on his head.* The man came to David. The man bowed down on the ground before David..

³David asked the man, "Where do you come from?"

The man answered David, "I escaped from the camp of the Israelites."

⁴David said to the man, "Please tell me, who won the battle?"*

The man answered, "The people have run away from the battle. Many of the people have fallen and are dead. Saul and his son Jonathan are both dead also."

⁵David said to the young man, "How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are both dead?"

⁶The young man that told David said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa. There I saw Saul leaning on his spear. The Philistine, chariots* and the men riding on horses were coming closer and closer to Saul. ⁷Saul looked back and saw me. He called to me. I answered him, 'Here I am!' ⁸Then Saul asked me, 'Who are you?' I told him, 'I am an Amalekite.'

⁹"Saul said to me, 'Please kill me. I am badly hurt. And I am almost dead already.' ¹⁰So I stopped and killed him. He was hurt so bad that I knew he could not live. Then I took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm. And I have brought the crown and bracelet here to you, my lord."

¹¹Then David tore his clothes to show he was very sad. All the men with David did the same thing. ¹²They were very sad and cried. They did not eat until evening. They cried because Saul and his son Jonathan were dead. David and his men cried for the Lord's people that were dead, and they cried for Israel. They cried because Saul, his son Jonathan, and many Israelites had been killed with swords.

David Orders the Amalekite Killed

¹³David talked to the young man that told him about Saul's death. David asked, "Where are you from?"

The young man answered, "I am the son of a foreigner. I am an Amalekite."

¹⁴David said to the young man, "Why were you not afraid to kill the Lord's chosen king?"

¹⁵Then David called one of the young men. David told the young man, "Go and kill the Amalekite."

The young Israelite killed the Amalekite. ¹⁶David said to the Amalekite, "You are responsible for your own death!* You have spoken against yourself. You said, 'I have killed the Lord's chosen king.'"

he had ... head Torn clothes and dirt on the head were a sign the man was very sad.

who ... battle Literally, "What is the situation?"
chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

You ... death Literally, "Your blood be on your own head!"

2 SAMUEL 1:17-2:7

David's Sad Song About Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷David sang a sad song about Saul and his son Jonathan. ¹⁸David told his men, to teach the song to the people of Judah. This song is called, "The Bow." This song is written in the Book of Jashar.*

¹⁹ "O Israel, your beauty has been destroyed on the high places.

The strong men have fallen.

²⁰ Don't tell it in Gath.*

Don't announce it in the streets of Ashkelon.*

The daughters of the Philistines may be happy.

The daughters of the uncircumcised* may rejoice.

²¹ May there be no dew or rain on the mountains of Gilboa.

May there be no offerings coming from those fields.

The strong men's shield became dirty there.

Saul's shield was not polished with oil.*

²² Jonathan's bow killed its share of enemies.

And Saul's sword killed its share of enemies.

They have touched the blood of dead men.

They have touched the fat of strong men.

²³ We loved Saul and Jonathan;

We enjoyed them while they lived.

Saul and Jonathan are together even in death.

They went faster than eagles,

They were stronger than lions.

²⁴ You daughters of Israel, cry for Saul!

Saul gave you red dresses;

Saul put gold decorations on your dresses.

²⁵ Strong men have fallen in the battle.

Jonathan is dead on Gilboa's hills.

²⁶ I cry for you, my brother Jonathan!

I enjoyed your friendship so much.

Your love to me was stronger than the love of women.

²⁷ Strong men have fallen in battle.

The weapons of war are gone."

David and His Men Move to Hebron

2 Later David prayed to the Lord. E said, "Should I go up into any of the cities of Judah?"

The Lord said to David, "Go."

David asked, "Where should I go?"

The Lord answered, "To Hebron."

³So David went up there. His two v went with him. They were Ahinoam Jezreel and Abigail the widow* of Nab Carmel. ⁴David also brought his men and families. All of them made their homes in cities of Hebron.

David Thanks the People of Jabesh

⁵The men of Judah came and anointed David king over Judah. Then they told D "The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones buried Saul."

⁶David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead. These messengers told D words to, the men in Jabesh: "The Lord I you, because you have shown kindness to lord Saul by burying his ashes.* ⁷The will now be kind and true to you. I will also be kind to you because you have buried S: ashes.* ⁸Now be strong and brave, because your lord is dead and the family group of J has anointed* me to be their king."

Book of Jashar An ancient lost book about the wars of Israel.

Gath Gath was the capital of the Philistines.

Ashkelon One of the five Philistine cities.

uncircumcised Men that were not circumcised. This meant they were Philistines, not Jews.

Saul's ... oil Or, "Saul's shield was not anointed with oil."

widow A woman whose husband has died.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

his ashes The bodies of both Saul and Jonathan burned. See 1 Samuel 31:12.

Ish-Bosheth Becomes King

¹Abner son of Ner was the captain of Saul's army. Abner took Saul's son Ish-Bosheth to Mahanaim. ²At that place, Abner made Ish-Bosheth king of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin. Ish-Bosheth became the king of all Israel. ³Ish-Bosheth was Saul's son. Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when he began to rule over Israel. He ruled two years. But the family group of Judah followed David. ⁴David was king in Hebron over the family group of Judah for seven years and six months.

Ish-Bosheth's Men and David's Men Have a Contest

⁵Abner son of Ner and the servants of Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, left Mahanaim. They went to Gibeon. ⁶Joab, Zeruiah's son, and the servants of David also went to Gibeon. They met Abner and Ish-Bosheth's servants at the pool of Gibeon. Abner's group sat on one side of the pool. Joab's group sat on the other side of the pool.

⁷Abner said to Joab, "Let us have the young men get up and have a contest here."

Joab said, "Yes, let them have a contest."

⁸Then the young men got up. The two groups counted their men for the contest. Twelve men were chosen from the family group of Benjamin for Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son. Twelve men were chosen from David's servants. ⁹Each man grabbed his enemy's head and stabbed his enemy's side with his sword. So the men fell down together. That is why the place is called "The Field of the Sharp Knives." ¹⁰The place is in Gibeon. ¹¹That day the contest became a terrible battle. David's servants defeated Abner and the Israelites.

Abner Kills Asahel

¹²Zeruiah had three sons, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was a fast runner. He was as fast as a deer in the field. ¹³Asahel chased Abner. Asahel went straight toward Abner.

¹⁴Abner looked back and asked, "Are you Asahel?"

Asahel said, "I am."

¹⁵Then Abner said to Asahel, "Turn to your right or left and catch one of the young boys, and take his armor* for yourself." But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner.

¹⁶Abner again said to Asahel, "Stop chasing me! If you don't stop, I will kill you! If I kill you, I will not be able to look at your brother Joab's face again."

¹⁷But Asahel refused to stop chasing Abner. So Abner used the back end of his spear and thrust it into Asahel's stomach. The spear went so deep into Asahel's stomach that it came out of his back. Asahel died right there.

Joab and Abishai Chase Abner

Asahel's body lay on the ground. The men ran to him and stopped. ¹⁸But Joab and Abishai continued chasing Abner.* The sun was just going down when they arrived at Ammah Hill. (Ammah Hill is in front of Giah on the way to Gibeon Desert.) ¹⁹The men from the family group of Benjamin came to Abner. They all stood together at the top of the hill.

²⁰Abner shouted to Joab. Abner said, "Must we fight and kill each other forever? Surely you know that this will only end in sadness. Tell the people to stop chasing their own brothers."

²¹Then Joab said, "It is a good thing you said that. As surely as God is alive, if you had not said anything, then people would still be chasing their brothers in the morning." ²²Then Joab blew a trumpet, and his people stopped chasing the Israelites. They did not try to fight the Israelites any more.

²³Abner and his men went all night through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan River. They marched all day and arrived at Mahanaim.

²⁴Joab came back after he had stopped chasing Abner. When Joab had gathered the

armor Clothing that had metal or hard things in it to protect the person wearing it in war.

Joab, Abishai Joab and Abishai were the brothers of Asahel, the man that Abner killed. See verse 18.

The Field of the Sharp Knives The name in Hebrew is "Helkaith-Hazzurim."

people together, 19 of David's servants were missing. Asahel was also missing. "But David's servants had killed 350 members of Abner's followers from the family group of Benjamin. "The servants of David took Asahel and buried him in the tomb of his father at Bethlehem.

Joab and his men marched all night. The sun came up when they reached Hebron.

War Between Israel and Judah

3 There was war for a long time between Saul's family and David's family.* David became stronger and stronger. And Saul's family became weaker and weaker.

David's Six Sons Born at Hebron

"David had these sons that were born at Hebron. The first son was Ammon. Ammon's mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. "The second son was Kileab. Kileab's mother was Abigail, the widow* of Nabal from Carmel. The third son was Absalom. Absalom's mother was Maacah daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. "The fourth son was Adonijah. Adonijah's mother was Haggith. The fifth son was Shephatiah. Shephatiah's mother was Abital. "The sixth son was Ithrean. Ithrean's mother was David's wife Eglah. David had these six sons, born at Hebron.

Abner Decides to Join David

"While there was war between Saul's family and David's family, Abner made himself stronger in Saul's army.

"Saul had a woman servant* named Rizpah. She was like a wife for him. Rizpah was the daughter of Aiah. Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you have sexual relations with my father's servant woman?"

between ... David's family The Judah family group followed David. They were at war with the other family groups that were following Saul.

widow A woman whose husband has died.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

"Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said. Abner said, "I have been loyal to Saul and his family. I did not give you to David— I did not let him defeat you. I am not a traitor working for Judah.* But now you are saying that I did this bad thing. "I promise that I will now make sure that the things God said will happen. The Lord said he would take the kingdom from Saul's family and give it to David. The Lord will make David king of Israel and Judah. He will rule from Dan to Beersheba.* And may God do bad things to me if I don't help do those things."

"Ish-Bosheth could not say anything to Abner. Ish-Bosheth was too afraid of him.

"Abner sent messengers to David. Abner said, "You control this country. Make an agreement with me, and I will help you become the ruler of all the people of Israel."

"David answered, "Good! I will make an agreement with you. But I ask you only one thing: I will not meet with you until you bring Saul's daughter Michal to me."

David Gets His Wife Michal Back

"David sent messengers to Saul's son Ish-Bosheth. David said, "Give me my wife Michal. She was promised to me. I killed 100 Philistines to get her."*

"Then Ish-Bosheth told the men to go and take Michal from a man named Paltiel son of Laish. "Michal's husband Paltiel went with Michal. Paltiel was crying while he followed Michal to Bahurim. But Abner said to Paltiel, "Go back home." So Paltiel went back home.

Abner Promises to Help David

"Abner sent this message to the leaders of Israel. He said, "You have been wanting to make David your king. "Now do it! The Lord was talking about David when he said, 'I will

I am ... Judah Literally, "Am I a dog's head of Judah?"

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

I killed ... to get her Literally, "I paid for her with 100 Philistine foreskins."

save my people the Israelites from the Philistines and all their other enemies. I will do this through my servant David.”

¹⁰Abner said these things to David in Hebron. And he said these things to the people of the Benjamin family group. The things Abner said sounded good to the Benjamin family group and to all the people of Israel.

¹¹Then Abner came up to David at Hebron. Abner brought 20 men with him. David gave a party for Abner and for all the men that came with him.

¹²Abner said to David, “Lord, my king, I will go and bring all the Israelites to you. Then they will make an agreement with you. And you will rule over all Israel, like you wanted.”

Then David let Abner leave. And Abner left in peace.

Abner's Death

¹Joab and David's officers came from battle. They had many valuable things that they had taken from the enemy. David had let Abner leave in peace. So Abner was not with David at Hebron. ²Joab and all his army arrived at Hebron. The army said to Joab, “Abner son of Ner came to King David. And David let Abner leave in peace.” ³Joab came to the king and said, “What have you done? Abner came to you, but you sent him away without hurting him! Why?” ⁴You know Abner son of Ner. He came to trick you. He came to learn all about the things you are doing.”

⁵Joab left David, and sent messengers to Abner at the well of Sirah. The messengers brought Abner back, but David did not know this. ⁶When Abner arrived at Hebron, Joab took him to one side in the middle of the gateway to talk with him in private. But Joab stabbed Abner in the stomach, and Abner died. In the past, Abner had killed Joab's brother Asahel. So Joab killed Abner.

David Cries for Abner

¹Later David heard the news. David said, “My kingdom and I are innocent of the death of Abner son of Ner. The Lord knows this.” ²Joab

and his family are responsible for this, and all his family are to be blamed. I hope many troubles will come to Joab's family. I hope that his family always has someone with the sickness of leprosy, and someone that must use crutches, and someone that will be killed in war, and someone without food to eat.”

³Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because Abner had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.

⁴David said to Joab and to all the people with Joab, “Tear your clothes and put on clothes of sadness.* Cry for Abner.” They buried Abner in Hebron. David went to the funeral. King David and all the people cried at Abner's grave.

⁵King David sang this sad song for Abner:

“Did Abner die like a foolish man?

⁶ His hands were not tied.
His feet were not put in chains.
You have fallen before evil men.
You have fallen dead.”

Then all the people cried again for Abner. ⁷All the people came to encourage David to eat food while it was still day. But David made a special promise. He said, “May God punish me and add trouble to me if I eat bread or any other food before the sun goes down.”

⁸All the people saw what happened, and they agreed with the things that King David was doing. ⁹That day all the people of Judah and all the Israelites understood that it was not King David that killed Abner son of Ner.

¹⁰King David said to his servants, “You know that a very important leader has died today in Israel. ¹¹And this was the day that I was anointed* to be the king. These sons of Zeruiah have caused much trouble for me. May the Lord give these men the punishment they should have.”

Tear ... sadness This was a way to show great sadness.
anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

Baanah and Recab, Captains of Saul's Army

4 Saul's son (*Ish-Bosheth*) heard that Abner had died at Hebron. Ish-Bosheth and all his people became very scared. ²Two men that were captains in the army came to Saul's son (*Ish-Bosheth*). One man was named Baanah and the second man was named Recab. Baanah and Recab were the sons of Rimmon of Beeroth. They came from the family group of Benjamin. The town Beeroth belonged to the family group of Benjamin. ³The people of Beeroth ran away to Gittaim. And they still live there today.

Jonathan's Son Mephibosheth

⁴Saul's son Jonathan had a son that was crippled. Jonathan's son was five years old when the news came that Saul and Jonathan were dead at Jezreel. This son's nurse picked him up and ran away. But when the nurse hurried to run away, Jonathan's son fell out of his nurse's arms. (This is how Jonathan's son, became crippled. This son's name is Mephibosheth.

Baanah and Recab Kill Ish-Bosheth

⁵Recab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon from Beeroth, went to Ish-Bosheth's house at noon. Ish-Bosheth was resting because it was hot. ⁶Recab and Baanah came into the middle of the house like, they were going to get some wheat. Ish-Bosheth was lying on his bed in his bedroom. Recab and Baanah stabbed and killed Ish-Bosheth. Then they cut off his head and took it with them. They traveled all night by the way through the Arabah. ⁷They arrived at Hebron. And they gave Ish-Bosheth's head to David.

Recab and Baanah said to the King David, "Here is the head of your enemy Ish-Bosheth son of Saul. He tried to kill you. The Lord has punished Saul and his family for you today."

⁸David answered Recab and his brother Baanah. David said, "Surely, as the Lord lives, he has saved me from all trouble. ⁹But a person thought he would bring me good news. He told me, 'Look! Saul is dead.' He thought I would

reward him for bringing me the news. But I took hold of this man and killed him at Ziklag. ¹⁰So I must require your death because evil men have killed a good man on his own bed in his own house."

¹¹David commanded the young men to kill Recab and Baanah. Then the young men cut off the hands and feet of Recab and Baanah and hung them by the pool of Hebron. Then they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in the same place where Abner was buried at Hebron.

The Israelites Make David King

5 Then all the family groups of Israel came to David at Hebron. They said to David, "Look, we are one family!" ²In the past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one that led us in battle, for Israel. The Lord said to you, "You will become shepherd of my people the Israelites. You will become ruler over Israel."

³All the leaders of Israel came to King David at Hebron. King David made an agreement with these leaders in Hebron in front of the Lord. Then the leaders anointed* David king over Israel.

⁴David was 30 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 40 years. ⁵He ruled over Judah in Hebron seven years and six months. And he ruled over all Israel and Judah in Jerusalem 33 years.

David Wins the Town of Jerusalem

⁶The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites. (The Jebusites were the people that lived in the land). The Jebusites said to David, "You can't come into our city." ⁷Even blind and crippled people can stop you." (They said this because they thought that David would not be able to enter into their city. ⁸But

one family Literally, "Your flesh and blood."

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

You can't come ... city The city of Jerusalem was built on a hill. And the city had high walls around it. So it was very hard to capture.

David did take the fort of Zion. This fort became the City of David.)*

¹That day David said to his men, "If you want to defeat the Jebusites, go through the water tunnel* and reach those 'crippled' and 'blind' enemies."

This is why people say, "The blind and the crippled can't come into the house.*"

²David lived in the fort and called it "The City of David."* David built the area called the Millo.* He also built more buildings inside the city. ³David became stronger and stronger because the Lord All-Powerful was with him.

⁴Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David. Hiram also sent cedar trees, carpenters and men that build things from stone. They built a house for David. ⁵At that time, David knew that the Lord had really made him king of Israel. And David knew that the Lord had made his kingdom very important to God's people, the people of Israel.

⁶David moved from Hebron to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, David got more women servants* and wives. Some more of David's children were born in Jerusalem. ⁷These are the names of the sons born to David at Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ⁸Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ⁹Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Goes to War Against the Philistines

¹When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had anointed* David king over Israel, all the Philistines went to look for David, to kill him. But David heard the news. He went down to a fort. ²The Philistines came and camped in the Valley of Rephaim.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

water tunnel There was a water tunnel that went under the ground into the ancient city of Jerusalem. David and his men used this tunnel to enter the city.

house This might mean, "house, palace, or temple."

Millo Probably one of the strong places that made up the ancient fort of Zion.

woman servants Or, "concubines," slave woman who were like wives to a man.

anoint To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

³David asked the Lord, saying, "Should I go to war against the Philistines? Will you help me defeat the Philistines?"

The Lord said to David, "Go, because I will certainly help you defeat the Philistines."

⁴Then David came to Baal-Perazim. There he defeated the Philistines. David said, "The Lord has broken my enemies before me like waters break out of a dam. That is why David named that place "Baal-Perazim."* ⁵The Philistines left the statues of their gods behind at Baal-Perazim. David and his men took these statues away.

⁶Again the Philistines came and camped at the Valley of Rephaim.

⁷David prayed to the Lord. This time the Lord told David, "Don't go there. Go around them to the back of their army. Attack them near the balsam trees. ⁸Climb up into the trees. From the top of the balsam trees, you will hear the Philistines marching to war. Then you must act quickly, because at that time the Lord will go and defeat the Philistines for you."

⁹David did the things the Lord commanded him to do. He defeated the Philistines. He chased them all the way from Geba to Gezer.

God's Holy Box Is Moved to Jerusalem

6 David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000 men. ²Then David and all his people went to Baalah in Judah* and took God's Holy Box* from Baalah in Judah* and moved it to Jerusalem. People go to the Holy Box to worship the Lord. The Holy Box is like the Lord's throne. There are statues of Cherub angels* on top of the Holy Box. And the Lord sits as king on these angels. ³David's men put God's Holy Box on a new wagon. They

Baal-Perazim In Hebrew this name means "The Lord breaks through."

Baalah in Judah Another name for Kiriath-Jearim. See 1 Chronicles 13:6.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

brought the Holy Box* out of Abinadab's house on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, led the new wagon.

'Uzzah and Ahio led the new wagon out of Abinadab's house on the hill. This wagon had God's Holy Box* on it. Ahio walked in front of the Holy Box. 'David and all the Israelites were playing all kinds of musical instruments, before the Lord. These musical instruments were made of cypress wood. There were lyres,* harps, drums, rattles and cymbals.* 'When David's men came to the threshing floor* of Nacon, the cows fell, and God's Holy Box began to fall off the wagon. Uzzah caught the Holy Box. 'The Lord was angry against Uzzah and killed him.* Uzzah showed he did not honor God when he touched the Holy Box. Uzzah died there by God's Holy Box. 'David was upset because the Lord had killed Uzzah. David called that place "Perez-Uzzah."* That place is still called Perez-Uzzah today.

'David became afraid of the Lord that day. David said, "How can I bring God's Holy Box* here now?"

"So David would not move the Lord's Holy Box* into the City of David.* David put the Holy Box at the house of Obed-Edom from Gath. David carried the Holy Box off the road to the house of Obed-Edom of Gath.* "The Lord's Holy Box stayed in Obed-Edom's house for three months. The Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his family.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

lyres Musical instruments that are like small harps.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a ringing noise.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

The ... him Only the Levites could carry God's Holy Box or other furniture from the Holy Tent. Uzzah was not a Levite. Read Numbers 1:50.

Perez-Uzzah This name in Hebrew means "The Punishment of Uzzah."

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Obed-Edom of Gath A person from the family group of Levi that lived near Jerusalem.

"The people told David, "The Lord has blessed the family of Obed-Edom and all his things, because God's Holy Box* is there." So David went and brought God's Holy Box from Obed-Edom's house. David did this with joy. "When the men, that carried the Lord's Holy Box had walked six steps, they stopped and, David sacrificed a bull and a fat calf. "Then David danced before the Lord. David had on a holy coat.*

"David and all the Israelites shouted with joy, and blew the trumpet while they brought the Lord's Holy Box* to the city. "Saul's daughter Michal was looking out the window. At the time the Lord's Holy Box came into the city, David was jumping and dancing before the Lord. Michal saw this, and she was disgusted with David.

"David put up a tent for the Holy Box.* The Israelites put the Lord's Holy Box in its place, under the tent. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

"After David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord All-Powerful. "David also gave a share of bread, a raisin cake, and some date bread to every man and woman, to all the people of Israel. Then all the people went home.

Michal Scolds David

"David went back to bless his home. But Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him. Michal said, "The king of Israel did not honor himself today! You took off your clothes in front of your servants' girls.* You were like a foolish man that takes off his clothes without shame!"

"Then David said to Michal, "The Lord chose me, not your father or any person from his family. The Lord chose me to be leader of his people the Israelites. That is why I will celebrate in front of the Lord. "Maybe I will lose honor from you., Maybe I will be humble

holy coat Or, "ephod," a vest usually worn by priests.

You took off ... girls David had on only a holy coat (ephod). We don't know how much of his body was covered.

to myself. But the girls you talk about honor me."

²"Saul's daughter Michal never had a child. She died without having any children.

David Wants to Build a Temple

7 When King David was living in his house, the Lord gave him peace from all his enemies around him. ¹King David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am living in a house made of cedar wood. But God's Holy Box* is still kept in a tent!"

²Nathan said to King David, "Go and do what you really want to do. The Lord is with you."

³But that night, the Lord's word came to Nathan. The Lord said, ⁴"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord says: You are not the person to build a house for me to live in. ⁵I did not live in a house at the time I took the Israelites out of Egypt. No, I traveled around in a tent. I used the tent for my home. ⁶I never said a word to any of the family groups of Israel about their building a house of cedar wood for me.'

⁷"You must say this to my servant David: 'This is what the Lord All-Powerful says: I took you from the pasture. I took you when you were following the sheep. I took you to become leader of my people the Israelites. ⁸I have been with you every place you went. I have defeated your enemies for you. I will make you as famous as any of the great people on the earth. ^{9,10}And I will choose a place for my people the Israelites. I will plant the Israelites so that they can live in their own place. Then they will not be moved any more. In the past, I sent judges to lead my people of Israel. And evil people bothered them. That will not happen now. I will give you peace from all your enemies. I also tell you that I will make your family be kings.*

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

make your family be kings Literally, "make a house for you."

¹¹"Your days will be finished, and you will be buried with your fathers. At that time, I will make one of your own children become the king. ¹²He will build a house for my name. I will make his kingdom strong forever. ¹³I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he sins, then I will use other people to punish him. They will be my whips. ¹⁴But I will not stop loving him. I will continue to be kind to him. I took away my love and kindness from Saul. I pushed Saul away when I turned to you. I will not do that to your family. ¹⁵Your family and your kingdom will continue forever for you."

¹⁶Nathan told David everything. He told David everything he heard in the vision.*

David Prays to God

¹Then David the king went in and sat in front of the Lord. David said, "Lord, my Master, why am I so important to you? Why is my family important? Why have you made me so important? ²I am nothing but a servant. And you have been so kind to me. But you have also said these kind things about my future family. Lord, my Master, you don't always talk like this to people, do you? ³How can I continue talking to you? Lord, my Master, you know that I am only a servant. ⁴You have done these wonderful things because you have said you would do them and because it is something you wanted to do. And you have decided to let me know all these great things. ⁵This is why you are great, Lord God! There is no one like you. There is no god like you. We have heard all this ourselves.

⁶"And there is no nation on earth like your people, the people of Israel. They are a special people. They were slaves. But you took them from Egypt and made them free. You made them your people. You did great and wonderful things for the Israelites. You did wonderful things for your land. ⁷You made the people of Israel your very own people forever. And Lord, you became their God.

vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

²⁵"Now, Lord God, you talked about me. I am your servant. You also talked about my family. Make your promises come true forever. Do the things you have promised. ²⁶Then your name will be honored forever. And people will say, 'The Lord God All Powerful rules! May the family of your servant David continue before you.'

²⁷"You, Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, have shown things to me. You said, 'I will make your family great.' This is why I, your servant, decided to pray this prayer to you. ²⁸Now, Lord God, you are God, and your words are true. And you have promised this good thing to me, your servant. ²⁹Please, bless my family. Let it continue before you forever. Lord God, you have said these wonderful things. With your blessing, let my family be blessed forever."

David Wins Many Wars

8 Later, David defeated the Philistines. He took control of their capital city. ²David also defeated the people of Moab. He forced them to lie on the ground. Then he used a rope to measure them. When two men were measured, David ordered them killed. But every third man was allowed to live. The people of Moab became servants of David. They paid tribute* to him.

³Hadadezer son of Rehob was king of Zobah. David defeated Hadadezer when he tried to take control of the area near the Euphrates River. ⁴David took from Hadadezer 1,700 horse soldiers. He also took 20,000 foot soldiers. David crippled all the chariot horses except 100. He saved those 100 horses to pull chariots.

⁵Syrians from Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah. But David defeated those 22,000 Syrians. ⁶Then David put groups of soldiers in Damascus, Syria. The Syrians became David's servants and brought tribute.* The Lord gave victory to David in every place he went.

⁷David took the shields of gold that had belonged to Hadadezer's servants. David took these shields and brought them to Jerusalem. ⁸David also took many, many things made of brass from Betah and Berothai. (Betah and Berothai were cities that had belonged to Hadadezer.)

⁹Toi king of Hamath heard that David had defeated Hadadezer's whole army. ¹⁰Then Toi sent his son Joram to King David. Joram greeted David and blessed him because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. (Hadadezer had fought wars against Toi before.) Joram brought things made of silver, gold, and brass. ¹¹David took these things and dedicated* them to the Lord. He put them with the other silver and gold that he dedicated to the Lord from the nations that he had defeated. ¹²These nations were Syria, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, and Amalek. David also defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

¹³David defeated 18,000 Syrians in Salt Valley. He was famous when he came home. ¹⁴David put groups of soldiers in Edom. He put these groups of soldiers through all the land of Edom. All the people of Edom became servants for David. The Lord gave victory to David in every place he went.

David's Rule

¹David ruled over all Israel. David's decisions were fair and right for all his people. ²Joab son of Zeruiah was captain, over the army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. ³Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests. Seraiah was secretary. ⁴Benaiah son of Jehoiada was ruler, over the Kerethites and Pelethites.* And David's sons were important leaders.*

dedicated To give for a special use.

Kerethites and Pelethites These were David's special bodyguards. An ancient Aramaic translation has "the archers and stone-throwers."

important leaders Literally, "priests."

tribute Money that a people gave to a king that defeated them.

David Wants to Show Kindness to Saul's Family

9 David asked, "Is there any person still left in Saul's family? I want to show kindness to this person for Jonathan's sake."

¹There was a servant named Ziba from Saul's family. David's servants called Ziba to David. The king (*David*) said to Ziba, "Are you Ziba?"

Ziba said, "Yes, I am Ziba, your servant."

²The king said, "Is there any person left in Saul's family? I want to show God's kindness to this person."

Ziba said to the king (*David*), "Jonathan has a son still living. He is crippled in both feet."

³The king said to Ziba, "Where is this son?"

Ziba said to the king, "He is at the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."

⁴Then King David sent servants to bring Jonathan's son from the house of Makir son of Ammiel in Lo Debar. ⁵Jonathan's son Mephibosheth came to David, and bowed with his face low to the floor.

David said, "Mephibosheth!"

Mephibosheth said, "Here I am. I am your servant."

⁶David said to Mephibosheth, "Don't be afraid. I will be kind to you. I will do this for your father Jonathan's sake. I will give back to you all the land of your grandfather Saul. And you will always be able to eat at my table."

⁷Mephibosheth bowed to David again. Mephibosheth said, "You are being very kind to me, your servant. And I am no better than a dead dog!"

⁸Then King David called Saul's servant Ziba. David said to Ziba, "I have given Saul's family and all he owns to your master's grandson (*Mephibosheth*). ⁹You will farm the land for Mephibosheth. Your sons and servants will do this for Mephibosheth. You will harvest the crops. Then your master's grandson (*Mephibosheth*) will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, will always be able to eat at my table."

Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants. ¹⁰Ziba said to the king (*David*), "I am your servant. I will do all the things my lord, the king,

commands me."

So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like he was, one of the king's sons. ¹¹Mephibosheth had a young son named Mica. All the people in Ziba's family became Mephibosheth's servants. ¹²Mephibosheth was crippled in both feet. Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem. Every day Mephibosheth ate at the king's table.

Hanun Shames David's Men

10 Later Nahash, king of the Ammonites died. Hanun his son became king after him. ²David said, "Nahash was kind to me. So I will be kind to his son Hanun." So David sent his officers to comfort Hanun about his father's death.

So David's servants went to the land of the Ammonites. ³But the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, their lord, "Do you think that David is trying to honor your father by sending some men to comfort you? No! David sent these men to secretly study and learn things about your city. They plan to make war against you."

⁴So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off one half of their beards. He cut their clothes in the middle down to their hips. Then he sent them away.

⁵When the people told David, he sent messengers, to meet his officers. He did this because these men were very ashamed. King David said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards grow again. Then come back to Jerusalem."

War Against the Ammonites

⁶The Ammonites saw that they had become David's enemies. So the Ammonites hired Syrians from Beth Rehob and Zobah. There were 20,000 Syrian foot soldiers. The Ammonites also hired the king of Maacah with 1,000 men and 12,000 men from Tob.

⁷David heard about this. So he sent Joab and all the army of powerful men. ⁸The Ammonites came out and got ready for the battle. They stood at the city gate. The Syrians from Zobah and Rehob, and the men from Tob and Maacah did not stand together with the Ammonites in the field.

⁹Joab saw that the Ammonites stood against him both in the front and in the back. So he chose some of the best men from the Israelites. Joab made these best men ready for battle against the Syrians. ¹⁰Then Joab gave the other men to his brother Abishai to lead against the Ammonites. ¹¹Joab said to Abishai, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, you will help me. If the Ammonites are too strong for you, I will come and help you. ¹²Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and for the cities of our God. The Lord will do what he decides is right."

¹³Then Joab and his men attacked the Syrians. The Syrians ran away from Joab and his men. ¹⁴The Ammonites saw that the Syrians were running away, so they ran away from Abishai and went back to their city.

So Joab came back from the battle with the Ammonites and went back to Jerusalem.

The Syrians Decide to Fight Again

¹The Syrians saw that the Israelites had defeated them. So they came together into one big army. ²Hadadezer* sent messengers to bring the Syrians that lived on the other side of the Euphrates River. These Syrians came to Helam. Their leader was Shobach, the captain of Hadadezer's army.

³David heard about this. So he gathered all the Israelites together. They crossed over the Jordan River and went to Helam.

There the Syrians prepared for battle and attacked. ⁴But David defeated the Syrians, and the Syrians ran away from the Israelites. David killed many Syrians: 700 chariot drivers, and 40,000 horse riders. David also killed Shobach the captain of the Syrian army.

⁵The kings that served Hadadezer* saw that the Israelites had defeated them. So they made peace with the Israelites and served them. The Syrians were afraid to help the Ammonites again.

David Meets Bathsheba

11 In the spring, at the time when kings go out to war, David sent Joab, his servants, and all the Israelites out to destroy the Ammonites. Joab's army also attacked Rabbah.*

But David stayed in Jerusalem. ²In the evening, he got up from his bed. He walked around on the roof of the king's house. While David was on the roof, he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful. ³So David sent for his servants and asked them who the woman was. A servant answered, "That woman is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam. She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

⁴David sent messengers to go and bring Bathsheba to him. When she came to David, he had sexual relations with her. She washed herself, and then went back to her house. ⁵But Bathsheba became pregnant. She sent word to David. She told him, "I am pregnant."

David Tries to Hide His Sin

¹David sent a message to Joab. "Send Uriah the Hittite to me."

So Joab sent Uriah to David. ²Uriah came to David. David talked with Uriah. David asked Uriah how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and how the war was. ³Then David said to Uriah, "Go home and rest."

Uriah left the king's house. The king also sent a gift to Uriah. ⁴But Uriah did not go home. Uriah slept outside the door of the king's house. He slept there like all the king's servants did. ⁵The servants told David, "Uriah did not go home."

Then David said to Uriah, "You came from a long trip. Why did you not go home?"

⁶Uriah said to David, "The Holy Box* and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in

Rabbah The capital city of the Ammonites.

rest Literally, "wash your feet."

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Hadadezer The ancient Greek has Hadarezer.

tents. My lord Joab, and my lord's (*King David's*) servants are camping out in the field. So it is not right for me to go home to drink, and sleep with my wife."

"David said to Uriah, "Stay here today. Tomorrow I will send you back to the battle."

Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. He stayed until the next morning. "Then David called Uriah to come and see him. Uriah ate and drank with David. David made Uriah drunk. But Uriah still did not go home. That evening, Uriah went to sleep with the king's servants outside the king's door."

David Plans Uriah's Death

"The next morning, David wrote a letter to Joab. David made Uriah carry the letter. "In the letter, David wrote: "Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is the hardest. Then leave him there alone, and let him be killed in battle."

"Joab watched the city and saw where the bravest Ammonites were. He chose Uriah to go to that place. "The men of the city* came out to fight against Joab. Some of David's men were killed. Uriah the Hittite was one of those men."

"Then Joab sent a report to David about all the things that happened in the war. "Joab told the messenger to tell King David the things that had happened in the war. "Maybe the king will become upset. Maybe the king will ask, 'Why did Joab's army go near the city to fight? Don't you know that there are men that shoot arrows off the city wall?' "Do you remember who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? It was a woman on the city wall that threw the top part of a grinding stone on Abimelech. That woman killed him in Thebez. Why did you go near the wall?' If King David says these words," then you must answer: 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite also died.'"

"The messenger went in and told David all the things Joab told him to say. "The messenger told David, "The men of Ammon, attacked us in the field. But we fought them at

the city gate. "The men on the city wall shot arrows at your servants. Some of your servants were killed. Your servant Uriah the Hittite also died."

"David said to the messenger, "This is what you will say to Joab: 'Don't be upset about this thing.* The sword kills all people the same. Make a stronger attack against the city Rabbah. Then you will win this city.' Encourage Joab with these words."

David Marries Bathsheba

"Bathsheba heard that her husband Uriah was dead. Then she cried for her husband. "After she had finished her time of being sad, David sent servants to take her to his house. She became David's wife. And she gave birth to a son for David. The Lord did not like the bad thing David had done."

Nathan Speaks to David

12 The Lord sent Nathan to David. Nathan went to David. Nathan said, "There were two men in a city. One man was rich. But the other man was poor. "The rich man had very many sheep and cattle. "But the poor man had nothing, except one little female lamb that he bought. The poor man fed the lamb. The lamb grew up with this poor man and his children. The lamb ate from the poor man's food and drank from the poor man's cup. The lamb slept on the poor man's chest. The lamb was like a daughter to the poor man."

"Then a traveler stopped to visit the rich man. The rich man wanted to give food to the traveler. But the rich man did not want to take anything from his own sheep or cattle to feed the traveler. No, the rich man took the lamb from the poor man. The rich man killed the lamb, and cooked it for his visitor."

"David became very angry against the rich man. He said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, surely the man that did this should die! "He must pay four times the price of the lamb

because he did this terrible thing and because he had no mercy."

Nathan Tells David About His Sin

"Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! This is what the Lord God of Israel says: 'I anointed* you king of Israel. I saved you from Saul. 'I let you take his family and his wives. And I made you king of Israel and Judah. As if that were not enough, I gave you more and more. 'So why did you ignore the Lord's command? Why did you do the thing which he says is wrong? You killed Uriah the Hittite with a sword. And you took his wife to become your wife. Yes, you killed Uriah with the sword of the Ammonites. 'So, the sword will never leave your family. You took Uriah the Hittite's wife. In this way, you showed that you did not care for me.'

"This is what the Lord says: 'I am bringing trouble against you. This trouble will come from your own family. I will take your wives from you and I will give them to a person that is very close to you. This person will sleep with your wives, and everyone will know it!*' "You slept with Bathsheba, in secret. But I will do this thing so all the people of Israel can see it.'"

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'

Nathan said to David, 'The Lord has taken away your sin. You will not die. 'But you did cause the Lord's enemies to greatly hate him because of this [sin you did]. So for this reason, the son that was born to you will die.'

David and Bathsheba's Baby Dies

"Then Nathan went home. And the Lord caused the baby boy that was born to David and Uriah's wife to become very sick. "David prayed to God for the baby. David refused to

eat or drink. He went into his house and stayed there. He lay on the ground all night.

"The leaders of David's family came and tried to pull David up from the ground. But David refused to get up. He refused to eat food with these leaders. "On the seventh day, the baby died. David's servants were afraid to tell David that the baby was dead. They said, 'Look, we tried to talk to David while the baby was alive. But he refused to listen to us. If we tell David that the baby is dead, maybe he will do something bad to himself.'

"But David saw his servants whispering. Then David understood that the baby was dead. So David asked his servants, 'Is the baby dead?'

The servants answered, 'Yes, he is dead.'

"Then David got up from the floor. He washed himself. He changed his clothes and got dressed. Then he went into the Lord's house to worship. Then he went home and asked for something to eat. His servants gave him some food, and he ate.

"David's servants said to him, 'Why are you doing this thing? When the baby was still living you refused to eat. You cried. But when the baby died you got up and ate food.'

"David said, 'While the baby was still living, I refused to eat and I cried because I thought, 'Who knows? Maybe the Lord will feel sorry for me and let the baby live.' "But now the baby is dead. So why should I refuse to eat? Can I bring the baby back to life? No! Some day I will go to him, but he can't come back to me.'

Solomon Is Born

"Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife. He slept with her and had sexual relations with her. Bathsheba became pregnant again. She had another son. David named the boy Solomon. The Lord loved Solomon. "The Lord sent word through Nathan the prophet. Nathan gave Solomon the name, Jedidiah.* Nathan did this for the Lord.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.
and everyone will know it Literally, "in the sight of the sun."

so all ... can see it Literally, "before all of Israel and before the sun."

Jedidiah This name means "loved by the Lord."

David Captures Rabbah

¹Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites. He captured the king's city. ²Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah. I have captured the City of Waters. ³Now bring the other people together and attack this city (*Rabbah*). Capture this city before I capture it. If I capture this city, it will be called by my name."

⁴Then David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah. He fought against Rabbah and captured the city. ⁵David took the crown off their king's head.* The crown was gold and weighed about 75 pounds.* This crown had precious stones in it. They put the crown on David's head. David took many valuable things out of the city.

⁶David also brought out the people of the city Rabbah. David made them work with saws, iron picks, and axes. He also forced them to build things with bricks. David did the same thing to all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all his army went back to Jerusalem.

Amnon Loves Tamar

13 David had a son named Absalom. Absalom's sister was named Tamar. Tamar was very beautiful. One of David's other sons, Amnon,* ²loved Tamar. Tamar was a virgin.* Amnon did not think he should do anything bad to her. But Amnon wanted her very much. Amnon made himself very sick just thinking about her.*

³Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah. (Shimeah was David's brother.) Jonadab was a very clever man. Jonadab said to Amnon, "Every day you look thinner and

thinner! You are the king's son! You have plenty to eat, so why are you losing weight? Tell me!"

Amnon told Jonadab, "I love Tamar. But she is the sister of my half-brother Absalom."

⁴Jonadab said to Amnon, "Go to bed. Act like you are sick. Then your father will come to see you. Tell him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come in and give me food to eat. Let her make the food in front of me. Then I will see it, and eat it from her hand.'"

⁵So Amnon lay down in bed and acted like he was sick. King David came in to see Amnon. Amnon said to King David, "Please let my sister Tamar come in. Let her make two cakes for me while I watch. Then I can eat from her hands."

⁶David sent messengers to Tamar's house. The messengers told Tamar, "Go to your brother Amnon's house and make some food for him."

Tamar Makes Food for Amnon

¹So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house. Amnon was in bed. Tamar took some dough and pressed it together with her hands. She made some cakes while Amnon was watching. Then she baked the cakes. ²After Tamar had finished baking the cakes,, she took the pan and poured out the cakes for Amnon. But Amnon refused to eat.

Amnon said to his servants,, "All of you people, leave me alone!" So all his servants went out from Amnon's room.

³Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the inner room. Then I will eat from your hand."

Amnon Rapes Tamar

Tamar went to her brother Amnon in the inner room. She brought the cakes that she had made. ²She went to Amnon, so he could eat from her hands. But Amnon caught hold of Tamar. He said to her, "Sister, come and sleep with me."

³Tamar said to Amnon, "No, brother! Don't force me! This should never be done in Israel!

their king's head Or, "Milcom's head." Milcom was a false god that the Ammonite people worshiped.
was ... about 75 pounds Literally, "the weight was one gold talent."

Amnon Amnon was half-brother to Absalom and Tamar. They all had David as their father, but Amnon had a different mother. See 2 Samuel 3:2,3.

virgin A pure woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone.

Amnon made himself very sick ... her Or, "So Amnon planned to act like he was sick."

Don't do this shameful thing! "I could never get rid of my shame. You will become like those foolish Israelite men that do shameful things. Please talk with the king. He will let you marry me."

"But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. He was stronger than Tamar. He forced her to have sexual relations with him. "After that, Amnon hated Tamar. Amnon hated her much more than he had loved her before. Amnon said to Tamar, "Get up and leave!"

"Tamar said to Amnon, "No! You are doing a greater evil now than before—you are trying to send me away."

But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. "Amnon called his young servant and said, "Get this girl out of this room now! Lock the door after her."

"So Amnon's servant led Tamar out of the room and locked the door after her.

Tamar had on a long robe with many colors.* The king's virgin daughters wore robes like this one. "Tamar took ashes and put them on her head. She tore her robe of many colors. She put her hand on her head and cried loudly.*

"Absalom, Tamar's brother, said to Tamar, "So your brother Amnon has raped you.* Amnon is your brother. So for now, sister, be quiet. Don't let this upset you too much."* So Tamar did not say anything. She went to live at Absalom's house.*

"King David heard the news. He was very angry. "Absalom hated Amnon. Absalom did not say anything, good or bad, to Amnon. He hated Amnon because Amnon had raped his sister Tamar.

Absalom's Revenge

"Two years later, Absalom had some men come to Baal-Hazor to cut the wool from his

sheep. Absalom invited all the king's sons to come and watch. "Absalom went to the king and said, "I have some men coming to cut the wool from my sheep. Please come with your servants and watch."

"King David said to Absalom, "No, son. We will not all go. It will be too much trouble for you."

Absalom begged David to go. David did not go, but he did give his blessing.

"Absalom said, "If you don't want to go, then please let my brother Amnon go with me."

King David asked Absalom, "Why should he go with you?"

"Absalom kept begging David. Finally, David let Amnon and all the king's sons go with Absalom.

Amnon Is Murdered

"Then Absalom gave a command to his servants. He said to them, "Watch Amnon. When he is drunk, I will tell you, 'Kill Amnon.' At that time, kill him! Don't be afraid. I have commanded you. Be strong and brave."

"Absalom's young men killed Amnon like Absalom commanded. But all of David's other sons escaped. Each son got on his mule and escaped.

David Hears About Amnon's Death

"While the king's sons were on their way, the news came to David. The message was, "Absalom has killed all of the king's sons! Not one of the sons was left alive."

"King David tore his clothes and lay on the ground.* All of David's servants standing near him also tore their clothes.

"But Jonadab son of Shimeah (*David's brother*) said to David, "Don't think all the young men, the king's sons, are killed. No, it is only Amnon that is dead. Absalom planned this because Amnon had raped his sister Tamar. "My lord the king, don't think that all of the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

many colors Or, "stripes."

took ashes ... and cried loudly This showed that she was very sad and upset.

has raped you Literally, "has been with you."

Don't let ... too much Literally, "Don't take this thing to heart."

So Tamar ... Absalom's house Or, "Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a ruined woman."

tore his clothes ... ground This showed that he was very sad and upset.

³⁴Absalom ran away.

There was a guard standing on the city wall. He saw many people coming from the other side of the hill. ³⁵So Jonadab said to King David, "Look, I was right! The king's sons are coming."

³⁶When Jonadab said these things, the king's sons arrived. They were crying loudly. David and all his servants began crying. They all cried very hard. ³⁷David cried for his son (Amnon) every day.

Absalom Escapes to Geshur

Absalom ran away to Talmi son of Ammihud, king of Geshur.* ²After Absalom had run away to Geshur, he stayed there for three years. ³King David was comforted after Amnon died, but he missed Absalom greatly.

Joab Sends a Wise Woman to David

14 Joab son of Zeruiah knew that King David missed Absalom very much. ¹So Joab sent messengers to Tekoa to bring a wise woman from there. Joab said to this wise woman, "Please pretend to be very sad. Put on clothes of sadness. Don't dress up. Act like a woman that has been crying many days for someone that died. ²Go to the king and talk to him using these words that I tell you." Then Joab told the wise woman what to say.

³Then the woman from Tekoa talked to the king. She fell to the ground. Her face touched the ground. She bowed and said, "King, help me!"

⁴King David said to her, "What's your problem?"

The woman said, "I am a widow. My husband is dead. ¹I had two sons. These two sons were out in the field fighting. There was no person to stop them. One son killed the other son. ²Now all the family is against me. They said to me, 'Bring the son that killed his brother. Then we will kill him, because he killed his brother.' ³If I let them kill my son,

then they will kill the person that should get his father's things. My son will be like the last spark of a fire. And that last spark will burn out and be finished. Then my dead husband's name and property will be gone from the earth."

⁴Then the king said to the woman, "Go home. I will take care of things for you."

⁵The woman of Tekoa said to the king, "Let the blame be on me, O king my lord! But you and your kingdom are innocent."

⁶King David said, "Bring the person that says anything bad to you. Then this person will not bother you again."

⁷The woman said, "Please remember the Lord your God. Then those people that want to punish murderers will not punish my son."

David said, "As the Lord lives, no person will hurt your son. Not even one hair from your son's head will fall to the ground."

⁸The woman said, "Please let me say some things to you, my lord the king."

The king said, "Speak."

⁹Then the woman said, "Why have you planned these things against the people of God? Yes, when you say these things, you show you are guilty. Why? Because you have not brought back the son that you forced to leave home. ¹⁰It is true that we will all die some day. We are like water that is spilled on the ground. No person can gather this water back from the ground. But God does not take away life. No, he has a plan for people that are forced out from their homes—they are not forced away from him! ¹¹My lord the king, I came to say these words to you. Why? Because the people made me afraid. I said to these people, 'Please let me talk to the king. Maybe the king will listen to me.' ¹²The king will hear, and save me from the man that wants to kill both me and my son, and keep us from getting the things God has given us. ¹³I know* that the words of my lord the king will give me rest, because you will be like God's angel. You will know which is good and which is bad. The Lord your God will be with you."

Talmi ... king of Geshur Talmi was Absalom's grandfather. See 2 Samuel 3:3.

know Literally, "say."

"King David answered the woman, "You must answer the question I will ask you."

The woman said, "My lord the king, please ask your question."

"The king said, "Did Joab tell you to say all these things?"

The woman answered, "As you live, my lord the king, you are right! Your servant Joab did tell me to say these things. "Joab did these things, so that you would see things differently.* My lord, you are wise like God's angel. You know everything that happens on earth."

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

"The king said to Joab, "Look, I will do the thing I promised. Now please bring back the young man Absalom."

"Joab bowed with his face on the ground. He blessed King David, and said, "Today I know that you are pleased with me. I know because you have done what I asked."

"Then Joab got up and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. "But King David said, "Absalom can go back to his own house. He can't come to see me." So Absalom went back to his own house. Absalom could not go to see the king.

"Absalom was highly praised for his good looks. No man in Israel was as handsome as Absalom. There was not a blemish on Absalom—from his head to his feet. "At the end of every year, Absalom cut off the hair of his head and weighed it. The hair weighed about five pounds.*

"Absalom had three sons and one daughter. This daughter's name was Tamar. Tamar was a beautiful woman.

Absalom Forces Joab to Come See Him

"Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two full years without being allowed to visit King David. "Absalom sent messengers, to Joab. These messengers asked Joab to, send

Absalom to the king. But Joab would not come to Absalom. Absalom sent a message, a second time. But Joab still refused to come.

"Then Absalom said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to my field. He has barley growing in that field. Go burn the barley."

So Absalom's servants went and started a fire in Joab's field. "Joab got up and came to Absalom's house. Joab said to Absalom, "Why did your servants burn my field?"

"Absalom said to Joab, "I sent a message to you. I asked you to come here. I wanted to send you to the king. I wanted you to ask him why he asked me to come home from Geshur. I can't see him, so, it would have been better for me to stay in Geshur. Now let me see the king. If I have sinned, then he can kill me!"

Absalom Visits King David

"Then Joab came to the king and told him Absalom's words. The king called for Absalom. Then Absalom came to the king. Absalom bowed low on the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

Absalom Makes Many Friends

15 After this, Absalom got a chariot* and horses for himself. He had 50 men run in front of him while he drove the chariot. "Absalom got up early and stood near the gate.* If there was any man that had a problem and came to King David for judgment, Absalom would call to this man. Absalom would say, "What city are you from?" The man would answer, "I am from such and such family group in Israel." "Then Absalom would say to this man, "Look, you are telling the truth. But King David will not listen to you."

"Absalom also said, "Oh, I wish someone would make me a judge in this country! Then I could help every man that comes with a problem for judgment. I could help him get a fair solution to his problem."

that you would ... differently Literally, "that the appearance of things would be changed."

five pounds Literally, "200 shekels by the king's weight."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

gate This was where people came to do all their business. This was also where many court cases were held.

⁵When a person came near to bow to Absalom, Absalom would reach out and take hold of the person. Then he would kiss that person. ⁶Absalom did that to all the Israelites that came to King David for judgment. In this way, Absalom won the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Absalom Makes Plans to Take David's Kingdom

⁷After four years,* Absalom said to King David, "Please let me go to complete my special promise that I made to the Lord at Hebron. ⁸I made that promise while I was still living in Geshur, Syria. I said, 'If the Lord brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the Lord.'"

⁹King David said, "Go in peace."

Absalom went to Hebron. ¹⁰But Absalom sent spies through all the family groups of Israel. These spies told the people, "When you hear the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom has become the king at Hebron!'"

¹¹Absalom invited 200 men to go with him. Those men went out of Jerusalem with him. But they did not know the thing that he was planning. ¹²Ahithophel was one of David's advisers. Ahithophel was from the town of Giloh. While Absalom was offering sacrifices,* he called Ahithophel to come from his city (Giloh). Absalom's plans were working very well and more and more people began to support him.

David Learns About Absalom's Plans

¹³A man came in to tell the news to David. The man said, "The people of Israel are beginning to follow Absalom."

¹⁴Then David said to all his servants that were with him in Jerusalem, "We must escape! If we don't escape, then Absalom will not let us get away. Let's hurry before Absalom catches us. He will destroy us all. And he will kill the people of Jerusalem."

¹⁵The king's servants said to the king, "We will do anything you tell us."

David and His People Escape

¹⁶King David went out with all the people in his house. The king left ten of his wives* to take care of the house. ¹⁷The king went out with all his people following him. They stopped at the last house. ¹⁸All his servants passed by the king. And all the Kerethites, all the Pelethites, and the Gittites (600 men from Gath) passed by the king.

¹⁹The king said to Ittai from Gath, "Why are you also going with us? Turn back and stay with the new king (*Absalom*). You are a foreigner. This is not your home land. ²⁰Only yesterday you came to join me. Must you now go with me to different places? No! Turn back, and take your brothers with you. May kindness and loyalty be shown to you."

²¹But Ittai answered the king, "As the Lord lives, and as long as you live, I will stay with you. I will be with you, in life or death!"

²²David said to Ittai, "Come, let us cross the Kidron Brook."

So Ittai from Gath and all his people with their children crossed over the Kidron Brook. ²³All the people* were crying loudly. King David crossed over the Kidron Brook. Then all the people went on to the desert. ²⁴Zadok and all the Levites with him were carrying the Box of God's Agreement.* They put down God's Holy Box.* Abiathar said prayers* until all the people had gone out from Jerusalem.

²⁵King David said to Zadok, "Take God's Holy Box* back to Jerusalem. If the Lord is kind to me, then he will bring me back. And the

wives Literally, "concubines," women servants that were like wives.

people Literally, "country."

Box of God's Agreement, God's Holy Box

Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

said prayers Literally, "went up." This could mean, "burn incense," "offer sacrifices," or it might simply mean that Abiathar stood to one side, by the Holy Box, until all the people passed by.

four years Some ancient writings say "40 years."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Lord will let me see Jerusalem and his temple.*

²⁰But if the Lord says that he is not pleased with me, then he can do anything he wants against me."

²¹The king said to Zadok the priest, "You are a seer.* Go back to the city in peace. Take your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan with you. ²²I will be waiting near the places where people cross over into the desert. I will wait there until I hear from you."

²³So Zadok and Abiathar took God's Holy Box* back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

David's Prayer Against Ahithophel

¹David went up the Mount of Olives. He was crying. He covered his head and he went without shoes on his feet. All the people with David also covered their heads. They went with David, crying.

²A person told David, "Ahithophel is one of the people that made plans with Absalom." Then David prayed, "O Lord, I pray you to make Ahithophel's advice become foolish."

³David came to the top of the mountain. This was where he often worshiped God. At that time, Hushai the Arkite came to him. Hushai's coat was torn, and there was dirt on his head.*

⁴David said to Hushai, "If you go with me, then you will be just one more person to care for. ⁵But if you go back to Jerusalem, you can make Ahithophel's advice become useless. Tell Absalom, 'I am your servant, O King. I served your father, but now I will serve you.' ⁶The priests Zadok and Abiathar will be with you. You must tell them everything you hear in the king's house. ⁷Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan will be with them. You will send them to tell me everything you hear."

temple Here this means the Holy Text at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord.

seer Another name for a prophet.

God's Holy Box Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

coat was torn ... head This showed he was very sad.

⁸Then David's friend Hushai went into the city. And Absalom arrived at Jerusalem.

Ziba Meets David

16 David passed a short way over the top of the Mount of Olives. There Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, met David. Ziba had two donkeys with saddles on them. The donkeys also carried 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a wineskin full of wine. ²King David said to Ziba, "What are these things for?"

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's family to ride on. The bread and the summer fruit are for the servants to eat. And when any person feels weak in the desert, he can drink the wine."

³The king asked, "Where is Mephibosheth?"

Ziba answered the king, "Mephibosheth is staying in Jerusalem because he thinks, 'Today the Israelites will give my grandfather's* kingdom back to me.'"

⁴Then the king said to Ziba, "All right. Everything that belonged to Mephibosheth, I now give to you."

Ziba said, "I bow to you. I hope I will always be able to please you."

Shimei Curses David

¹David came to Bahurim. A man from Saul's family came out from Bahurim. This man's name was Shimei son of Gera. Shimei came out saying bad things to David. And he kept saying bad things again and again.

²Shimei began throwing stones at David and his servants. But the people and the soldiers gathered around David—they were all around him. ³Shimei cursed David. He said, "Get out, get out, you no-good murderer!" ⁴The Lord is punishing you. Why? Because you killed people in Saul's family. You stole Saul's place as king. But now the Lord has given the kingdom to your son Absalom. Now the same

Mephibosheth Literally, "your master's grandson."

grandfather's Literally, "father's."

murderer Literally, "man of blood."

bad things are happening to you. Why? Because you are a murderer.”*

“Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse you, my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off Shimei’s head.”

“But the king answered, “What can I do, sons of Zeruiah? Sure, Shimei is cursing me. But the Lord told him to curse me.”

“David also said to Abishai and all his servants, “Look, my very own son (*Absalom*) is trying to kill me. This man (*Shimei*) from the family group of Benjamin has more right to kill me. Let him alone. Let him keep on saying bad things to me. The Lord told him to do this. “Maybe the Lord will see the wrong things that are happening to me. Then maybe the Lord will give me something good for every bad thing that Shimei says today.”

“So David and his men went on their way, down the road. But Shimei kept following David. Shimei walked on the other side of the road by the side of the hill. Shimei kept saying bad things to David on his way. Shimei also threw stones and dirt at David.

“King David and all his people came to Bahurim. The king and his people were tired. But they rested at Bahurim.

“Absalom, Ahithophel, and all the people of Israel came to Jerusalem. “David’s friend, Hushai the Arkite, came to Absalom. Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king! Long live the king!”

“Absalom answered, “Why are you not loyal to your friend David? Why did you not leave Jerusalem, with your friend?”

“Hushai said, “I belong to the person that the Lord chooses. These people and the people of Israel chose you. I will stay with you. “In the past, I served your father. So, now I should serve David’s son. I will serve you.”

Absalom Asks Ahithophel for Advice

“Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Please tell us what we should do.”

“Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Your father left some of his wives* here to take care of the house. Go and have sexual relations with them. Then all the Israelites will hear that your father hates you. And all of your people will be encouraged to give you more support.”

“Then they put up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the house.* And Absalom had sexual relations with his father’s wives.* All the Israelites saw it. “At that time, the advice of Ahithophel was very important, to both David and Absalom. It was as important as God’s word to a man.

Ahithophel’s Advice About David

17 Ahithophel also said to Absalom, “Let me now choose 12,000 men. Then I will chase David tonight. “I will catch him while he is tired and weak. I will scare him. And all his people will run away. But I will kill only King David. “Then I will bring all the people back to you. If David is dead, then all the people will come back in peace.”

“This plan seemed good to Absalom and all the leaders of Israel. “But Absalom said, “Now call Hushai the Arkite. I also want to hear what he says.”

Hushai Destroys Ahithophel’s Advice

“Hushai came to Absalom. Absalom said to Hushai, “This is the plan Ahithophel gave. Should we follow it? If not, tell us.”

“Hushai said to Absalom, “Ahithophel’s advice is not good this time.” “Hushai added, “You know that your father and his men are strong men. They are angry like a bear that is robbed of its babies in the field. Your father is a skilled fighter. He will not stay all night, with the people. “He is probably already hiding in some cave or in some other place. If your father attacks your men first, then people will hear the news. And they will think, ‘Absalom’s followers are losing!’ “Then even the people

wives Literally, “concubines,” women servants that were like wives.

roof of the house The houses had flat roofs which were often used as an extra room.

murderer Literally, “man of blood.”

that are brave like a lion will become scared. Why? Because all the Israelites know that your father is a strong fighter and that his men are brave.

¹¹"This is what I suggest: You must gather all the Israelites together from Dan to Beersheba.* Then there will be many people, like the sand by the sea. Then you yourself must go into the battle. ¹²"We will catch David in the place where he is hiding. We will fall on David like dew falls on the ground. We will kill David and all of his men. No man will be left alive. ¹³But if David escapes into a city, all the Israelites will bring ropes to that city. And we will pull that city into the valley. There will not be even a small stone left in that city."

¹⁴Absalom and all the Israelites said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than the advice of Ahithophel." They said this, because it was the Lord's plan. The Lord had planned to destroy the good advice of Ahithophel. In this way, the Lord could punish Absalom.

Hushai Sends a Warning to David

¹⁵Hushai told those things to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Hushai told them about the things that Ahithophel suggested to Absalom and the leaders of Israel. Hushai also reported to Zadok and Abiathar about the things that he himself had suggested. Hushai said, ¹⁶"Quickly! Send a message to David. Tell him not to stay tonight at the places where people cross into the desert. But cross over the Jordan River, at once. If he crosses the river, then the king and all his people will not be caught."

¹⁷The priests' sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz waited at En-Rogel. They did not want to be seen going into the town, so a servant girl came out to them. She gave them the message. Then Jonathan and Ahimaaz went and told those things to King David.

¹⁸But a boy saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz. The boy ran to tell Absalom. Jonathan and

Ahimaaz ran away quickly. They arrived at a man's house in Bahurim. The man had a well in his courtyard.* Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well. ¹⁹The man's wife spread a sheet over the well. Then she covered the well with grain. The well looked like a pile of grain, so no person could know that Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hiding there. ²⁰Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house. They asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman said to Absalom's servants, "They have already crossed over the brook."

Absalom's servants then went to look for Jonathan and Ahimaaz. But they could not find them. So Absalom's servants went back to Jerusalem.

²¹After Absalom's servants left, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well. They went and told King David. They said to David, "Hurry, cross over the river. Ahithophel has said these things against you."

²²Then David and all his people crossed over the Jordan River. Before the sun came up, all of David's people had already crossed the Jordan River.

Ahithophel Kills Himself

²³Ahithophel saw that the Israelites did not accept his advice. Ahithophel put a saddle on his donkey. He went home to his city. He made plans for his family. Then he hung himself. After Ahithophel died, the people buried him in his father's tomb.*

Absalom Crosses the Jordan River

²⁴David arrived at Mahanaim.

Absalom and all his Israelites crossed over the Jordan River. ²⁵Absalom made Amasa captain of the army. Amasa took Joab's place.* Amasa was the son of Ithra the Ishmaelite.

courtyard An open area outside the house. Many houses were built around courtyards so people could work, cook, or eat outside.

tomb A cave or a building where dead people are buried.

Amasa took Joab's place Joab still supported David. Joab was one of the three captains in David's army when David was running away from Absalom. See 2 Samuel 18:2.

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

Amasa's mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash sister of Zeruiah.* (Zeruiah was Joab's mother.)

²⁴Absalom and the Israelites made their camp in the land of Gilead.

Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai

²⁵David arrived at Mahanaim. Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai were at that place. (Shobi son of Nahash was from the Ammonite town of Rabbah. Makir son of Ammiel was from Lo Debar. And Barzillai was from Rogelim, Gilead.) ²⁶They said, "The people in the desert are tired, hungry and thirsty." So they brought many things for David and his people to eat. They brought beds, bowls, and clay pots. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, dried seeds, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk.

David Gets the Battle Ready

18 David counted his people. He chose captains over 1,000 and captains over 100 to lead these people. ²David separated the people into three groups. And then David sent the people out. Joab led a third of the people. Abishai (the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother) led another third of the people. And Ittai from Gath led the last third of the people.

King David said to the people, "I will also go with you."

³But the people said, "No! You must not go with us. Why? Because if we run away in the battle, Absalom's men will not care. Even if half of us are killed, Absalom's men will not care. But you are worth 10,000 of us! It is better for you to stay in the city. Then, if we need help, you can help us."

⁴The king said to his people, "I will do the things that you think are best."

Then the king stood at the side of the gate. The army went out. They went out in groups of 100 and 1,000.

"Be Gentle With Young Absalom!"

⁵The king gave a command to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. He said, "Do this for me: Be gentle with young Absalom!"

All the people heard the king's orders about Absalom to the captains.

David's Army Defeats Absalom's Army

⁶David's army went out into the field against Absalom's Israelites. They fought in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷David's army defeated the Israelites. There were 20,000 men killed that day. ⁸The battle spread through all the country. But that day more men died in the forest than by the sword.

⁹It happened that Absalom met David's servants. Absalom rode on his mule to escape. The mule went under the branches of a large oak tree. The branches were thick, and Absalom's head got caught in the tree. His mule ran out from under him, so Absalom was hanging above the ground.*

¹⁰A man saw this happen. He told Joab, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

¹¹Joab said to the man, "Why did you not kill him and let him fall to the ground? I would have given you a belt and ten pieces of silver!"

¹²The man said to Joab, "I would not try to hurt the king's son even if you gave me 1,000 pieces of silver. Why? Because we heard the king's command to you, Abishai, and Ittai. The king said, 'Be careful not to hurt young Absalom.' ¹³If I had killed Absalom, the king himself would find out. And you would punish me."

¹⁴Joab said, "I will not waste time here with you!"

Absalom was still alive and hanging in the oak tree. Joab took three spears. He threw the spears at Absalom. The spears went through Absalom's heart. ¹⁵Joab had ten young men that helped him in battle. These ten men came around Absalom and killed him.

¹⁶Joab blew the trumpet and called the people to stop chasing Absalom's Israelites.

Amasa's mother ... Zeruiah Literally, "Isra had sexual relations with Abigail, the daughter of Nahash sister of Zeruiah."

above the ground Literally, "between heaven and earth."

¹⁷Then Joab's men took Absalom's body and threw it into a large hole in the forest. They filled the large hole with many stones.

All the Israelites that followed Absalom, ran away and went home.

¹⁸When Absalom lived, he had put up a pillar in King's Valley. Absalom said, "I have no son to keep my name alive." So he named the pillar after himself. That pillar is called "Absalom's Monument" even today.

Joab Sends the News to David

¹Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said to Joab, "Let me now run and bring the news to King David. I'll tell him the Lord has destroyed the enemy for him."

²Joab answered Ahimaaz, "No, you will not bring the news to David, today. You can bring the news another time, but not today. Why? Because the king's son is dead."

³Then Joab said to a man from Cush, "Go, tell the king about the things you have seen."

The Cushite bowed to Joab. Then the Cushite ran to tell David.

⁴But Ahimaaz son of Zadok begged Joab again, "No matter what happens, please let me also run after the Cushite!"

Joab said, "Son, why do you want to carry the news? You will not get any reward for the news you bring."

⁵Ahimaaz answered, "No matter what happens, I will run."

Joab said to Ahimaaz, "Run!"

Then Ahimaaz ran through Jordan Valley. He passed the Cushite.

David Hears the News

¹David was sitting between the two gates of the city. The watchman went up to the roof over the gate walls. The watchman looked up and saw a man running alone. ²The watchman shouted to tell King David.

King David said, "If the man is alone, he is bringing news."

The man was running nearer and nearer the city. ³The watchman saw another man running. The watchman called to the gate-keeper,

"Look! Another man is running alone."

The king said, "He is also bringing news."

⁴The watchman said, "I think the first man runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."

The king said, "Ahimaaz is a good man. He must be bringing good news."

⁵Ahimaaz called to the king, "All is fine!" Ahimaaz bowed to the king. His face was close to the ground. Ahimaaz said, "Praise the Lord your God! The Lord has defeated the men that were against you, my lord the king."

⁶The king asked, "Is young Absalom all right?"

Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent me, I saw some great excitement. But I don't know what it was."

⁷Then the king said, "Step over here and wait." Ahimaaz stepped over and stood, waiting.

⁸The Cushite arrived. He said, "News for my lord the king. Today the Lord has punished the people that were against you!"

⁹The king asked the Cushite, "Is young Absalom all right?"

The Cushite answered, "I hope your enemies and all people that come against you to hurt you will be like this young man (*Absalom*)."

¹⁰Then the king knew Absalom was dead. The king was very upset. He went to the room over the city gate. He cried there. He went to his room. And on his way there, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son Absalom! I wish I had died for you. O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Joab Scolds David

19 People told the news to Joab. They told Joab, "Look, the king is crying and very sad for Absalom."

¹David's army, had won the battle that day. But it became a very sad day for all the people. It was a very sad day, because the people heard, "The king is very sad for his son."

²The people came into the city quietly. They were like people that had been defeated in battle and had run away. "The king had covered his face. He was crying loudly, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

⁵Joab came into the king's house. Joab said to the king, "Today you cover your face. You also cover the faces of all your servants—with shame. Today your servants saved your life. They saved the lives of your sons, daughters, wives and women servants.* ⁶Your servants are ashamed because you love those people that hate you, and you hate those people that love you. Today you have made it clear that your officers and men are nothing to you. Today I can see that if Absalom had lived, and all of us were killed, you would be very pleased. ⁷Now get up and speak to your servants and encourage them. I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out to do this, there will be no man that stays with you tonight. That will be worse than all the trouble you have had from your youth until today."

David Talks to the People

⁸Then the king went to the city gate.* The news spread that the king was at the gate. So all the people came to see the king.

David Is King Again

All the Israelites that followed Absalom, had run away home. ⁹All the people in all the family groups of Israel began to argue. They said, "King David saved us from the Philistines and our other enemies. David ran away from Absalom. ¹⁰We chose Absalom to rule us, but he is now dead in battle. We should make David the king again."

¹¹King David sent a message, to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. David said, "Speak to the leaders of Judah. Say, 'Why are you the last family group to bring King David back to his house? See, all the Israelites are talking about bringing the king back to his house. ¹²You are my brothers, you are my family. Then why are you the last family group to bring back the king?' ¹³And say to Amasa, 'You are part of my family. May God punish me if I don't make you captain of the army in Joab's place.'"

¹⁴David touched the hearts of all the people of Judah, so that they agreed like one man. The people of Judah sent a message to the king. They said, "Come back with all your servants."

¹⁵Then King David came to the Jordan River. The people of Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king. They came so they could bring the king over the Jordan River.

Shimei Asks David to Forgive Him

¹⁶Shimei son of Gera was from the family group of Benjamin. He lived in Bahurim. Shimei hurried down to meet King David. Shimei came with the people of Judah. ¹⁷Also, 1,000 people from the family group of Benjamin came with Shimei. Ziba the servant from Saul's family also came. Ziba brought his 15 sons and 20 servants with him. All these people hurried to the Jordan River to meet King David.

¹⁸The people went across the Jordan River to help bring the king's family back to Judah. The people did anything the king wanted. While the king was crossing the river, Shimei son of Gera came to meet him. Shimei bowed down on the ground in front of the king. ¹⁹Shimei said to the king, "My lord, don't think about the wrong things I did. My lord the king, don't remember the bad things I did when you left Jerusalem. ²⁰You know that I sinned. That is why today I am the first person from Joseph's family* to come down and meet you, my lord the king."

²¹But Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "We must kill Shimei because he asked for bad things to happen to the Lord's chosen king."

²²David said, "What should I do with you, sons of Zeruiah? Today you are against me. No person will be put to death in Israel. Today I know I am king over Israel."

²³Then the king said to Shimei, "You will not die." The king made a promise to Shimei that he himself would not kill Shimei.*

Joseph's family This probably means the Israelites that followed Absalom. Many times the name Ephraim (a son of Joseph) is used for all of the family groups in northern Israel.

The king ... not kill Shimei David did not kill Shimei but, a few years later, David's son Solomon ordered Shimei to be put to death. See 1 Kings 2:44-46.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

city gate This was where the public meetings were held.

Mephibosheth Goes to See David

¹"Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson* came down to meet King David. Mephibosheth had not cared for his feet, cut his beard or washed his clothes all the time the king had left Jerusalem until he came back in peace. ²"Mephibosheth came from Jerusalem to meet the king. The king said to Mephibosheth, "Mephibosheth, why did you not go with me when I ran away from Jerusalem?"

³"Mephibosheth answered, "O king my lord, my servant (*Ziba*) fooled me. I said to Ziba, 'I am crippled. So put a saddle on a donkey. Then I will ride on the donkey and go with the king.*' ⁴"But my servant tricked me. He said bad things about me to you. But my lord the king is like an angel from God. Do the thing you think is good. ⁵"You could have killed all my grandfather's* family. But you did not do this. You put me with those people that eat at your own table. So I don't have a right to complain to the king about anything."

⁶"The king said to Mephibosheth, "Don't say anything more about your problems. This is what I decide: You and Ziba can divide the land."

⁷"Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let Ziba take all the land. Why? Because my lord the king has arrived in peace to his own house."

David Asks Barzillai to Go to Jerusalem with Him

⁸"Barzillai of Gilead came down from Rogelim. He came to the Jordan River with King David. He went with the king to lead him across the river. ⁹"Barzillai was a very old man. He was 80 years old. He had given the king food and other things when David was staying at Mahanaim. Barzillai could do this because, he was a very rich man. ¹⁰"David said to Barzillai, "Come across the river, with me. I will take care of you if you will live in Jerusalem with me."

grandson Literally, "son."

I said ... king Possibly Mephibosheth was saying that his servant Ziba had taken the donkey and left Mephibosheth.

Read 2 Samuel 16:1-4.

grandfather's Literally, "father's."

¹¹"But Barzillai said to the king, "Do you know how old I am? Do you think I can go with you to Jerusalem? ¹²"I am 80 years old! I am too old to tell which is bad and which is good. I am too old to taste the things I eat or drink. I am too old to hear any more the voices of men and women that sing. Why should you want to be bothered with me? ¹³"I don't need rewards from you. I will cross the Jordan River with you. ¹⁴"But please, let me go back. Then I can die in my own city and be buried in the grave of my father and mother. But here, Kimham can be your servant; let him go back with you, my lord the king. Do with him anything you want." ¹⁵"The king answered, "Kimham will go back with me. I will be kind to him for you. I will do anything for you."

David Goes Back Home

¹⁶"The king kissed Barzillai and blessed him. Barzillai went back home. And the king and all the people went back across the river.

¹⁷"The king crossed the Jordan River to Gilgal. Kimham went with him. All the people of Judah and half the people of Israel led David across the river.

The Israelites Argue with the People of Judah

¹⁸"All the Israelites came to the king. They said to the king, "Our brothers, the people of Judah, stole you away and brought you and your family across the Jordan River with your men. Why?"

¹⁹"All the people of Judah answered the Israelites, "Because the king is our close relative. Why are you angry with us about this thing? We have not eaten food at the king's expense. The king did not give us any gifts."

²⁰"The Israelites answered, "We have ten shares in David.* So we have more right to David than you do. But you ignored us. Why? We were the ones that first talked about bringing our king back."

ten shares in David Judah and Benjamin were two of the family groups that later became the kingdom of Judah after the kingdom split. The other ten family groups were in the kingdom of Israel.

„But the people of Judah made a very ugly answer to the Israelites. The words of the people of Judah were more ugly than the words of the Israelites.

Sheba Leads Israel Away From David

20 It happened that there was a bad man named Sheba son of Bicri. Sheba was from the family group of Benjamin. He blew the trumpet and said, “We have no share in David. We have nothing in the son of Jesse. All Israel, let us all go home to our tents.”

²Then all the Israelites left David, and followed Sheba son of Bicri. But the people of Judah stayed with their king all the way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

³David came to his house in Jerusalem. David had left ten of his wives* to take care of the house. David put these women in a special house.* People guarded this house. The women stayed in this house until they died. David gave them food, but he did not have sexual relations with them. They lived like widows until they died.

⁴The king said to Amasa, “Tell the people of Judah to meet with me in three days. And you must also be here.” ⁵Then Amasa went to call the people of Judah together. But he took longer than the time that the king had told him.

David Tells Abishai to Kill Sheba

⁶David said to Abishai, “Sheba son of Bicri is more dangerous to us than Absalom was. So take my servants and chase Sheba. Hurry before Sheba gets into cities with walls. If Sheba gets into cities with walls, he will escape from us.”

⁷Joab’s men, the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and the soldiers, went out of Jerusalem. They chased Sheba son of Bicri.

Joab Kills Amasa

⁸When Joab and the army came to the great rock at Gibeon, Amasa came out to meet them. Joab was wearing his uniform. Joab had on a belt. His sword was in its sheath.* Joab went ahead to meet Amasa, and his sword fell out of its sheath. Joab picked up the sword and held it in his hand. ⁹Joab asked Amasa, “Brother, is everything all right with you?”

Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. ¹⁰Amasa did not notice the sword that was in Joab’s hand. Joab pushed the sword into Amasa’s stomach and caused Amasa’s inside parts to spill on the ground. Joab did not have to stab Amasa again—he was already dead.

David’s Men Continue to Look for Sheba

Then Joab and his brother Abishai continued to chase after Sheba son of Bicri. ¹¹One of Joab’s young men stood by Amasa’s body. This young man said, “Everyone that supports Joab and David should follow Joab. Help him chase Sheba.”

¹²Amasa lay in his own blood in the middle of the road. All the people were stopping to look at the body. So the young man took Amasa’s body from the road and put it in the field. Then he put a cloth over Amasa’s body. ¹³After Amasa’s body was taken off the road, all the people followed Joab. They went with Joab to chase Sheba son of Bicri.

Sheba Escapes to Abel Beth Maacah

¹⁴Sheba son of Bicri went through all the family groups of Israel to Abel Beth Maacah. All the Berites also came together and followed Sheba.

¹⁵Joab and his men came to Abel Beth Maacah. Joab’s army surrounded the town. They piled dirt up against the city wall. (After doing that, they could come close to the wall.) Then Joab’s men began breaking down the wall. They wanted to make the wall fall down.

wives Literally, “concubines,” women servants that were like wives.

David put ... special house David’s son Absalom ruined David’s concubines by having sexual relations with them. See 2 Samuel 16:21-22.

sheath A leather or metal case for carrying a sword or knife.

"A wise woman shouted out from the city. She said, "Listen to me! Tell Joab to come here. I want to talk with him."

"Joab came near to talk with the woman. The woman asked him, "Are you Joab?"

Joab answered, "Yes, I am."

Then the woman said to Joab, "Listen to what I say."

Joab said, "I am listening."

"Then the woman said, "In the past, people would say, 'Ask for advice at Abel.' Then the problem would be answered. "I am one of the peaceful, loyal people of Israel. You are trying to destroy an important city of Israel. Why must you destroy something that belongs to the Lord?"

"Joab answered, "No, no! I don't want to destroy anything.* "But there is a man from the hill country of Ephraim. He is named Sheba son of Birci. He has turned against King David. If you will bring him to me, I will leave the city alone."

The woman said to Joab, "All right! His head will be thrown over the wall to you."

"Then the woman spoke very wisely to all the people of the city. The people cut off the head of Sheba son of Birci. Then the people threw Sheba's head over the city wall, to Joab.

So Joab blew the trumpet and the army left the city. Every man went home to his tent. And Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

The People on David's Staff

"Joab was captain of all the army of Israel. Benaiah son of Jehoiada led the Kerethites and Pelethites. "Adoniram led the men that were forced to do hard work. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the historian. "Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were the priests. "And Ira the Jairite was David's chief servant.*

No no ... anything Literally, "Far, far be it! I don't want to swallow up or destroy."

chief servant Literally, "priest."

Saul's Family Punished

21 There was a time of hunger in David's time. This time of hunger continued for three years. David prayed to the Lord.

The Lord answered, "Saul and his family of murderers* are the reason for this time of hunger. This time of hunger has come because Saul killed the Gibeonites." "The Gibeonites were not Israelites. They were a group of those Amorites that were still left alive. The Israelites had promised them that they would not hurt the Gibeonites.* But Saul felt very strongly for the people of Israel and Judah. So he tried to kill the Gibeonites.)

King David, called the Gibeonites together. He talked to them. "David said to the Gibeonites, "What can I do for you? What can I do to take away Israel's sin, so you can bless the Lord's people?"

"The Gibeonites said to David, "Saul and his family don't have enough silver and gold to pay for what they did. But we don't have the right to kill any person in Israel."

David said, "But, what can I do for you?"

"The Gibeonites said to David, "Saul made plans against us. He tried to destroy all our people that are left in the land of Israel. "Saul was the Lord's chosen king. So bring seven of his sons to us. Then we will hang them in front of the Lord at Saul's Mount Gibeah."

King David said, "I will give those sons to you." "But the king protected Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. (Jonathan was Saul's son.) David had made a promise in the Lord's name to Jonathan.* So the king did not let them hurt Mephibosheth. "But the king did take Armoni and Mephibosheth,* Rizpah's and Saul's sons. The king took these two sons of Rizpah and the five sons of Merab, Saul's daughter. (Adriel,

family of murderers Literally, "house of blood."

The Israelites ... Gibeonites This happened in Joshua's time when the Gibeonites tricked the Israelites. Read Joshua 9:3-15.

David had made ... to Jonathan David and Jonathan promised each other that they would not harm each other's families. Read 1 Samuel 20:12-23,42.

Mephibosheth This is another man named Mephibosheth, not Jonathan's son.

son of Barzillai the Meholathite, was the father of Merab's five sons.) "David gave these seven sons, to the Gibeonites. Then the Gibeonites hung these seven sons, on the Mount Gibeah, before the Lord. All these seven sons, died together. They were put to death during the first days of harvest. (The barley harvest was just beginning.)

Rizpah Watches Over Her Sons' Bodies

"Aiah's daughter Rizpah took the cloth of sadness and put it on the rock.* That cloth stayed on the rock from the time the harvest began until the time rain fell on it. During the day Rizpah did not let the birds of the sky touch her sons' bodies. At night Rizpah did not let the animals of the field touch her sons' bodies.

David Moves and Buries the Bones of Saul and Jonathan

"People told David what Aiah's daughter Rizpah, Saul's woman servant,* was doing. "Then David took the bones of Saul and Jonathan from the men of Jabesh Gilead. (The men of Jabesh had stolen these bones from the public street of Beth Shan. This public street in Beth Shan is where the Philistines had hung the bodies of Saul and Jonathan. The Philistines had hung these bodies after they killed Saul at Gilboa.)

"David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from Gilead. Then the people gathered the bodies of the seven sons of Saul that were hanged. "They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in Zela, Benjamin. The people buried the bodies in the grave of Saul's father Kish. The people did all the things the king commanded.

Then God listened to the prayers of the people in the land.

War with the Philistines

"The Philistines had war with David again. David and his men went out to fight the Philistines. But David became tired and weak. "Ishbi-Benob was one of the giant's sons. Ishbi-Benob's spear weighed about 7½ pounds.* Ishbi-Benob had a new sword. He planned to kill David. "But Abishai son of Zeruiah killed the Philistine and saved David's life.

Then David's men made a vow* to David. They said to him, "You can't go out with us to battle any more. If you go into battle again and are killed, then Israel will lose its greatest leader.*

"Later, there was another war with the Philistines at Gob. Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, another of the giant's sons.

"Then another war with the Philistines came at Gob again. Elhanan the son of Jaare-Oregim from the family group of Benjamin killed Goliath the Gittite.* Goliath's spear was as large as a weaver's rod.

"War came again at Gath. There was a very large man. This man had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. (He had 24 fingers and toes in all.) This man was also a son of the giant. "This man challenged Israel. But Jonathan killed this man. (Jonathan was the son of Shimei, David's brother.)

"These four men were sons of the giant from Gath. They all were killed by David and his men.

David's Song of Praise to the Lord

22 The Lord had saved David from Saul and all his other enemies. David sang this song:

7½ pounds Literally, "300 shekels of brass."

vow A special promise to God. Often the person who makes a vow gives special sacrifices or gifts to God after doing some special thing for a certain period of time.

then Israel ... greatest leader Literally, "you will cause the lamp of Israel to go out."

Goliath the Gittite In 1 Chronicles 20:5, this Philistine is called Lahmi the brother of Goliath.

rock This might mean the rock that the bodies were lying on, or a rock that marked the place where her sons were buried.
woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

- 1 The Lord is my rock, my fort, my Savior.
 2 I will run to God for help.
 He is my Rock of safety.
 God is my shield.
 His power saves me.*
 The Lord is my high tower and my place
 of safety.
 My Savior saves me from harm.
 3 The Lord should be praised.
 I will call to the Lord for help.
 The Lord will save me from my
 enemies.
 4 The waves of death came around me.
 Troubles came like a flood.
 They made me afraid.
 5 Ropes from the grave wrapped around
 me.
 I was trapped by death.
 6 I was in trouble,
 but I called to the Lord.
 Yes, I called to my God.
 He was in his temple.
 He heard my voice.
 My cry came to his ears.
 7 Then the earth was shocked,
 the earth shook,
 the foundations of heaven shook.
 Why? Because the Lord was angry!
 8 Smoke came out of his nostrils,
 Burning sparks of fire came out of his
 mouth.
 9 The Lord split open the heavens and
 came down!
 He stood on a thick, dark cloud!
 10 The Lord rode on the cherub angel and
 flew.
 Yes, people saw him riding on the
 wings of the wind!
 11 The Lord wrapped the dark clouds around
 him like a tent.
 He gathered the thick clouds of water
 from the skies.
 12 His light was so bright
 that coals of fire began to burn!

- 13 The Lord thundered from heaven!
 God Most High spoke!
 14 The Lord sent out arrows and scattered
 the enemy.
 The Lord sent out lightning,
 and the people ran away in fear.
 15 The covers of the world's foundations
 were torn off.
 Then people could see the bottom of the
 sea.
 They came off because the Lord spoke,
 Because of the hot wind from his nose.
 16 The Lord reached down from the sky.
 The Lord caught me.
 He pulled me out of deep waters.
 17 He saved me from my strong enemy.
 He saved me from people that hated me.
 My enemies were too strong for me,
 so he saved me.
 18 I was in trouble when my enemies
 attacked me.
 But the Lord helped me;
 19 The Lord brought me to safety!
 He saved me because he loves me.
 20 The Lord rewards me because I did right.
 The Lord rewards me because my hands
 are clean from evil.
 21 Why? Because I obeyed the ways of the
 Lord!
 I did not sin against my God.
 22 I always remember the Lord's decisions.
 I will follow his laws!
 23 The Lord knows that I am not guilty.
 I keep myself from my sin.
 24 That is why the Lord has rewarded me:
 I live right!
 I follow a clean life for the Lord to see.
 25 If a person loves you,
 then you will show your loving
 kindness to him.
 If a person is true to you,
 then you will be true to him.
 26 If a person lives a good life for you,
 then you will be good to him.
 But if a person turns against you,
 then you will turn against him.*

His power saves me Literally, "He is the horn of my salvation."

But ... turn against him Or, "If a person is crooked, you will be crafty."

- 28 You will save people in trouble,
But you look down on proud people.
You will bring proud people down.
- 29 Lord, you are my lamp.
The Lord makes the darkness around
me become light.
- 30 You help me to defeat a group of
soldiers.*
By God's power, I can jump over a
wall!
- 31 God's way is perfect.
The Lord's word has been tested.
The Lord is a shield
for everyone that runs to him for safety.
- 32 There is no God except the Lord.
There is no Rock except our God.
- 33 God is my strong fort.
He helps blameless people live like he
wants.*
- 34 The Lord makes my feet fast like a deer's
feet!
He makes me steady in high places.
- 35 The Lord trains me for war,
so my arms can bend a brass bow.
- 36 You protect me like a shield.
Your help has made me great.
- 37 You have made my path wider,
so that my feet don't slip.
- 38 I have chased my enemies,
I have destroyed them!
I would not go back until my enemies
were destroyed.
- 39 I have destroyed my enemies.
I have completely destroyed them!
They can't rise again.
Yes, my enemies fell under my feet.
- 40 Why? Because you make me strong for
the battle.
You have defeated my enemies.
- 41 You have caused my enemies to run
away.
So I can defeat those people that hate me.
- 42 My enemies looked for help.
But there was no one to save them.

- 43 I beat my enemies into pieces.
They became like dust on the ground.
I kept stamping on my enemies until
they were like mud in the streets.
- 44 You have also saved me when my people
argued against me.
You kept me as ruler of the nations.
People I don't know will serve me!
- 45 People from other lands will obey me!
When they hear about me,
they will quickly obey me.
- 46 The people from other lands will become
afraid.
They will come out of their hiding
places shaking with fear.
- 47 The Lord lives.
Praise my Rock!*
Lift God high!
He is the Rock that saves me.
- 48 He is the God who punishes my
enemies, for me.
He brings people under my rule.
- 49 He frees me from my enemies.
Yes, you lift me above my enemies.
You save me from the man that wants to
hurt me.
- 50 Lord God, this is why I give thanks to
you among the nations.
- 51 The Lord helps his king win battles.
The Lord shows love and kindness to
his chosen king.
He will be kind to David and to his
children forever.

David's Last Words

23 These are the last words of David son
of Jesse: David sang this song:

- The man that was made great by God,
speaks.
He is the chosen king of the God of
Jacob.
He is the sweet singer of Israel.
1 The Lord's Spirit spoke through me.

defeat a group of soldiers Literally, "run through a
group of soldiers."

live like he wants Literally, "walk in his ways."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a
strong place of safety.

His word was on my tongue.

³ The God of Israel spoke.

The Rock of Israel said to me,

"The person that rules fairly over people—
the person that rules with respect for
God—

⁴ that person will be like the morning
light at dawn.

That person will be like a morning
without clouds.

That person will be like sunshine after
a rain—
the rain that makes the tender grass
grow out of the ground."

⁵ In the past, God did not make my family
strong.

But then God made an agreement with
me forever.

God made sure this agreement was good
in every way.

God has made this agreement strong,
and he will not break it.

This agreement is my salvation.

This agreement is all I want.

Truly, the Lord will make my family
grow strong.

⁶ But all bad people will be like thorns.
People don't hold thorns.

They throw them away.

⁷ If a person touches them,
it is like being pierced by bronze and
iron spears.

Those people will be like thorns.

They will be thrown in the fire,
and they will be completely burned!

David's Army

⁸These are the names of David's soldiers:

Josheb-Basshebeth the Tahkemonite.
Josheb-Basshebeth was captain of the chariot
officers. He was also called, Adino the Eznite.
Josheb-Basshebeth killed 800 men at one time.

⁹Next, there was Eleazar son of Dodai the
Ahoite. Eleazar was one of the three soldiers
that were with David at the time they
challenged the Philistines. The Philistines came
together for a battle at a time when the
Israelites had gone away. ¹⁰Eleazar fought the

Philistines until he was very tired. But he kept
holding on to the sword tightly and continued
fighting. The Lord gave a great victory to the
Israelites that day. The people came back after
Eleazar had won the battle. But they came only
to take valuable things from the enemy.

¹¹Next, there was Shammah son of Agee the
Hararite. The Philistines came together to fight.
They fought in a field of lentils.* The people
ran away from the Philistines. ¹²But Shammah
stood in the middle of the field. He fought for
the field. He killed the Philistines. That time
the Lord gave a great victory.

The Three Heroes

¹³One time three of the Thirty Heroes* came
down to David at the time of harvest. These
three men came to the cave of Adullam. The
Philistine army had made its camp in the valley
of Rephaim. ¹⁴At that time, David was in the
fort. There were some Philistines soldiers in
Bethlehem.

¹⁵David had a strong desire for some water
from his home town. David said, "Oh, I wish
some person would give me water from the
well near the city gate in Bethlehem!" David
did not really want this, he was only talking.

¹⁶But the Three Heroes* broke through the
Philistines army. These three men took water
out of the well near the city gate in Bethlehem.
Then the Three Heroes brought the water to
David. But David refused to drink the water.
He poured it on the ground before the Lord.
¹⁷David said, "Lord, I can't drink this. It would
be like drinking the blood of the men that
risked their lives for me." This is why David
refused to drink the water. These three soldiers
did many things like that.

¹⁸Abishai, brother of Joab, son of Zeruiah
was leader of the Three Heroes.* Abishai used
his spear against 300 enemies, and killed
them. He became as famous as the Three.
¹⁹Abishai received more honor than the Three.

lentils A kind of bean.

Thirty Heroes These men were David's famous group of
very brave soldiers.

Three Heroes These were David's three bravest soldiers.

He became their leader. But he was not a member of the Three.

¹¹There was Benaiah son of Jehoiada. He was the son of a powerful man. He was from Kabzeel. Benaiah did many brave things. Benaiah killed the two sons of Ariel from Moab. Benaiah also went down into a pit when it was snowing and killed a lion. ¹²Benaiah killed an Egyptian that was a strong fighter. The Egyptian had a spear in his hand. But Benaiah only had a staff in his hand. Benaiah caught the spear in the Egyptian's hand and took it away from him. Then Benaiah killed the Egyptian with the Egyptian's own spear. ¹³Benaiah son of Jehoiada did many things like that. Benaiah was as famous as the Three Heroes.* ¹⁴Benaiah received more honor than the Thirty Heroes,* but he did not become a member of the Three Heroes. David made Benaiah leader of his guards.

The Thirty Heroes

¹Asahel, the brother of Joab, was one of the Thirty Heroes.* Other men in the group of Thirty Heroes were: Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem, ²Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, ³Helez the Palitite, Ira son of Ikesh the Tekoite, ⁴Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, ⁵Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, ⁶Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite, Ittai son of Ribai from Gibeath of the family group of Benjamin, ⁷Benaiah, a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of Gaash, ⁸Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, ⁹Eliabha the Shaalbonite, the sons of Jashen, Jonathan, ¹⁰Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite, ¹¹Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maacathite, Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, ¹²Hezro the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, ¹³Igal son of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite, ¹⁴Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, helpers to Joab son of Zeruiah, ¹⁵Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, ¹⁶and Uriah the Hittite. There were 37 in all.

Three Heroes These were David's three bravest soldiers.

Thirty Heroes These men were David's famous group of very brave soldiers.

David Wants a Count of His Army

24 The Lord was angry against Israel again. The Lord caused David to turn against the Israelites. David said, "Go count the people of Israel and Judah."

¹King David said to Joab, the captain of the army, "Go through all the family groups of Israel from Dan to Beersheba,* and count the people. Then I will know how many people there are."

²But Joab said to the king, "May the Lord your God give you 100 times as many people, no matter how many there are! And may your eyes see this thing happen. But why do you want to do this?"

³King David very strongly commanded Joab and the captains of the army to count the people. So Joab and the captains of the army went out from the king to count the people of Israel. ⁴They crossed over the Jordan River. They made their camp in Arzer. Their camp was on the right side of the city. (The city is in the middle of the valley of Gad. The city is also on the way to Jazer.)

⁵Then they went to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi. They went to Dan-Jaan and around to Sidon. ⁶They went to the fort of Tyre. They went to all the cities of the Hivites and of the Canaanites. They went to southern Judah, to Beersheba. ⁷Nine months and 20 days later, they had gone through all the land. They came to Jerusalem after nine months and 20 days.

⁸Joab gave the list of the people to the king. There were 800,000 men in Israel that could use the sword. And there were 500,000 men in Judah.

The Lord Punishes David

¹Then David felt ashamed after he had counted the people. David said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I did! Lord, I beg you, forgive me for my sin. I have been very foolish."

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel. Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

¹¹When David got up in the morning, the Lord's word came to Gad, David's seer*. ¹²The Lord told Gad, "Go and tell David, 'This is what the Lord says: I offer you three things. Choose the one that I will do to you.'"

¹³Gad went to David and told him. Gad said to David, "Choose one of these three things: Should seven years of hunger come to you and your land? Or should your enemies chase you for three months? Or should there be three days of disease in your country? Think about it, and decide which of these things I should tell the Lord, who sent me."

¹⁴David said to Gad, "I am really in trouble! But the Lord is very merciful. So let the Lord punish us. Don't let my punishment come from people."

¹⁵So the Lord sent disease on Israel. It began in the morning and continued until the chosen time to stop. From Dan to Beersheba* 70,000 people died. ¹⁶The angel raised his arm toward Jerusalem to destroy it. But the Lord felt very sorry about the bad things that had happened. The Lord said to the angel that destroyed the people, "That's enough! Put down your arm." The Lord's angel was by the threshing floor* of Araunah* the Jebusite.

David Buys Araunah's Threshing Floor

¹⁷David saw the angel that killed the people. David spoke to the Lord. David said, "I've sinned! I've done wrong! But these people only followed me like sheep. They did nothing

wrong. Please let your punishment be against me and my father's family."

¹⁸That day Gad came to David. Gad told David, "Go and build an altar* to the Lord on the threshing floor* of Araunah* the Jebusite."

¹⁹Then David did the things Gad told him to. David obeyed the things the Lord commanded. David went to see Araunah. ²⁰When Araunah looked, he saw the king (David,) and his servants coming to him. Araunah went out and bowed, putting his face close to the ground. ²¹Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to me?"

David answered, "To buy the threshing floor* from you. Then I can build an altar* to the Lord. Then the disease will stop."

²²Araunah said to David, "My lord the king can take anything you want for a sacrifice.* Here are some cows for the burnt offering, and the threshing boards* and the yokes* for the wood. ²³O King, I give everything to you!" Araunah also said to the king, "May the Lord your God be pleased with you."

²⁴But the king said to Araunah, "No! I tell you the truth, I will buy the land from you at a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor* and the cows for 50 shekels of silver. ²⁵Then David built an altar* to the Lord there. David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

The Lord answered his prayer for the country. The Lord stopped the disease in Israel.

seer Another name for a prophet.

Dan to Beersheba This means all the people of Israel.

Dan was the town farthest north, and Beersheba was in the south.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Araunah Also spelled "Ornan."

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

threshing boards A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

yoke(s) A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

1 Kings

1 At this time King David was very, very old. He could not keep warm. His servants covered him with blankets, but still he was cold. ²So his servants said to him, "We will find a young woman to care for you. She will lie close to you and keep you warm." ³So the king's servants began looking everywhere in the country of Israel for a young woman. They were looking for a beautiful girl to keep the king warm. They found a girl named Abishag. She was from the city Shunem. They brought the young woman to the king. ⁴The girl was very beautiful. She cared for the king and served him. But King David did not have sexual relations with her.

⁵King David's son Adonijah became very proud. He said, "I will be the king." (Adonijah's mother was named Haggith.) Adonijah wanted to become king very much. So he got a chariot for himself and horses and 50 men to run ahead of him. ⁶King David never corrected his son Adonijah. David never asked him, "Why are you doing these things?" Adonijah was the son that was born after Absalom. Adonijah was a very handsome man.

⁷Adonijah talked with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest. They told him he was doing the right thing. ⁸But several men did not agree with the things Adonijah was doing. They did not think he was ready to become king. These men were Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei Rei, and King David's special guard. So these men did not join with Adonijah.

⁹Then Adonijah killed some animals for sacrifices. He killed some sheep, some cows,

and some fat calves. Adonijah made these sacrifices at the Stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel. Adonijah invited many men to come to this special worship with him. Adonijah invited the other sons of King David, and all the rulers and leaders of Judah. ¹⁰But Adonijah did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or his father's special guard or his brother Solomon.

¹¹When Nathan heard about this, he went to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Nathan asked her, "Have you heard about what Haggith's son Adonijah is doing? He has made himself king and the real king, David, does not know about it. ¹²Your life and the life of your son Solomon may be in danger. But I will tell you what you should do to save yourself. ¹³Go to King David and say to him, 'My King, you promised me that my son Solomon would be the next king after you. So why has Adonijah become king?' ¹⁴Then while you are still talking to him, I will come in and tell the king that what you have said about Adonijah, is true."

¹⁵So Bathsheba went in to see the king in his bedroom. The king was very old. Abishag, the girl from Shunem, was caring for him there. ¹⁶Bathsheba bowed down before the king. The king asked, "What do you want?"

¹⁷Bathsheba answered, "My king, you made a promise to me in the name of the Lord, your God. You said, 'Solomon your son will become king after me. Solomon will rule on my throne.' ¹⁸But now Adonijah has become king. And you did not know it. ¹⁹Adonijah has killed many animals for sacrifice. He has killed cows, fat calves, and sheep. And he invited all of your

sons. He also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of your army. But he did not invite Solomon, your son who serves you.²⁰ My king, all the people of Israel are watching you. They are waiting for you to decide who will be king after you.²¹ After you die, you will be buried with your fathers. At that time the people will say that Solomon and I are criminals."

²²While Bathsheba was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet came to see him.²³The servants told the king, "Nathan the prophet is here." So Nathan entered and went to the king. Nathan bowed down on the ground before the king.

²⁴Then Nathan said, "My king, have you announced that Adonijah will be the new king after you? Have you decided that Adonijah will rule the people after you?" Today he has made special sacrifices. He has killed many cows, fat calves, and sheep. And he invited all your other sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. They are now eating and drinking with him. And they are saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!'" But he did not invite me, or Zadok the priest, or Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, or your son Solomon.²⁵ Did you do this? We serve and obey you. Why didn't you tell us you chose him to be the king after you?"

²⁶Then King David said, "Tell Bathsheba to come in!" So Bathsheba came in before the king.

²⁷Then the king made a promise: "The Lord God has saved me from every danger. And the Lord God truly lives. And by his power I promise you²⁸ that today I will do the thing that I promised to you in the past. I made this promise by the power of the Lord God of Israel. I promised that your son Solomon would be the king after me. And I promised that he would take my place on my throne after me. I will keep my promise."

²⁹Then Bathsheba bowed down on the ground before the king. She said, "Long live King David!"

³⁰Then King David said, "Tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, to come in here." So the three men

came before the king.³¹ Then the king said to them, "Take my servants with you and let my son Solomon sit on my own mule. Bring him to Gihon Spring.³² At that place, Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet should anoint^{*} him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and announce, 'This is the new king, Solomon!'"³³ Then come back here with him. Solomon will sit on my throne and be the new king in my place. I have chosen Solomon to be the ruler over Israel and Judah."

³⁴Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, "This is good! And may your God make it happen." The Lord has always helped you, our king. Let the Lord also help Solomon. And let King Solomon be an even greater king than you."

³⁵So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the king's officers obeyed King David. They put Solomon on King David's mule and went with him to Gihon.³⁶ Zadok the priest carried the oil from the tent with him. Zadok poured the oil on Solomon's head to show that he was the king. They blew the trumpet and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!"³⁷ All the people followed Solomon into the city. They were playing flutes and making happy noises. They made so much noise that the ground shook.

³⁸At this time, Adonijah and all the guests with him were finishing their meal. They heard the sound from the trumpet. Joab asked, "What is that noise? What is happening in the city?"

³⁹While Joab was still speaking, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest came there. Adonijah said, "Come here! You are a good man.^{*} So you must be bringing good news to me."

⁴⁰But Jonathan answered, "No! It is not good news for you! Our King David has made Solomon the new king. And King David sent Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and all the king's officers with him. They put Solomon on the king's own

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

good man Or "important man." This Hebrew word means a person from an important family.

mule. "Then Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed* Solomon at Gihon Spring. And then they went into the city. People followed them and now the people in the city are very happy. That is the noise that you hear. "Solomon is now sitting on the king's throne. "All the king's servants have come to tell King David that he has done a good thing. They are saying, 'King David, you are a great king! And now we pray that your God will make Solomon a great king too. May your God make Solomon even more famous than you. And let him be an even greater king than you were!'"

Jonathan continued telling Adonijah about the things that were happening, "And King David has lain down on his bed. "King David said, 'Praise the Lord God of Israel. The Lord put one of my sons upon my throne and allowed me to see it.' "Then all of Adonijah's guests were afraid and they left quickly. "Adonijah was also afraid of Solomon. So he went to the altar and held the horns of the altar.* "Then someone told Solomon, "Adonijah is very afraid of you. Adonijah is at the altar. He is holding to the horns of the altar* and refuses to leave. Adonijah says, 'Tell King Solomon to promise me that he will not kill me.'"

"So Solomon answered, "If Adonijah shows that he is a good man, then I promise that not even a hair on his head will be hurt. But if he does anything wrong, then he will die." "Then King Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah. The men brought Adonijah to King Solomon. Adonijah came to King Solomon and bowed down. Then Solomon said, "Go home."

2 It was almost time for David to die. So David talked to Solomon and told him, "My time to die is near. Be a good and strong leader. "Obey all the things that the Lord your God commands. Follow the commands that the

Lord has given us. Obey all his laws and do the things he told us. Obey the things that are written in the Law of Moses. If you obey all these things, then you will be successful in all that you do and everywhere you go. "And if you obey the Lord, then the Lord will keep his promise about me. This is the promise the Lord made about me: 'Your sons must obey my commands and live the way I tell them. Your sons must have faith in me with all their heart and soul. If your sons do these things, then a man from your family will always be the ruler over the people of Israel.'

"Also, you remember what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me. He killed the two commanders of Israel's armies. He killed Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. You remember that he killed them during a time of peace. The blood from these men splashed on the sword belt and army boots he was wearing. So I must punish him. "But you are the king now. So you should punish him in the way you think is the most wise. "But you must be sure that he is killed. "Don't let him die peacefully of old age!"

"Be kind to the children of Barzillai of Gilead. Allow them to be your friends and eat at your table. They helped me when I ran away from your brother Absalom.

"And remember, Shimei son of Gera, is here with you. He is from the family group of Benjamin in Bahurim. Remember that he said very bad things against me on the day that I ran away to Mahanaim. Then he came down to meet me at the Jordan River. But I promised before the Lord, 'Shimei, I will not kill you.' "Don't leave him unpunished. You are a wise man; you will know what you must do to him. But don't let him die peacefully of old age."

"Then David died. He was buried in the City of David. "David ruled over Israel 40 years. He ruled seven years in Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem. "Now Solomon ruled on the throne of David his father. And there was no doubt that he was the king.*

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

held the horns of the altar This showed he was asking for mercy. If a person was innocent of a crime and if he ran into the holy place and held onto the corners of the altar, then that person should not be punished.

horns of the altar The corners of the altar were shaped like horns.

And there was no doubt ... king Or, "His kingdom was firmly established."

¹¹At this time, Adonijah son of Haggith went to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. Bathsheba asked him, "Do you come in peace?"

Adonijah answered, "Yes. This is a peaceful visit. ¹²I have something to say to you."

Bathsheba said, "Then speak."

¹³Adonijah said, "You remember that at one time the kingdom was mine. All the people of Israel thought I was their king. But things changed. Now my brother is the king. The Lord chose him to be king. ¹⁴So now I have one thing to ask you. Please do not refuse me."

Bathsheba answered, "What do you want?"

¹⁵Adonijah said, "I know that King Solomon will do anything you ask him. So please ask him to give Abishag the woman from Shunem to me. I want to marry her."

¹⁶Then Bathsheba said, "Fine. I will speak to the king for you."

¹⁷So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to talk with him. King Solomon saw her and he stood to meet her. Then he bowed down to her and sat on the throne. He told some servants to bring another throne* for his mother. Then she sat down at his right side.

¹⁸Bathsheba said to him, "I have one small thing to ask you. Please do not refuse me."

The king answered, "You can ask anything you want, mother. I will not refuse you."

¹⁹So Bathsheba said, "Allow Abishag, the woman from Shunem, to marry your brother Adonijah."

²⁰King Solomon answered his mother, "Why do you ask me to give Abishag to him? Why don't you ask me to allow him to become king also, since he is my older brother? Abiathar the priest and Joab will support him!"

²¹Then Solomon made a promise with the Lord. He said, "I promise that I will make Adonijah pay for asking me this! I promise that it will cost him his life! ²²The Lord has allowed me to become the king of Israel. He has given me the throne* that belonged to my father David. The Lord has kept his promise and gave the kingdom to me and my people. I promise

before the living God who has done these things, that Adonijah will die today!"

²³King Solomon gave a command to Benaiah. And Benaiah went out and killed Adonijah.

²⁴Then King Solomon said to Abiathar the priest, "I should kill you but I will allow you to go back to your home in Anathoth. I will not kill you now because you helped to carry the Holy Box* of the Lord while marching with my father David. And I know that you shared in all of the hard times the same as my father."

²⁵Solomon told Abiathar that he could not continue to serve as a priest of the Lord. This happened the way the Lord said it would. God said this about Eli the priest and his family at Shiloh. (And Abiathar was from Eli's family.)

²⁶Joab heard about this and he was afraid. He had supported Adonijah, but not Absalom. Joab ran to the tent of the Lord and held the horns of the altar.* ²⁷Someone told King Solomon that Joab was in the tent of the Lord at the altar. So Solomon ordered Benaiah to go and kill him.

²⁸Benaiah went into the tent of the Lord and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'"

But Joab answered, "No, I will die here."

So Benaiah went back to the king and told him what Joab had said. ²⁹Then the king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says! Kill him there. Then bury him. Then my family and I will be free of the guilt of Joab. This guilt was caused because Joab killed innocent people.

³⁰Joab killed two men who were much better than himself. They were Abner son of Ner and Amasa son of Jether. Abner was the commander of Israel's army and Amasa was the commander of Judah's army. (And at that time,) my father David did not know that Joab had killed them. So the Lord will punish Joab

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

held the horns of the altar This showed a person was asking for mercy. If a person was innocent of a crime, and if he ran into the Holy Place and held onto the corners of the altar, then the law said that person should not be punished.

throne The chair that a king or queen sits on.

for those men he killed. "He will be guilty for their deaths. And his family will also be guilty forever. But there will be peace from God for David, his descendants,* his family, and his throne forever."

"So Benaiah son of Jehoiada killed Joab. Joab was buried near his home in the desert. "Solomon then made Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, commander of the army in Joab's place. Solomon also made Zadok the new high priest in Abiathar's place. "Next, the king sent to get Shimei. The king said to him, "Build a house for yourself here in Jerusalem. Live in that house and don't leave the city. "If you leave the city and go past Kidron Brook, then you will be killed. And it will be your own fault."

"So Shimei answered, "What you have said is good, my king. I will obey you." So Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time. "But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran away. They went to the king of Gath. His name was Achish son of Maacah. Shimei heard that his slaves were in Gath. "So Shimei put his saddle on his donkey and went to King Achish at Gath. He went to find his slaves. He found them there and brought them back to his home.

"But someone told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and returned. "So Solomon sent to get him. Solomon said, "I made you promise in the name of the Lord that if you left Jerusalem you would die. I warned you that if you went anywhere else it would be your own fault that you died. And you agreed to what I said. You said that you would obey me. "Why did you break your promise? Why did you not obey my command? "You know the many wrong things you did against my father David. Now the Lord will punish you for those wrong things. "But the Lord will bless me. He will make David's throne safe forever."

"Then the king ordered Benaiah to kill Shimei, and he did. Now Solomon was in full control of his kingdom.

Solomon the King

3 Solomon made an agreement with Pharaoh the king of Egypt by marrying his daughter. Solomon brought her to the City of David.* At this time, Solomon was still building his palace and the temple of the Lord. Solomon was also building a wall around Jerusalem. "The temple had not yet been finished. So people were still making animal sacrifices* on altars at the high places.* "Solomon showed that he loved the Lord. He did this by obeying all the things his father David had told him to do. "But Solomon did something David did not tell him to do. "Solomon still used the high places to offer sacrifices and to burn incense.*

"King Solomon went to Gibeon to offer a sacrifice. He went there because that was the most important high place.* Solomon offered 1,000 offerings on that altar. "While Solomon was at Gibeon, the Lord came to him during the night in a dream. God said, "Ask for anything you want. I will give it to you."

"Solomon answered, "You were very kind to your servant, my father David. He followed you. He was good and lived right. And you showed the greatest kindness to him when you allowed his son to rule on his throne after him. "Lord my God, you have allowed me to be the king in my father's place. But I am like a little child. I do not have the wisdom I need to do the things I must do. "I, your servant, am here among your chosen people. There are many, many people. There are too many to count. "So a ruler must make many decisions among them. "So I ask that you give me wisdom so that I can rule and judge the people in the right way. This will allow me to know the difference between right and wrong. Without this great wisdom, it is impossible to rule these great people."

the ... David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

high place(s) Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

¹⁰The Lord was happy that Solomon asked him for this. ¹¹So God said to him, "You did not ask for long life for yourself. And you did not ask for riches for yourself. You did not ask for the death of your enemies. You asked for the wisdom to listen and make the right decisions. ¹²So, I will give you the thing you asked. I will make you wise and intelligent. I will make your wisdom so great, that there has never in the past been anyone like you. And in the future, there will never be anyone like you. ¹³Also, to reward you, I will give you those things that you did not ask for. All your life, you will have riches and honor. There will be no other king in the world as great as you. ¹⁴I ask you to follow me and obey my laws and commands. Do this the way your father David did. If you do this, then I will also give you a long life."

¹⁵Solomon woke up. He knew that God had talked to him in the dream. Then Solomon went to Jerusalem and stood before the Box of the Lord's Agreement.* Solomon offered a burnt offering for the Lord. And he made fellowship offerings to the Lord. After that, he gave a party for all of the leaders and officials that helped him rule.

¹⁶One day two women that were prostitutes* came to Solomon. They stood before the king. ¹⁷One of the women said, "Sir, this woman and I live in the same house. We were both pregnant and almost ready to give birth to our babies. I gave birth to my baby while she was there with me. ¹⁸Three days later, this woman also gave birth to her baby. There was no other person in the house with us. There were only the two of us. ¹⁹One night, while this woman was asleep with her baby, the baby died. ²⁰So, during the night, she took my son from my bed while I was asleep. She carried him to her bed. Then she put the dead baby in my bed. ²¹The next morning, I woke up and was ready to feed

my baby. But I saw that the baby was dead. Then I looked at it more closely. I saw that it was not my baby."

²²But the other woman said, "No! The living baby is mine. The dead baby is yours!"

But the first woman said, "No! You are wrong! The dead baby is yours and the living baby is mine!" So the two women argued in front of the king.

²³Then King Solomon said, "Each of you says that the living baby is your own. And each of you says that the dead baby belongs to the other woman."

²⁴Then King Solomon sent his servant to get a sword. ²⁵And King Solomon said, "This is what we will do. Cut the living baby in two pieces. Give each woman half of the baby."

²⁶The second woman said, "That is fine. Cut the baby into two pieces. Then neither of us will have him."

But the first woman, the real mother, was full of love for her son. She said to the king, "Please, Sir, don't kill the baby! Give it to her."

²⁷Then King Solomon said, "Don't kill the baby! Give it to the first woman. She is the real mother."

²⁸The people of Israel heard about King Solomon's decision. They respected and honored him very much because he was wise. They saw that he had the wisdom of God* in making the right decisions.

4 King Solomon ruled over all the people of Israel. ²These are the names of his leading officials that helped him rule:

Azariah son of Zadok

(Azariah was the priest);

³ Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha

(Elihoreph and Ahijah had the jobs of writing notes about the things that happened in the courts);

Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud

(Jehoshaphat wrote notes about the history of the people);

⁴ Benaiah son of Jehoiada

(Benaiah was the commander of the

Box of the Lord's Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

prostitute(s) A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

the wisdom of God Or, "very great wisdom."

army);

Zadok and Abiathar

(Zadok and Abiathar were priests);

⁵ Azariah son of Nathan

(Azariah was in charge of the district governors);

Zabud son of Nathan

(Zabud was a priest and an adviser to King Solomon);

⁶ Ahishar

(Ahishar was responsible for everything in the king's home);

Adoniram son of Abda

(Adoniram was in charge of the slaves).

⁷ Israel was divided into twelve areas called districts. Solomon chose governors to rule over each district. These governors were ordered to gather food from their districts and give the food to the king and his family. Each of the twelve governors were responsible for giving food to the king one month of each year. ⁸ These are the names of the twelve governors:

Ben-Hur was governor over the hill country of Ephraim;

⁹ Ben-Deker was governor over Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan;

¹⁰ Ben-Hesed was governor over Arubboth, Socoh, and Hepher;

¹¹ Ben-Abinadab was governor over Naphoth Dor
(He was married to Taphath, daughter of Solomon);

¹² Bana son of Ahilud was governor over Taanach and Megiddo and all of Beth Shan next to Zarethan
(This was below Jezreel, from Beth Shan to Abel Meholah across Jokmeam);

¹³ Ben-Geber was governor over Ramoth Gilead

(He was governor over all the towns and villages of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead. He was also governor over the district of Argob in Bashan. In this area there were 60 cities with big walls around them. These cities also had bronze bars on the gates.);

¹⁴ Ahinadab son of Iddo was governor over Mahanaim;

¹⁵ Ahimaaz was governor over Naphtali (He was married to Basemath the daughter of Solomon.);

¹⁶ Baana son of Hushai was governor over Asher and Aloth;

¹⁷ Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was governor over Issachar;

¹⁸ Shimei son of Ela was governor over Benjamin;

¹⁹ Geber son of Uri was governor over Gilead

(Gilead was the country where Sihon the king of the Amorite people lived and the country where Og the king of Bashan lived). But Geber was the only governor over that district.

²⁰ There were many, many people in Judah and Israel. The number of people was like sands on the seashore. The people lived happy lives: They ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves.

²¹ Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistine people. His kingdom went as far as the border of Egypt. These countries sent gifts to Solomon and they obeyed him all of his life.*

²² This is the amount of food that Solomon needed each day, for himself and for all of the people that ate at his table,:

150 bushels* of fine flour,

300 bushels* of flour,

²³ 10 cows that were fed good grain,
20 cows that were raised in the fields,
And 100 sheep.

Also three different kinds of deer and special birds.

²⁴ Solomon ruled over all the countries west of the Euphrates River. This was the land from Tiphshah to Gaza. And Solomon had peace on all sides of his kingdom. ²⁵ During Solomon's life all of the people in Judah and Israel, all the

sent ... life This showed that these countries had made peace agreements with Solomon because of his great power.

150 bushels Or, "30 kors."

300 bushels Or, "60 kors."

way from Dan to Beersheba, lived in peace and security. The people were at peace sitting under their own fig trees and grape vines.

²⁶Solomon had places to keep 4,000* horses for his chariots and he had 12,000 horse soldiers. ²⁷And each month one of the twelve district governors gave King Solomon all those things that he needed. This was enough for every person that ate at the king's table. ²⁸The district governors also gave the king enough straw and barley for the chariot horses and the riding horses. Each person brought this grain to required places.

²⁹God gave great wisdom to Solomon. Solomon could understand many, many things. His wisdom was too great to imagine.*

³⁰Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men in the East. And his wisdom was greater than all the men in Egypt.

³¹He was wiser than any of the men on earth. He was even wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite man. He was wiser than Heman, Calcol, and Darda. (These were the sons of Mahol.) King Solomon became famous in all of the countries around Israel and Judah. ³²During his life, King Solomon wrote* 3,000 wise teachings. He also wrote* 1,500 songs.

³³Solomon also knew very much about nature. Solomon taught about many different kinds of plants—everything from the great cedar trees of Lebanon to the vines that grow out of the walls. King Solomon also taught about animals, birds, and snakes.* ³⁴People from all nations came to listen to King Solomon's wisdom. The kings of all nations sent their wise men to listen to King Solomon.

Solomon Builds the Temple

5 Hiram was the king of Tyre. Hiram had always been David's friend. So when Hiram heard that Solomon had become the new king after David, he sent his servants to Solomon. ²This is what Solomon said to king Hiram: ³"You remember that my father, King David, had to fight many wars all around him. So he was never able to build a temple to honor the Lord his God. King David was waiting until the Lord allowed him to defeat all his enemies. ⁴But now the Lord my God has given me peace on all sides of my country. Now I have no enemies. My people are in no danger.

⁵"The Lord made a promise to my father David. The Lord said, 'I will make your son king after you. And your son will build a temple to honor me.' Now, I plan to build that temple to honor the Lord my God. ⁶And so I ask you to help me. Send your men to Lebanon. There, they should cut down cedar trees for me. My servants will work with yours. I will pay you any price that you decide as your servants' wages. But I need your help. Our carpenters* are not as good as the carpenters of Sidon."

⁷When Hiram heard what Solomon asked, he was very happy. King Hiram said, "I thank the Lord today for giving David a wise son over this great nation!" ⁸Then Hiram sent a message to Solomon. The message said, "I heard the thing that you asked. I will give you all the cedar trees and the fir trees you want. ⁹My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. Then I will tie them together and float them down the shore to the place you choose. There I will separate the logs, and you can take the trees."

¹⁰Solomon gave to Hiram about 120,000 bushels* of wheat to feed his household and about 120,000 gallons* of pure olive oil every year.

¹¹The Lord gave wisdom to Solomon as he had promised. And there was peace between

4,000 Hebrew and Latin have 40,000, but see 2 Chron. 9:25.

His wisdom ... imagine Or, "His wisdom was as expansive as the sands on the seashore."

wrote Literally, "spoke."

snakes Literally, "creeping things." These can be anything from insects, to lizards or snakes, and fish.

carpenters People who work with wood. In ancient times, this also meant that they cut the trees.

120,000 bushels Literally, "20,000 kors."

120,000 gallons Literally, "20,000 baths." A bath equals about 6 gallons.

Hiram and Solomon. These two kings made a treaty between themselves.

¹¹King Solomon forced 30,000 men of Israel to help in this work. ¹²King Solomon chose a man named Adoniram to be the boss. Solomon divided the men into three groups. There were 10,000 men in each group. Each group worked one month in Lebanon and then went home for two months. ¹³Solomon also forced 80,000 men to work in the hill country. These men had the job of cutting rocks. And there were 70,000 men to carry the rocks. ¹⁴There were also 3,300 men who were the bosses over the people who did the work. ¹⁵King Solomon commanded them to cut out big, expensive stones to be the foundation for the temple. These stones were carefully cut. ¹⁶Then Solomon's and Hiram's builders and the men from Byblos carved the stones. They prepared the stones and the logs for building the temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 So Solomon began to build the temple. This was 480 years* after the people of Israel left Egypt. This was during the fourth year of King Solomon's rule over Israel. It was in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. ¹The temple was 90 feet* long, 30 feet* wide, and 45 feet* high. ²The porch of the temple was 30 feet* long and 15 feet* wide. The porch ran along the front of the main part of the temple itself. Its length was equal to the width of the temple. ³There were narrow windows in the temple. These windows were narrow on the outside and larger on the inside.* ⁴Then Solomon built a row of rooms around the main part of the temple. These rooms were built on top of each other. (This row of rooms was three stories tall.) ⁵The rooms touched the temple wall, but their beams were not built into

that wall. (That temple wall became thinner at the top.) So the wall which made one side of those rooms was thinner than the wall below it. The rooms on the bottom floor were 7½ feet* wide. The rooms on the middle floor were 9 feet* wide. The rooms above that were 10½ feet* wide. ⁶The workers used large stones to build the walls. The workers cut the stones at the place where they got them out of the ground. So there was no noise of hammers, axes, or any other iron tools in the temple.

⁷The entrance to the bottom rooms was on the south side of the temple. Inside, there were stairs that went up to the second floor rooms and from there to the third floor rooms.

⁸So, Solomon finished building the temple. Every part in the temple was covered with cedar boards. ⁹Solomon also finished building the rooms around the temple. Each story was 7½ feet* tall. The cedar beams in those rooms touched the temple.

¹⁰The Lord said to Solomon, "If you obey all my laws and commands, I will do the thing for you that I promised your father David. ¹¹And I will live among the children of Israel in this temple that you are building. I will never leave the people of Israel."

Details About the Temple

¹²So Solomon finished building the temple.

¹³The stone walls inside the temple were covered with cedar boards. The cedar boards went from the floor to the ceiling. The stone floor was covered with pine boards. ¹⁴They built a room 30 feet* long deep inside the back part of the temple. They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards. The cedar boards went from the floor to the ceiling. This room was called the Most Holy Place. ¹⁵In front of the Most Holy Place, was the main part of the temple. This room was 60 feet* long. ¹⁶They covered the walls in this room with cedar boards—none of the stones in the walls could be

480 years This was about 960 B.C.

90 feet Literally, "60 cubits."

30 feet Literally, "20 cubits."

45 feet Literally, "30 cubits." The ancient Greek translation has "25 cubits."

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

These windows ... inside This might also mean, "These were windows with lattice work over them."

7½ feet Literally, "5 cubits."

9 feet Literally, "6 cubits."

10½ feet Literally, "7 cubits."

60 feet Literally, "40 cubits."

seen. They carved pictures of flowers and gourds* into the cedar.

¹⁹Solomon prepared the room deep inside the back part of the temple. This room was for the Lord's Box of the Agreement.* ²⁰This room was 30 feet* long, 30 feet* wide, and 30 feet* high. ²¹Solomon covered this room with pure gold. He built an [incense] altar in front of this room. He covered the altar with gold, and wrapped gold chains around it. There were two statues of Cherub angels* in that room. Those statues were covered with gold. ²²All of the temple was covered with gold. Also, the altar in front of the Most Holy Place was covered with gold.

²³The workers made two statues of Cherub angels* with wings. The workers made the statues from olive wood. These Cherub angels were put in the Most Holy Place. Each angel was 15 feet* tall. ²⁴Both Cherub angels were the same size and built the same way. Each Cherub angel had two wings. Each wing was 7½ feet* long. From the end of one wing to the end of the other wing was 15 feet.* And each Cherub angel was 15 feet* tall. ²⁵These Cherub angels were put in the Most Holy Place. They stood beside each other. Their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. The other two wings touched each side wall. ²⁶The two Cherub angels were covered with gold.

²⁷The walls around the main room and the inner room were carved with pictures of Cherub angels,* palm trees, and flowers. ²⁸The floor of both rooms was covered with gold.

²⁹The workers made two doors from olive wood. They put those doors at the entrance of the Most Holy Place. The frame around the

doors was made with five sides.* ³⁰They made the two doors from olive wood. The workers carved pictures of Cherub angels,* palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered the doors with gold.

³¹They also made doors for the entrance to the main room. They used olive wood to make a square door frame. ³²Then they used fir* to make the doors. ³³There were two doors. Each door had two parts, so the two doors folded. They carved pictures of Cherub angels,* palm trees, and flowers on the doors. Then they covered them with gold.

³⁴Then they built the inner yard. They built walls around this yard. Each wall was made from three rows of cut stones and one row of cedar timbers.

³⁵They started working on the temple in the month of Ziv, the second month of the year. This was during the fourth year that Solomon ruled over the people of Israel. ³⁶The temple was finished in the month of Bul, the eighth month of the year. This was during the eleventh year that Solomon ruled over the people. It took seven years to build the temple. The temple was built exactly the way it was planned.

Solomon's Palace

7 King Solomon also built a palace* for himself. It took 13 years to finish building Solomon's palace. ²He also built the building called "the Forest of Lebanon." It was 150 feet* long, 75 feet* wide, and 45 feet* high. It had four rows of cedar columns. On top of each column was a cedar capital.* ³There were cedar beams going across the rows of columns. They put cedar boards on top of these beams for the ceiling. There were 15 beams for each section of columns. There was a total of 45 beams.

gourds A plant with long vines. Its fruit grows in the shape of a jar and becomes hard like wood.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

30 feet Literally, "20 cubits."

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

7½ feet Literally, "5 cubits."

The frame ... five sides We are not sure of the meaning here.

fir A type of tree, like a pine tree.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

150 feet Literally, "100 cubits."

75 feet Literally, "50 cubits."

45 feet Literally, "30 cubits."

capital(s) The decorated caps of stone or wood on the top of columns.

¹There were three rows of windows on each of the side walls. The windows were across from each other. ²There were three doors at each end. All the door openings and frames were square.

³Solomon also built the "Porch of Columns." It was 75 feet* long and 45 feet* wide. Along the front of the porch, there was a covering supported by columns.

⁷Solomon also built a throne room where he judged people. He called this the "Hall of Judging." The room was covered with cedar from the floor to the ceiling.

⁸The house where Solomon lived was inside of the Hall of Judging. This house was built the same as the Hall of Judging. He also built the same kind of house for his wife, the daughter of the king of Egypt.

⁹All of these buildings were made with expensive blocks of stone. These stones were cut to the right size with a saw. They were cut in the front and in the back. These expensive stones went from the foundation up to the top layer of the wall. Even the wall around the yard was made with expensive blocks of stone. ¹⁰The foundations were made with large, expensive stones. Some of the stones were 15 feet* long and others were 12 feet* long. ¹¹On top of those stones there were other expensive stones and cedar beams. ¹²There were walls around the palace yard, the temple yard, and the porch of the temple. Those walls were built with three rows of stone and one row of cedar timbers.

¹³King Solomon sent a message to a man named Hiram* in Tyre. Solomon brought Hiram* to Jerusalem. ¹⁴Hiram's* mother was an Israelite from the family group of Naphtali. His dead father was from Tyre. Hiram* made things from bronze.* He was a very skilled and experienced worker. So King Solomon asked him to come and Hiram* accepted. So King

Solomon put Hiram* in charge of all the bronze work. Hiram* built all the things made from bronze.

¹⁵Hiram* made two bronze* columns. Each column was 27 feet* tall and 18 feet* around. The columns were hollow and the metal was 3 inches* thick. ¹⁶Hiram* also made two bronze capitals* that were 7½ feet* tall. Hiram* put these capitals on top of the columns. ¹⁷Then he made two nets of chains to cover the capitals on top of the two columns. ¹⁸Then he made two rows of decorations that looked like pomegranates.* They put these bronze pomegranates on the nets of each column in order to cover the capitals at the top of the columns. ¹⁹The capitals on top of the 7½ feet* tall columns were shaped like flowers. ²⁰The capitals were on top of the columns. They were above the bowl shaped net. At that place, there were 20 pomegranates in rows all around the capitals. ²¹Hiram* put these two bronze columns at the porch of the temple. One column was put on the south side and one was put on the north side of the entrance. The south column was named Jakin. The north column was named Boaz. ²²They put the flower-shaped capitals on top of the columns. So the work on the two columns was finished.

²³Then Hiram* made a round tank from bronze.* They called this tank "The Sea." The tank was about 45 feet* around. It was 15 feet* across and 7½ feet* deep. ²⁴There was a rim around the outer edge of the tank. Under this rim there were two rows of bronze gourds* surrounding the tank. The bronze gourds were made in one piece as part of the tank. ²⁵The tank rested on the backs of 12 bronze bulls. All 12 of these bulls were looking out, away from the tank. Three were looking north, three east,

27 feet Literally, "18 cubits."

18 feet Literally, "12 cubits."

3 inches Literally, "1 handbreadth."

capital(s) The decorated bronze caps on the top of columns.

7½ feet Literally, "5 cubits."

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

gourds A plant with long vines. Its fruit grows in the shape of a jar and becomes hard like wood.

75 feet Literally, "50 cubits."

45 feet Literally, "30 cubits."

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

12 feet Literally, "8 cubits."

Hiram Or, "Hiram."

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean "copper," "bronze," or "brass."

three south, and three west. ²⁶The sides of the tank were 4 inches* thick. The rim around the tank was like the rim of a cup or like the petals on a flower. The tank held about 11,000 gallons.*

²⁷Then Hiram* made ten bronze* carts. Each one was 6 feet* long, 6 feet* wide, and 4½ feet* high. ²⁸The carts were made from square panels set in frames. ²⁹On the panels and frames were bronze lions, bulls, and Cherub angels.* Above and below the lions and bulls there were designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. ³⁰Each cart had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. At the corners there were bronze supports for a large bowl. The supports had designs of flowers hammered into the bronze. ³¹There was a frame on top for the bowl. It was 18 inches* tall above the bowls. The opening for the bowl was round, 27 inches* in diameter. There were designs carved into the bronze on the frame. The frame was square, not round. ³²There were four wheels under the frame. The wheels were 27 inches* in diameter. The axles between the wheels were made as one piece with the cart. ³³The wheels were like the wheels on a chariot.* Everything on the wheels—the axles, the rims, the spokes, and the hubs were made from bronze.

³⁴The four supports were on the four corners of each cart. They were made as one piece with the cart. ³⁵There was a strip of bronze around the top of each cart. It was made as one piece with the cart. ³⁶The sides of the cart and the frames had pictures of Cherub angels,* lions, and palm trees carved into the bronze. These pictures were carved all over the carts—wherever there was room. And there were

flowers carved on the frame around the cart. ³⁷Hiram* made ten carts. And they were all the same. Each cart was made from bronze. The bronze was melted and poured into a mold. So all of the carts were the same size and shape.

³⁸Hiram* also made ten bowls. There was one bowl for each of the ten carts. Each bowl was six feet across. And each bowl could hold about 230 gallons* ³⁹Hiram* put five of the carts on the south side of the temple and the other five carts on the north side. He put the large tank in the southeast corner of the temple. ⁴⁰Hiram* also made pots, small shovels, and small bowls. Hiram* finished making all of the things King Solomon wanted him to make. Here is a list of the things that Hiram* made for the Temple of the Lord:

“two columns; two capitals* shaped like bowls for the top of the columns; two nets to go around the capitals; ⁴⁰⁰pomegranates for the two nets (There were two rows of pomegranates for each net to cover the two bowls for the capitals on top of the columns.); ⁴¹ten carts with a bowl on each cart; ⁴²the large tank with 12 bulls under it; ⁴³the pots, small shovels, small bowls, and all the dishes for the Lord’s temple.

Hiram* made all the things that King Solomon wanted. They were all made from polished bronze. ⁴⁴“Solomon never weighed the bronze that was used to make these things. There was too much to weigh. So the total weight of all the bronze was never known. The king ordered these things to be made near the Jordan River between Succoth and Zarethan. They made these things by melting the bronze and pouring it into molds in the ground.

“Solomon also commanded that many things be made from gold for the temple. These are the things that Solomon made from gold for the temple:

4 inches Literally, “4 fingers.”

11,000 gallons Literally, “2,000 baths.”

Hiram Or, “Hiram.”

bronze A metal. The Hebrew word can mean “copper,” “bronze,” and “brass.”

6 feet Literally, “4 cubits.”

4½ feet Literally, “3 cubits.”

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

18 inches Literally, “1 cubit.”

27 inches Literally, “1½ cubits.”

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

230 gallons Literally, “40 baths.”

capital(s) The decorated caps of stone or wood on the top of columns.

the golden altar; the golden table (the bread offered to God was on this table); *the lampstands of pure gold (there were five on the south side and five on the north side in front of the Most Holy Place); the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs; *the cups; the tools used to keep the lamps bright; the bowls; the pans; the dishes of pure gold used for carrying coals; and the doors at the entrance to the temple.

¹So King Solomon finished the work he wanted to do for the Lord's temple. Then King Solomon got all the things that his father David had saved for this special purpose. He brought these things into the temple. He put the silver and gold in the treasuries in the Lord's Temple.

The Box of the Agreement in the Temple

8 Then King Solomon called together all the elders of Israel, the heads of the family groups, and the leaders of the families of the Israel. He asked them to come to him in Jerusalem. Solomon wanted them to join in bringing the Box of the Agreement* from the City of David* into the temple. ²So all the men of Israel came together with King Solomon. This was during the time of the special holiday (the Festival of Shelters) during the month of Ethanin. This was the seventh month of the year.

³All of the elders of Israel arrived at that place. Then the priests took the Holy Box.* They carried the Holy Box* of the Lord along with the Meeting Tent* and the holy things that

were in the tent. The Levites* helped the priests carry these things. ⁴King Solomon and all the people of Israel met together before the Box of the Agreement.* They offered many sacrifices. They killed so many sheep and cattle that no person was able to count them all. ⁵Then the priests put the Box of the Agreement of the Lord in its right place. This was inside the Most Holy Place in the temple. The Box of the Agreement was put under the wings of the Cherub angels.* ⁶The wings of the Cherub angels were spread out over the Holy Box. They covered the Holy Box and its carrying poles. ⁷These carrying poles were very long. Any person that stood in the Holy Place in front of the Most Holy Place could see the ends of the poles. But no one outside could see them. The poles are still in there today. ⁸The only thing inside the Holy Box were the two tablets. These were the two tablets that Moses put in the Holy Box at the place called Horeb. Horeb was the place that the Lord made his Agreement with the people of Israel after they came out of Egypt.

⁹The priests put the Holy Box in the Most Holy Place. When the priests came out of the Holy Place, the Cloud* filled the Lord's Temple. ¹⁰The priests could not continue their work because the temple was filled with the Glory of the Lord.* ¹¹Then Solomon said,

"The Lord caused the sun to shine in the sky,
But he said that he would live in a dark cloud.

¹² I have truly built a wonderful temple for you,
A place for you to live forever."

¹³All of the people of Israel were standing there. So King Solomon turned to them and asked God to bless them.

Levites People from the family group of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Cloud The special sign that showed that God was with the people of Israel.

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright, shining light.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (Tabernacle) where the people of Israel met to worship God.

¹⁵Then King Solomon prayed a long prayer to the Lord. This is what he said:

"The Lord, the God of Israel, is great.

The Lord himself has done the things that

he promised to my father David.

The Lord told my father,

¹⁶ 'I brought my people, Israel, out of Egypt.

But I had not yet chosen a city from among the family groups of Israel for a temple to honor me.

And I had not chosen a man to be leader over my people, Israel.

But now I have chosen Jerusalem where I will be honored.

And I have chosen David to rule over my people, Israel.'

¹⁷"My father David wanted very much to build a temple to honor the Lord, the God of Israel. ¹⁸But the Lord said to my father David, 'I know that you want very much to build a temple to honor me. And this is good that you want to build my temple.' ¹⁹But you are not the one that I have chosen to build the temple. Your son will build my temple!

²⁰"So the Lord has kept the promise that he gave. I am the king now in place of David my father. Now I rule the people of Israel like the Lord promised. And I built the temple for the Lord, the God of Israel. ²¹I have made a place in the temple for the Holy Box.* Inside that Holy Box is the Agreement that the Lord made with our ancestors. The Lord made that Agreement when he brought our ancestors out of Egypt."

²²Then Solomon stood in front of the Lord's altar.* All of the people were standing in front of him. King Solomon spread his hands and looked toward the sky. ²³He said:

"O Lord, God of Israel, there is no other god like you in the skies or on the earth. You made the Agreements with your people because you love them. And you keep your Agreement. You are kind and loyal to people that follow you. ²⁴You made a promise to your servant David, my father. And you have kept that promise. You made that promise with your own mouth. And with your great power you have made that promise come true today. ²⁵Now, Lord, God of Israel, keep the other promises you made to your servant David, my father. You said, 'David, your sons must carefully obey me, just like you did. If they do this, then you will always have someone from your family ruling the people of Israel.' ²⁶And again, O Lord, God of Israel, I ask you to please continue to keep that promise to my father.

²⁷"But, God, will you really live here with us on the earth? All the sky and the highest place in heaven cannot contain you. Certainly this house which I have built cannot contain you either. ²⁸But please listen to my prayer and my request. I am your servant, and you are the Lord my God. Hear this prayer that I am praying to you today. ²⁹In the past you said, 'I will be honored there.' So please watch this temple night and day. Please listen to the prayer that I pray to you at this temple. ³⁰Lord, I and your people Israel will turn to this place and pray to you. Please hear those prayers! We know that you live in heaven. We ask you to hear our prayer there and forgive us.

³¹"If a person does something wrong against another person, he will be brought here to the altar. If that person is not guilty, then he will make an oath. He will promise that he is innocent. ³²Then listen in heaven and judge the man. If the person is guilty, then please show us that he is guilty. And if the person is innocent, then please show us that he is not guilty.

³³"Sometimes your people Israel will sin against you, and their enemies will defeat them. Then the people will come back to you and praise you. The people will pray to you in this temple. ³⁴Please hear them in heaven. Then forgive the sins of your people Israel, and allow

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

them to have their land again. You gave this land to their ancestors.

³³"Sometimes they will sin against you, and you will stop the rain from falling on their land. Then they will pray toward this place and praise your name. You make them suffer, and they will be sorry for their sins. ³⁴"So please listen in heaven to their prayer. Then forgive us for our sins. Teach the people to live right. Then, O Lord, please send rain to the land you gave them.

³⁵"The land might become very dry and no food will grow on it. Or maybe a great sickness will spread among the people. Maybe all of the food that is growing will be destroyed by insects. Or your people might be attacked in some of their cities by their enemies. Or many of your people might become sick. ³⁶"When any of these things happen, if even one man is sorry for his sins, and spreads his hands in prayer toward this temple, ³⁷"please listen to his prayer. Listen to it while you are in your home in heaven. Then forgive the people and help them. Only you know the things that people are really thinking. So judge each person and be fair to him. ³⁸"Do this so that your people will fear and respect you all the time that they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors.

³⁹"People from other places will hear about your greatness and your power. They will come from far away to pray at this temple. ⁴⁰"From your home in heaven please listen to their prayers. Please do all that those people from other places ask you. Then those people will fear and respect you the same as your people in Israel. Then all people everywhere will know that I built this temple to honor you.

⁴¹"Sometimes you will command your people to go and fight against their enemies. Then your people will turn toward this city which you have chosen and the temple that I have built for your honor. And they will pray to you. ⁴²"At that time, listen to their prayers from your home in heaven, and help them.

⁴³"Your people will sin against you. I know this because every person sins. And you will be angry with your people. You will let their enemies defeat them. Their enemies will make

them prisoners and carry them to some faraway land. ⁴⁴"In that faraway land, your people will think about what happened. They will be sorry for their sins, and they will pray to you. They will say, 'We have sinned and done wrong.' ⁴⁵"They will be in that faraway land. But if they turn toward this land that you gave to their ancestors,* and toward this city you chose, and toward this temple I built to honor you, ⁴⁶"then please listen from your home in heaven. ⁴⁷"Forgive your people of all their sins. And forgive them for turning against you. Make their enemies be kind to them. ⁴⁸"Remember that they are your people. Remember that you brought them out of Egypt. It was like you saved them by pulling them out of a hot oven!

⁴⁹"Lord God, please listen to my prayers and to the prayers of your people Israel. Listen to their prayers any time that they ask you for help. ⁵⁰"You have chosen them from all the peoples of the earth to be your own special people. Lord, you promised to do that for us. You used your servant Moses at the time you brought our ancestors* out of Egypt."

⁵¹Solomon prayed that prayer to God. He was on his knees in front of the altar.* Solomon prayed with his arms raised toward heaven. Then Solomon finished praying and stood. ⁵²Then, in a loud voice, he asked God to bless all the people of Israel. Solomon said:

⁵³"Praise the Lord! He promised that he would give rest to his people, Israel. And he has given us rest! The Lord used his servant Moses and made many good promises to the people of Israel. And the Lord has kept every one of those promises. ⁵⁴I ask that the Lord our God will be with us. I ask that he will be with us the same as he was with our ancestors.* I ask that the Lord never leaves us. ⁵⁵In this way, we will turn to him and follow him. Then we will obey all the laws, decisions, and commands that he gave our ancestors. ⁵⁶I ask that the Lord our God will always remember

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

this prayer and the things I have asked. I pray that the Lord will do these things for his servant, the king, and for his people, Israel. I pray that he will do this every day. ^aIf the Lord will do these things, then all the people of the world will know that the Lord is the only true God. ^bYou people must be loyal and true to the Lord our God. You must always follow and obey all of his laws and commands. You must continue to obey in the future like you do now."

^cThen King Solomon and all the people of Israel with him offered sacrifices to the Lord. ^dSolomon killed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. These were for the fellowship offerings. This is the way the king and the Israelites dedicated the temple—they showed that they had given the temple to the Lord.

^eAlso, that day King Solomon dedicated the yard in front of the temple. He offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat from the animals that were used as fellowship offerings. King Solomon made these offerings there in the yard. He did this because the bronze altar in front of the Lord was too small to hold them all.

^fSo there at the temple, King Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the holiday.* All Israel was there, from as far away as Hamath Pass in the north, to the border of Egypt in the south. Many, many people were there. They ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves together with the Lord for seven days. Then they stayed for another seven days. They celebrated for a total of 14 days!^g ^hThe next day, Solomon told the people to go home. All the people thanked the king, said good-bye, and went home. They were happy because of all the good things that the Lord had done for David his servant and for his people Israel.

God Comes to Solomon Again

9 So Solomon finished building the Lord's temple and his own palace. Solomon

finished building all the things that he wanted to build. ⁱThen the Lord appeared to Solomon again, just as he had done before in the town of Gibeon. ^jThe Lord said to him: "I heard your prayer. I heard the things that you asked me to do. You built this temple. And I have made it a holy place. So I will be honored there forever. I will watch over it and think of it always. ^kYou must serve me the same way your father David did. He was fair and sincere. And you must obey my laws and do all the things that I commanded you.

^l"If you do all these things, then I will make sure that the king of Israel is always someone from your family. This is the promise I made to your father David. I told him that Israel would always be ruled by one of his descendants.*

^m"But if you or your children stop following me, and don't obey the laws and commands I have given you, and if you serve and worship other gods, then I will force Israel to leave the land I have given to them. Israel will be an example to other people. Other people will make jokes about Israel. I made the temple holy. It is the place where people honor me. But if you don't obey me, then I will tear it down. ⁿThis temple will be destroyed. Every person who sees it will be amazed. They will ask, 'Why did the Lord do this terrible thing to this land and to this temple?' ^oOther people will answer, 'This happened because they left the Lord their God. He brought their ancestors out of Egypt. But they decided to follow other gods. They began to worship and serve those gods. That is why the Lord caused all these bad things to happen to them.'"

^pIt took 20 years for King Solomon to build the Lord's temple and the king's palace.* ^qAnd after 20 years King Solomon gave 20 towns in Galilee to Hiram the king of Tyre. Solomon gave King Hiram these towns because Hiram helped Solomon build the temple and the palace. Hiram gave Solomon all the cedar and pine and gold that Solomon wanted. ^rSo Hiram traveled from Tyre to see the towns that

holiday This was probably Passover.

Then they stayed ... 14 days This is not in the ancient Greek translation.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

Solomon gave him. When Hiram saw those towns, he was not pleased. ¹³King Hiram said, "What are these towns that you have given me, my brother?" King Hiram named that land the Land of Cabul.* And that area is still called Cabul today. ¹⁴Hiram had sent to King Solomon about 9,000 pounds* of gold, to use in building the temple.

¹⁵King Solomon forced slaves to work for him to build the temple and the palace. Then King Solomon used these slaves to build many other things. He built the Millo.* He also built the city wall around Jerusalem. Then he built again the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer.

¹⁶In the past, the king of Egypt fought against the city of Gezer and burned it. He killed the Canaanite people who lived there. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter. So Pharaoh gave that city to Solomon as a wedding present. ¹⁷Solomon built that city again. Solomon also built the city of Lower Beth Horon. ¹⁸King Solomon also built the cities of Baalath, and Tamar in the Judean desert. ¹⁹King Solomon also built cities where he could store grain and things. And he built places for his chariots and his horses. King Solomon also built many things that he wanted in Jerusalem and in Lebanon and in all the places he ruled.

²⁰There were people in the land that were not Israelites. Those people were the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ²¹The Israelites had not been able to destroy those people. But Solomon forced them to work for him as slaves. They are still slaves today. ²²Solomon did not force any Israelites to be his slaves. The people of Israel were soldiers, government officials, officers, captains, and chariot commanders and drivers.

²³There were 550 supervisors over Solomon's projects. They were bosses over the men who did the work. ²⁴Pharaoh's daughter moved from the City of David to the big house

that Solomon built for her. Then Solomon built the Millo.*

²⁵Three times each year Solomon offered burned sacrifices and fellowship offerings on the altar. This is the altar that Solomon built for the Lord. King Solomon also burned incense before the Lord. So he supplied the things needed for the temple.

²⁶King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber. This town is near Elath on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. ²⁷King Hiram had some men who knew much about the sea. Those men often traveled in ships. King Hiram sent those men to serve in Solomon's navy and work with Solomon's men. ²⁸Solomon's ships went to Ophir. The ships brought about 31,500 pounds* of gold back from Ophir to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10 The queen of Sheba heard about Solomon. So she came to test him with hard questions. ²She traveled to Jerusalem with a very large group of servants. There were many camels carrying spices, jewels, and much gold. She met Solomon and asked him all the questions that she could think of. ³Solomon answered all the questions. None of her questions were too hard for him to explain. ⁴The queen of Sheba saw that Solomon was very wise. She also saw the beautiful palace* he had built. ⁵The queen saw the food at the king's table. She saw his officials meeting together. She saw the servants in the palace and the good clothes that they wore. She saw his parties and the sacrifices that he offered in the temple. All these things really amazed her—they just 'took her breath away'!

⁶So the queen said to the king, "I heard many things in my own country about the things you do and about your wisdom. All these things are true! I did not believe these things until I came and saw them with my own eyes. Now I see that there is even more than I heard about. Your wisdom and your wealth is much

Cabul This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "worthless."

9,000 pounds Literally, "120 talents."

Millo The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

31,500 pounds Literally, "420 talents"

palace A large house for the king and his family.

greater than people told me. ⁸Your wives* and officers are very fortunate! They can serve you and hear your wisdom every day! ⁹Praise the Lord your God! He was pleased to make you king of Israel. The Lord God loves Israel. So he made you the king. You follow the law and treat people fairly."

¹⁰Then the queen of Sheba gave the king about 9,000 pounds* of gold. She also gave him many spices and jewels. The queen of Sheba gave to Solomon more spices than anyone has ever brought into Israel.

¹¹Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir. Those ships also brought very much wood* and jewels. ¹²Solomon used the wood to build supports in the temple and the palace. He also used the wood to make harps* and lyres* for the singers. No other person has ever brought that kind of wood to Israel, and no person has seen that kind of wood since that time.

¹³Then King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba gifts that a king always give to the ruler of another country. Then he gave her anything else she asked for. After this, the queen and her servants went back to her own country.

¹⁴Every year King Solomon got about 79,920 pounds* of gold. ¹⁵Besides the gold from the cargo ships,* he also got gold from the traders and merchants,* and from the kings of Arabia and governors of the land.

¹⁶King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 15 pounds* of gold. ¹⁷He also made 300 smaller shields of hammered gold. Each shield contained about 4 pounds* of gold. The king put them in the building called the "Forest of Lebanon."

wives This comes from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has "men."

9,000 pounds Literally, "120 talents."

wood This is a special kind of wood called "Ahnug" wood.

No one knows exactly what type of wood this was.

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

lyres Musical instruments that are like small harps.

79,920 pounds Literally, "666 talents."

cargo ships Literally, "ships of Tarshish."

traders and merchants Businessmen who make their living buying and selling things.

15 pounds Literally, "600 shekels."

4 pounds Literally, "3 minas."

¹⁸King Solomon also built a large ivory throne. He covered it with pure gold. ¹⁹There were six steps leading up to the throne. The back of the throne was round at the top. There were armrests on both sides of the chair. And in the sides of the chair under the two armrests there were pictures of lions. ²⁰There were also two lions on each of the six steps. There was one lion at each end. There was nothing like this in any other kingdom. ²¹All of Solomon's cups and glasses were made of gold. And all of the weapons* in the building called the "Forest of Lebanon" were made from pure gold. Nothing in the palace was made from silver. ²²There was so much gold that, in Solomon's time people did not think silver was important!

²³The king also had many cargo ships* that he sent out to trade things with other countries. These were Hiram's ships. Every three years the ships would come back with a new load of gold, silver, ivory, and animals.

²⁴Solomon was the greatest king on earth. He had the most riches and wisdom of all kings. ²⁵People everywhere wanted to see King Solomon. They wanted to hear the great wisdom that God had given him. ²⁶Every year people came to see the king. And every person brought a gift. They brought things made from gold and silver, clothes, weapons, spices, horses, and mules.

²⁷So Solomon had many, many chariots and horses. He had 1,400 chariots* and 12,000 horses. Solomon built special cities for these chariots. So the chariots were kept in those cities. King Solomon also kept some of the chariots with him in Jerusalem. ²⁸The king made Israel very rich. In the city of Jerusalem, silver was as common as rocks and cedar wood was as common as the many, many fig trees growing on the hills. ²⁹Solomon brought horses from Egypt and Kue. His traders bought them in Kue and brought them to Israel. ³⁰A chariot* from Egypt cost about 15 pounds* of silver, and a horse cost about 3 3/4 pounds* of silver.

weapons The Hebrew word can mean, "dishes, tools, or weapons."

chariot(s) Small wagons used in war.

3 3/4 pounds Literally, "150 shekels."

Solomon sold horses and chariots to the kings of the Hittites and the Arameans.

Solomon's and His Many Wives

11 King Solomon loved women! He loved many women that were not from the nation of Israel. These included the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabite women, Ammonite women, Edomite women, Sidonian women, and Hittite women. ¹In the past, the Lord had said to the people of Israel, "You must not marry people from other nations. If you do, then those people will cause you to follow their gods." But Solomon fell in love with these women. ²Solomon had 700 wives. (These women were all daughters of leaders from other nations.) He also had 300 slave women that were like wives to him. His wives caused him to turn away from God. ³When Solomon was old, his wives caused him to follow other gods. Solomon did not follow the Lord completely the way that his father David had done. ⁴Solomon worshiped Astarte.* This was the god of the people of Sidon. And Solomon worshiped Milcom.* This was that horrible idol of the Ammonite people. ⁵So Solomon did wrong before the Lord. Solomon did not follow the Lord completely the way his father David had done.

⁶Solomon built a place for worshiping Chemosh. Chemosh was that horrible idol of the Moabite people. Solomon built that worship place on a hill next to Jerusalem. On that same hill, Solomon built a worship place for Molech. Molech was that horrible idol of the Ammonite people. ⁷Then Solomon did the same thing for all of his wives from other countries. His wives burned incense* and gave sacrifices to their gods.

⁸Solomon turned away from following the Lord, the God of Israel. So the Lord became angry at Solomon. The Lord had come to

Solomon twice. ⁹The Lord told Solomon that he must not follow other gods. But Solomon did not obey the Lord's command. ¹⁰So the Lord said to Solomon, "You have chosen to break your agreement with me. You have not obeyed my commands. So I promise that I will tear your kingdom away from you. I will give it to one of your servants." ¹¹But I loved your father David. So I will not take your kingdom away from you while you are living. I will wait until your son becomes king. Then I will take it from him. ¹²Still, I will not tear away all of the kingdom from your son. I will leave him one family group to rule. I will do this for David. He was a good servant. And I will also do this for Jerusalem. I chose that city!"

Solomon's Enemies

¹³At that time, the Lord caused Hadad the Edomite to become Solomon's enemy. Hadad was from the family of the king of Edom. ¹⁴This is how it happened: Earlier David defeated Edom. Joab was the commander of David's army. Joab went into Edom to bury dead people. Joab killed all the men still living there. ¹⁵Joab and all Israel stayed in Edom for six months. During that time they killed all of the men of Edom. ¹⁶But at that time Hadad was only a young boy. So Hadad ran away to Egypt. Some of his father's servants went with him. ¹⁷They left Midian and went to Paran. In Paran some other people joined them. Then the whole group went to Egypt. They went to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and asked for help. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house and some land. Pharaoh also supported him and gave him food to eat.

¹⁸Pharaoh liked Hadad very much. Pharaoh gave Hadad a wife. The woman was Pharaoh's sister-in-law. (Pharaoh's wife was queen Tahpenes.) ¹⁹So the sister of Tahpenes married Hadad. They had a son named Genubath. Queen Tahpenes allowed Genubath to grow up in Pharaoh's house with his children.

²⁰In Egypt, Hadad heard that David had died. He also heard that Joab, the commander of the army was dead. So Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go home to my own country."

Astarte The Canaanite people thought that this false goddess could make people able to have babies. She was their goddess of love.

Milcom The god of the Ammonite people.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

²²But Pharaoh answered, "I have given you everything you need here! Why do you want to go back to your own country?"

Hadad answered, "Please, just let me go home."

²³God also caused another man to be an enemy against Solomon. This man was Rezon, son of Eliada. Rezon ran away from his master. His master was Hadadezer, king of Zobah. ²⁴After David defeated the army of Zobah, Rezon gathered some men and became the leader of a small army. Rezon went to Damascus and stayed there. Rezon became king of Damascus. ²⁵Rezon ruled Aram. Rezon hated Israel, so he continued to be an enemy of Israel all of the time that Solomon lived. Rezon and Hadad caused much trouble for Israel.

²⁶Jeroboam son of Nebat was one of Solomon's servants. Jeroboam was from the family group of Ephraim. He was from the town of Zeredah. Jeroboam's mother was named Zeruah. His father was dead. He turned against the king.

²⁷This is the story of why Jeroboam turned against the king. Solomon was building the Millo* and fixing the wall of the city of David his father. ²⁸Jeroboam was a strong man. Solomon saw that this young man was a good worker. So Solomon made him the boss over all of the workers from the family group of Joseph.* ²⁹One day Jeroboam was traveling out of Jerusalem. Ahijah the prophet from Shiloh met him on the road. Ahijah was wearing a new coat. These two men were alone in the country. ³⁰Ahijah took his new coat and tore it into twelve pieces.

³¹Then Ahijah said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces of this coat for yourself. The Lord the God of Israel says: 'I will tear the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten of the family groups.' ³²And I will allow David's family to control only one family group. I will let them keep this group. I will do this for my servant David and for Jerusalem. Jerusalem is

the city which I chose from all the family groups of Israel. ³³I will take the kingdom from Solomon because he stopped following me. He worships Astarte, the Sidonian god; Chemosh, the Moabite god; and Milcom, the Ammonite god. Solomon stopped doing the things that are right and good. He does not obey my laws and my commands. He is not living the way that his father David lived. ³⁴So I will take the kingdom away from Solomon's family. But I will let Solomon be their ruler for the rest of his life. I will do this for my servant David. I chose David because he obeyed all my commands and all my laws. ³⁵But I will take the kingdom away from his son. And Jeroboam, I will allow you to rule over the ten family groups. ³⁶I will allow Solomon's son to continue to rule over one family group. I will do this so that my servant David will always have a rule before me in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the city that I chose to be my own. ³⁷But I will make you rule over everything you want. You will rule over all of Israel. ³⁸I will do these things for you if you will live right and obey all my commands. If you obey the laws and commands like David, then I will be with you. I will make your family a family of kings, like I did for David. I will give Israel to you. ³⁹I will punish David's children because of the things Solomon did. But I will not punish them forever."

Solomon's Death

⁴⁰Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam ran away to Egypt. He went to Shishak the king of Egypt. Jeroboam stayed there until Solomon died.

⁴¹Solomon did many great and wise things while he ruled. All of these things are written in the Book of History about Solomon. ⁴²Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. ⁴³Then Solomon died and was buried with his ancestors.* He was buried in the city of David, his father.

Millo The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

family ... Joseph The people from the family groups of Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph's sons.

died ... ancestors Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

Civil War

12 ¹²Jeroboam son of Nebat was still in Egypt where he had run away from Solomon. When he heard about Solomon's death, he returned to his city, Zeredah, in the hills of Ephraim.

King Solomon died and was buried with his ancestors.* After that, his son Rehoboam became the new king. ³All of the people of Israel went to Shechem. They went to make Rehoboam the king. Rehoboam also went to Shechem to become king. The people said to Rehoboam, "Your father forced us to work very hard. Now, make it easier for us. Stop the heavy work that your father forced us to do. Then we will serve you."

⁴Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days and I will answer you." So the people left.

⁶There were some older men who had helped Solomon make decisions when he was alive. So King Rehoboam asked these men what he should do. He said, "How do you think I should answer these people?"

⁷The elders answered, "If you are like a servant to them today, then they will truly serve you. If you speak kindly to them, then they will work for you always."

⁸But Rehoboam did not listen to this advice. He asked the young men that were his friends. ⁹Rehoboam said, "The people said, 'Give us easier work than your father gave us.' How do you think I should answer these people? What should I tell them?"

¹⁰The king's young friends said, "Those people came to you and said, 'Your father forced us to work very hard. Now make our work easier.' So you should brag and, tell them, 'My little finger is stronger than my father's whole body.' ¹¹My father forced you to work hard. But I will make you work much harder! My father used whips to force you to work. I will beat you so hard that you will think scorpions* have stung you!"

¹²Rehoboam had told the people, "Come back to me in three days." So after three days all the people of Israel came back to Rehoboam. ¹³At that time, King Rehoboam spoke hard words to them. He did not listen to the advice from the elders. ¹⁴He did what his friends told him to do. Rehoboam said, "My father forced you to work hard. So I will give you even more work. My father beat you with whips. But I will beat you so hard that you will think scorpions* have stung you!" ¹⁵So the king did not do what the people wanted. The Lord caused this to happen. The Lord did this in order to keep the promise he made to Jeroboam son of Nebat. The Lord used Ahijah the prophet to make this promise. Ahijah was from Shiloh.

¹⁶All the people of Israel saw that the new king refused to listen to them. So the people said to the king: "Are we part of David's family? No! Do we get any of Jesse's land? No! So Israel, let's go to our own homes. Let David's son rule his own people!" So the people of Israel went home. ¹⁷But Rehoboam still ruled over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸A man named Adoniram was the boss over all the workers. King Rehoboam sent Adoniram to talk to the people. But the people of Israel threw stones at him until he died. Then King Rehoboam ran to his chariot* and escaped to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel rebelled (*turned against*) the family of David. And they are still against David's family today.

²⁰All the people of Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back. So they called him to a meeting and made him king over all of Israel. The family group of Judah was the only family group that continued to follow the family of David.

²¹Rehoboam went back to Jerusalem. He gathered together the families of Judah and the family group of Benjamin. This was an army of 180,000 men. Rehoboam wanted to fight against the people of Israel. He wanted to take his kingdom back.

died ... ancestors Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

scorpions Insects that have tails with stingers in them. If a scorpion stings a person, it really hurts badly."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

²²But the Lord spoke to a man of God.* His name was Shemaiah. The Lord said, ²³"Talk to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and also to all the people of Judah and Benjamin. ²⁴Say to them, 'The Lord says that you must not go to war against your brothers. Every one of you should go home. I made all these things happen!'" So the men in Rehoboam's army obeyed the Lord's command. They all went home.

²⁵Shechem was a city in the hill country of Ephraim. Jeroboam made Shechem a very strong city and lived there. Later he went to the city of Peniel and made it stronger.

²⁶Jeroboam said to himself, "If the people continue going to the Lord's temple in Jerusalem, then they will want to be ruled by David's family. The people will follow Rehoboam, king of Judah again. Then they will kill me." ²⁷So the king asked his advisers what he should do. They gave him their advice. So Jeroboam made two golden calves. King Jeroboam said to the people, "You should not go Jerusalem to worship. Israel, these are the gods that brought you out of Egypt."* ²⁸King Jeroboam put one golden calf in Bethel.* He put the other golden calf in the city of Dan.* ²⁹But this was a very great sin. The people of Israel traveled to the cities of Bethel and Dan to worship the calves. But this was a very great sin.

³⁰Jeroboam also built temples at the high places.* He also chose priests from among the different family groups of Israel. (He did not choose priests only from the family group of Levi.) ³¹And King Jeroboam started a new holiday. This holiday was like the Passover, Festival in Judah. But this holiday was on the 15th day of the eighth month—not the 15th day of the first month. During that time the king offered sacrifices on the altar in the city of

Bethel. And he made the sacrifices to the calves that he had made. King Jeroboam also chose priests in Bethel to serve at the high places* that he made. ³²So King Jeroboam chose his own time for a holiday for the Israelites. It was the 15th day of the eighth month. During that time he offered sacrifices and burned incense* on the altar that he built. This was in the city of Bethel.

God Speaks Against Bethel

13 The Lord commanded a man of God* from Judah to go to the city of Bethel. King Jeroboam was standing at the altar offering incense when the man of God arrived. ²The Lord had commanded the man of God to speak against the altar. He said,

"Altar, the Lord says to you: 'David's family will have a son named Josiah. These priests are now worshiping at the high places.* But altar, Josiah will put those priests on you and he will kill them. Now those priests burn incense upon you. But Josiah will burn human bones on you. Then you can't be used again!'"

³The man of God gave proof to the people that these things would happen. He said, "This is proof that the Lord told me about. The Lord said, 'This altar will break apart. And the ashes on it will fall onto the ground.'"

⁴King Jeroboam heard the message from the man of God* about the altar in Bethel. He took his hand off of the altar and pointed at the man. He said, "Arrest that man!" But when the king said this, his arm became paralyzed. He could not move it. ⁵Also, the altar broke into pieces. All its ashes fell onto the ground. This was the proof that the things the man of God said were from God. ⁶Then King Jeroboam said to the man of God, "Please pray to the Lord your God for me. Ask the Lord to heal my arm."

So the man of God* prayed to the Lord. And the king's arm was healed. It became like it was before. ⁷Then the king said to the man of

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Israel ... Egypt This is exactly the same thing that Aaron said at the time he made the golden calf in the desert. See Ex. 32:4.

Bethel, Dan Bethel was a city in the south part of Israel, near Judah. Dan was in the north part of Israel.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense Special dried tree sap, burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a sacrifice to God.

God, "Please come home with me. Come and eat with me. I will give you a gift."

⁹But the man of God* said to the king, "I will not go home with you! Even if you gave me half of your kingdom, I would not go! I will not eat or drink anything in this place. ¹⁰The Lord commanded me not to eat or drink anything. The Lord also commanded me not to travel on the same road that I used when I came here." ¹¹So he traveled on a different road. He did not travel on the same road that he used when he came to Bethel.

¹²There was an old prophet* living in the city of Bethel. His sons came and told him about what the man of God* did in Bethel. They told their father what the man of God had said to King Jeroboam. ¹³The old prophet said, "Which road did he use when he left?" So the sons showed their father which way the man of God from Judah had taken. ¹⁴The old prophet told his sons to put a saddle on his donkey. So they put the saddle on the donkey. Then the prophet left on his donkey.

¹⁵The old prophet went after the man of God.* The old prophet found the man of God sitting under an oak tree. The old prophet asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

The man of God answered, "Yes, I am."

¹⁶So the old prophet said, "Please come home and eat with me."

¹⁷But the man of God* answered, "I can't go home with you. I can't eat or drink with you in this place. ¹⁸The Lord said to me, 'You must not eat or drink anything in that place. And you must not go back on the same road you came on.'"

¹⁹Then the old prophet said, "But I am also a prophet like you." Then the old prophet told a lie. He said, "An angel from the Lord came to me. The angel told me to bring you to my home and allow you to eat and drink with me."

²⁰So the man of God* went to the old prophet's house and ate and drank with him.

²¹While they were sitting at the table, the Lord spoke to the old prophet. ²²And the old prophet spoke to the man of God from Judah. He said, "The Lord said that you did not obey him! You did not do the thing the Lord commanded. ²³The Lord commanded you not to eat or drink anything in this place. But you came back and ate and drank. So your body will not be buried in your family grave."

²⁴The man of God* finished eating and drinking. Then the old prophet put the saddle on the donkey for him and the man left. ²⁵On the road traveling home, a lion attacked and killed the man of God. The prophet's body was lying on the road. The donkey and the lion stood near the body. ²⁶Some other men were traveling on that road. They saw the body and the lion standing near the body. The men came to the city where the old prophet lived and told about what they had seen on the road.

²⁷The old prophet had tricked the man and, brought him back. He heard about what happened and he said, "That is the man of God* who did not obey the Lord's command. So the Lord sent a lion to kill him. The Lord said that he would do this." ²⁸Then the prophet said to his sons, "Put a saddle on my donkey." So his sons put a saddle on his donkey. ²⁹The old prophet went and found the body lying on the road. The donkey and the lion were still standing near it. The lion had not eaten the body, and it did not hurt the donkey.

³⁰The old prophet put the body on his donkey. He carried the body back to the city to cry for him and bury him. ³¹The old prophet buried the man in his own family grave. The old prophet cried for him. The old prophet said, "Oh, my brother, I am sorry for you." ³²So the old prophet buried the body. Then he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in this same grave. Put my bones next to his." ³³The things which the Lord spoke through him will certainly come true. The Lord used him to speak against the altar at Bethel and against the high places* in the other towns in Samaria."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

¹⁰King Jeroboam did not change. He continued doing evil things. He continued to choose people from different family groups to become priests.* Those priests served at the high places.* Any person who wanted to be a priest was allowed to become a priest. ¹¹That was the sin that caused the destruction and ruin of his kingdom.

Jeroboam's Son Dies

14 At that time, Jeroboam's son, Abijah, became very sick. ¹Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go to Shiloh. Go see the prophet Ahijah. Ahijah is the man that said that I would become king of Israel. Dress yourself so people won't know that you are my wife. ²Give the prophet ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey. Then ask him what will happen to our son. The prophet Ahijah will tell you."

³So the king's wife did what he said. She went to Shiloh. She went to the home of Ahijah the prophet. Ahijah was very old and had become blind. ⁴But the Lord said to him, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son. He is sick." The Lord told Ahijah what he should say.

Jeroboam's wife came to Ahijah's house. She was trying to not let people know who she was. ⁵Ahijah heard her coming to the door. So Ahijah said, "Come in, Jeroboam's wife. Why are you trying to make people think you are someone else? I have some bad news for you. ⁶Go back and tell Jeroboam that this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says. The Lord says, 'Jeroboam, I chose you from among all the people of Israel. I made you the ruler of my people. ⁷David's family was ruling the kingdom of Israel. But I took the kingdom away from them and I gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David. He always obeyed my commands. He followed me with his whole heart. He did only the things that I accepted. ⁸But you have done many great sins.

Your sins are much worse than the sins of any person that ruled before you. You have quit following me. You made idols and other gods. This has made me very angry. ⁹So, Jeroboam, I will bring troubles to your family. I will kill all of the men in your family. I will destroy your family completely, like fire completely destroys dung. ¹⁰Any person from your family that dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. And any person from your family that dies in the fields will be eaten by birds. The Lord has spoken."

¹¹Then the prophet Ahijah continued talking to Jeroboam's wife. He said, "Now go home. As soon as you enter your city, your son will die. ¹²All Israel will cry for him and bury him. Your son will be the only person in Jeroboam's family that will be buried. This is because he is the only one in Jeroboam's family that pleased the Lord God of Israel. ¹³The Lord will put a new king over Israel. That new king will destroy Jeroboam's family. This will happen very soon. ¹⁴Then the Lord will hit Israel. The people of Israel will be very scared—they will shake like tall grass in the water. The Lord will pull up Israel from this good land. This is the land that he gave their ancestors. He will scatter them on the other side of the Euphrates River. This will happen because the Lord is angry with the people. The people made him angry when they made special poles to worship Asherah.* ¹⁵Jeroboam sinned. And then Jeroboam made the people of Israel sin. So the Lord will let the people of Israel be defeated."

¹⁶Jeroboam's wife went back to Tirzah. As soon as she walked into the house, the boy died. ¹⁷All Israel buried him and cried for him. This happened exactly the way the Lord said it would. The Lord used his servant, the prophet Ahijah, to say these things.

¹⁸King Jeroboam did many other things. He fought wars and continued to rule the people. All the things he did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ¹⁹Jeroboam ruled as king for 22 years. Then he died and

people ... priests The Law taught that only people from the family group of Levi could become priests.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, then people thought she was the wife of Baal.

was buried with his ancestors.* His son Nadab became the new king after him.

"At the time that Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king of Judah, he was 41 years old. Rehoboam ruled in the city of Jerusalem for 17 years. This is the city in which the Lord chose to be honored. He chose this city from all the other cities of Israel. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah from Ammon.

"The people of Judah also sinned, and did, things that the Lord said were wrong. The people did more things to make the Lord angry at them. These people were worse than their fathers that lived before them. "The people built high places, stone memorials, and sacred poles.* They built them on every high hill and under every green tree. "There were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex.* So the people of Judah did many bad things. The people that had lived in the land before them did those same evil things. And God took the land away from those people and gave it to the people of Israel.

"During the fifth year that Rehoboam was king, King Shishak of Egypt fought against Jerusalem. "Shishak took the treasures from the Lord's temple and from the king's palace. He even took the gold shields that David had taken from the officers of Hadadezer, king of Aram. David had taken these shields to Jerusalem. But Shishak took all the gold shields. "So king Rehoboam made more shields to put in their places. But these shields were made from bronze, not gold. He gave the shields to the men who were guarding the palace gates. "Every time the king went to the Lord's temple, the guards went with him. They carried the shields. After they were finished, they put the shields back on the wall in the guard room.

"All the things that king Rehoboam did are written in the Book of History about the Kings

of Judah. "Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting a war against each other.

"Rehoboam died and was buried with his ancestors.* He was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.* (His mother was Naamah from Ammon.) Rehoboam's son, Abijah became the new king after him.

Abijah, King of Judah

15 Jeroboam son of Nebat was ruling over Israel. During Jeroboam's 18th year as king, his son Abijah became the new king of Judah. "Abijah ruled for three years. His mother's name was Maacah. She was Absalom's daughter.

"He did all the same sins that his father did before him. Abijah was not faithful to the Lord his God like David, his grandfather. "The Lord loved David. So for him, the Lord gave Abijah a kingdom in Jerusalem. And the Lord allowed him to have a son. The Lord also allowed Jerusalem to be safe. He did this for David. "David had always done the right things that the Lord wanted. He had always obeyed the Lord's commands. The only time David did not obey the Lord was the time David sinned against Uriah the Hittite.

"Rehoboam and Jeroboam were always fighting a war against each other.* "All of the other things that Abijah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah.

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam during the whole time that Abijah was king. "When Abijah died he was buried in the City of David.* Abijah's son Asa became the new king after him.

Asa, King of Judah

"During Jeroboam's 20th year as king over Israel, Asa became king of Judah. "Asa ruled in Jerusalem for 41 years. His grandmother's name was Maacah. And Maacah was the daughter of Abshalom.

laid ... ancestors Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

high places, stone memorials, sacred poles

People used these things to worship false gods.

men ... sex Sexual sins like this were a part of the way people worshiped the Canaanite gods.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Rehoboam ... other This verse is not in the ancient Greek translation.

¹¹Asa did the good things that the Lord said are right, like his ancestor* David did. ¹²During that time there were men who served other gods by selling their bodies for sex. Asa forced those men to leave the country. Asa also took away the idols that his ancestors had made. ¹³Asa also removed his grandmother, Maacah, from being queen. Maacah had made one of those terrible images of the goddess Asherah. Asa cut down this terrible image. He burned it in Kidron Valley. ¹⁴Asa did not destroy the high places,* but he was faithful to the Lord all his life. ¹⁵Asa's father had given some things to God. Asa had also given some gifts to God. They gave gifts of gold, silver, and other things. Asa put all those things in the temple.

¹⁶During the time that king Asa was king of Judah, he was always fighting a war against Baasha, the king of Israel. ¹⁷Baasha fought against Judah. Baasha wanted to stop people from going into or coming from Asa's country, Judah. So He made the city Ramah very strong.

¹⁸So Asa took silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord's temple and the king's palace. He gave the silver and gold to his servants and sent them to Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram. (Ben-Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon. Tabrimmon was the son of Hezion.) He was ruling in the city of Damascus. ¹⁹Asa sent this message, "My father and your father had a peace agreement. Now I want to make a peace agreement between me and you. I am sending you a gift of gold and silver. Break your treaty with Baasha the king of Israel. Then Baasha will leave my land."

²⁰King Ben-Hadad agreed with king Asa. So he sent his army to fight against the towns of Israel. Ben-Hadad defeated the towns of Ijon, Dan, Abel Bethmaacah, and all the towns around Lake Galilee. He defeated all the area of Naphtali. ²¹Baasha heard about these attacks. So he stopped making Ramah strong. He left that town and returned to Tirzah. ²²Then king Asa gave an order to all of the people of Judah.

Every person had to help. They went to Ramah and took all the stones and wood that Baasha was using to make that city strong. They carried those things to Geba in the land of Benjamin and to Mizpah. Then King Asa built those two towns much stronger.

²³All the other things about Asa, the great things he did, and the cities he built are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. When Asa became old, he had a disease on his feet. ²⁴Asa died and he was buried in the City of David,* his ancestor. Then Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became the new king after him.

Nadab, King of Israel

¹During Asa's second year as king of Judah, Nadab, son of Jeroboam, became king of Israel. Nadab ruled over Israel for two years. ²Nadab did bad things against the Lord. He sinned the same way his father Jeroboam had sinned. And Jeroboam also caused the people of Israel to sin.

³Baasha was the son of Ahijah. They were from the family group of Issachar. Baasha made a plan to kill King Nadab. This was during the time that Nadab and all Israel were fighting against the town of Gibbethon. This was a Philistine town. At that place Baasha killed Nadab. ⁴This happened during the third year that Asa was the king of Judah. And Baasha became the next king of Israel.

Baasha, King of Israel

¹At the time Baasha became the new king, he killed everyone in Jeroboam's family. Baasha left no person in Jeroboam's family alive. This happened the way the Lord said it would. The Lord spoke through his servant Ahijah from Shiloh. ²This happened because King Jeroboam had done many sins. And Jeroboam had caused the people of Israel to do many sins. Jeroboam made the Lord, the God of Israel, very angry.

³The other things that Nadab did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of

ancestor Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Israel. ³²All during the time that Baasha ruled over Israel, he was fighting wars against Asa, king of Judah.

³³Baasha, son of Ahijah, became king of Israel during the third year that Asa ruled over Judah. Baasha ruled in Tirzah for 24 years. ³⁴But Baasha did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He did the same sins that his father Jeroboam had done. Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin.

16 Then the Lord spoke to Jehu son of Hanani. The Lord was speaking against King Baasha. ²"I made you an important person. I made you a prince over my people Israel. But you have followed the ways of Jeroboam. You have caused my people Israel to sin. They have made me angry with their sins. ³So I will destroy you, Baasha, and your family. I will do the same to you that I did to the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat. ⁴The people in your family will die in the streets of the city. And dogs will eat their bodies. Some of the people in your family will die in the fields. And the birds will eat their bodies."

⁵All the other things about Baasha and the great things he did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ⁶Baasha died and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became the new king after him.

⁷So the Lord gave a message to Jehu the prophet. This message was against Baasha and his family. Baasha had done much evil against the Lord. This made the Lord very angry. Baasha did the same things that Jeroboam's family had done before him. The Lord was also angry because Baasha killed all of Jeroboam's family.

Elah, King of Israel

¹Elah became king during the 26th year that Asa was the king of Judah. Elah was the son of Baasha. He ruled in Tirzah for two years.

²Zimri was one of King Elah's officers. Zimri commanded half of Elah's chariots. ³But Zimri made plans against Elah.

King Elah was in Tirzah. He was drinking and getting drunk at Arza's home. Arza was the man in charge of the palace* at Tirzah. ¹⁰Zimri went into that house and killed King Elah. This was during the 27th year that Asa was king in Judah. Then Zimri became the new king of Israel after Elah.

Zimri, King of Israel

¹After Zimri became the new king, he killed all of Baasha's family. He did not let any of the men in Baasha's family live. Zimri also killed Baasha's friends. ²So Zimri destroyed Baasha's family. This happened the way the Lord said it would when the Lord used the prophet Jehu to speak against Baasha. ³This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and his son, Elah. They sinned and caused the people of Israel to sin. The Lord was angry because they had many idols.

⁴The other things that Elah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

⁵Zimri became king of Israel during the 27th year that Asa was king of Judah. Zimri ruled in Tirzah seven days. This is what happened: The army of Israel was camped near the Philistines from Gibbethon. They were prepared for war. ⁶The men in the camp heard that Zimri had made secret plans against the king. They heard that he killed the king. So all Israel made Omri king over Israel that day in the camp. Omri was the commander of the army. ⁷So Omri and all Israel left Gibbethon and attacked Tirzah. ⁸Zimri saw that the city had been captured. So he went into the palace* and started a fire. He burned the palace and himself. ⁹So Zimri died because he had sinned. Zimri did the things the Lord said were wrong. He sinned in the same way that Jeroboam had sinned. And Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin.

¹⁰The story about Zimri's secret plans and the other things that Zimri did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. And the things that happened when Zimri turned against King Elah are also written in that book.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

Omri, King of Israel

¹The people of Israel were divided into two groups. Half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath and wanted to make him king. The other half of the people followed Omri. ²But Omri's followers were stronger than the followers of Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni was killed and Omri became king.

³During the 31st year that Asa was the king of Judah, Omri became king of Israel. Omri ruled over Israel for 12 years. Six of those years he ruled in the town of Tirzah. ⁴But Omri bought the hill of Samaria. He bought it from Shemer for about 150 pounds* of silver. Omri built a city on that hill. He called the city Samaria after the name of its owner, Shemer.

⁵Omri did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Omri was worse than all the kings that were before him. ⁶He did all the same sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat did. Jeroboam caused the people of Israel to sin. So they made the Lord, the God of Israel, very angry. The Lord was angry because they worshiped worthless idols.

⁷The other things about Omri and the great things he did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ⁸Omri died and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became the new king after him.

Ahab, King of Israel

⁹Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel during the 38th year that Asa was king of Judah. Ahab ruled Israel in the town of Samaria for 22 years. ¹⁰Ahab did the things that the Lord said were wrong. And Ahab was worse than all the kings that were before him. ¹¹It was not enough for Ahab to do the same sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had done. So Ahab also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal. Ethbaal was the king of the people of Sidon. Then Ahab began to serve and worship Baal.* ¹²Ahab built a temple in Samaria for worshiping Baal. He put an altar in that temple. ¹³Ahab also set up a

special pole for worshiping Asherah.* Ahab did more things to make the Lord the God of Israel angry than all the other kings who were before him.

¹⁴During the time of Ahab, Hiel from Bethel built the town of Jericho again. At the time Hiel started work on the city, his oldest son, Abiram died. And when Hiel built the gates of the city, his youngest son, Segub, died. This happened the way that the Lord said it would happen when he spoke through Joshua son of Nun.*

Elijah and The Time Without Rain

17 Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. Elijah said to King Ahab, "I serve the Lord God of Israel. By his power, I promise that no dew or rain will fall during the next few years. The rain will fall only if I command it to fall."

²Then the Lord said to Elijah, ³"Leave this place and go east. Hide near Cherith creek. This creek is east of the Jordan River. 'You can drink from the creek. I have commanded ravens* to bring food to you in that place.'" ⁴So Elijah did what the Lord told him to do. He went to live near Cherith creek, east of the Jordan River. ⁵Ravens brought Elijah food every morning and every evening. Elijah drank water from the creek.

⁶There was no rain, so after a time the creek became dry. ⁷Then the Lord said to Elijah, ⁸"Go to Zarephath in Sidon. Live there. There is a woman whose husband is dead that lives in that place. I have commanded her to give you food."

⁹So Elijah went to Zarephath. He went to the town gate and saw a woman there. Her husband was dead. The woman was gathering wood for a fire. Elijah said to her, "Will you bring me a little water in a cup so I can drink?" ¹⁰The woman was going to get his water, and Elijah said, "Bring me a piece of bread too, please."

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

he spoke ... Nun At the time that Joshua destroyed Jericho, he said that whoever built the city again would lose his oldest and youngest sons. See Joshua 6:26.

ravens Black birds.

150 pounds Literally, "2 talents."

Baal Baal was the main god of Sidon. People thought he could make people have many children and good crops.

¹²"The woman answered, "I promise you before the Lord your God that I have no bread. I have only a little flour in a jar. And I have only a little olive oil in a jug. I came to this place to gather a couple of pieces of wood for a fire. I will take it back home and cook our last meal. My son and I will eat it and then die from hunger."

¹³Elijah said to the woman, "Don't worry. Go home and cook your food as you said. But first make a small loaf of bread from the flour that you have. Bring that bread to me. Then cook for yourself and your son." ¹⁴The Lord God of Israel says, "That jar of flour will never become empty. The jug will always have oil in it. This will continue until the day the Lord sends rain to the land."

¹⁵So the woman went to her home. She did what Elijah told her to do. Elijah, the woman, and her son had enough food for many days. ¹⁶The jar of flour and the jug of oil were never empty. This happened just like the Lord said it would. The Lord spoke through Elijah.

¹⁷Some time later the woman's son became sick. He became more and more sick. Finally the boy stopped breathing. ¹⁸And the woman said to Elijah, "You are a man of God.* Can you help me? Or did you come here only to cause me to remember all of my sins? Did you come here only to cause my son to die?"

¹⁹Elijah said to her, "Give your son to me." Elijah took the boy from her and carried him upstairs. He laid him on the bed in the room where he was staying. ²⁰Then Elijah prayed, "O Lord my God. This widow* is letting me stay in her house. Will you do this bad thing to her? Will you cause her son to die?" ²¹Then Elijah lay on top of the boy three times. Elijah prayed, "O Lord my God. Allow this boy to live again!"

²²The Lord answered Elijah's prayer. The boy began breathing again. He was alive! ²³Elijah carried the boy downstairs. Elijah gave the boy to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

²⁴The woman answered, "Now I know that you really are a man from God. I know that the Lord truly speaks through you!"

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

18 During the third year that no rain fell, the Lord said to Elijah, "Go and meet with King Ahab. I will soon send rain." ²So Elijah went to meet Ahab.

At that time, there was no food in Samaria. ³So King Ahab told Obadiah to come to him. Obadiah was the man in charge of the king's palace.* (Obadiah was a true follower of the Lord. ⁴One time Jezebel was killing all the Lord's prophets. So Obadiah took 100 prophets and hid them in two caves. Obadiah put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. Then Obadiah brought them food and water.) ⁵King Ahab said to Obadiah, "Come with me. We will look at every spring and every creek in the land. We will see if we can find enough grass to keep our horses and mules alive. Then we will not have to kill our animals." ⁶Each person chose the part of the country where they would go look for water. Then the two men went through the whole country. Ahab went in one direction by himself. Obadiah went in another direction by himself. ⁷While Obadiah was traveling, he met Elijah. Obadiah knew Elijah when he saw him. Obadiah bowed down before Elijah. He said, "Elijah? Is it really you, master?"

⁸Elijah answered, "Yes, it is me. Go and tell your master the king that I am here."

⁹Then Obadiah said, "If I tell Ahab that I know where you are, he will kill me! I have done nothing wrong to you! Why do you want me to die?" ¹⁰As sure as the Lord your God lives, the king has been looking for you everywhere! He has sent people to every country to find you. If the ruler of a country said that you were not in his country, then Ahab forced the ruler to promise that you were not in his country. ¹¹Now you want me to go and tell him that you are here? ¹²If I go tell King Ahab that you are here, then the Lord

man of God Another name for a prophet.

widow A woman whose husband has died.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

might carry you to some other place. King Ahab will come here, and he will not be able to find you. Then he will kill me! I have followed the Lord since I was a boy. "You heard what I did! Jezebel was killing the Lord's prophets, and I hid 100 prophets in caves. I put 50 prophets in one cave and 50 prophets in another cave. I brought them food and water. "Now you want me to go and tell the king that you are here. The king will kill me!"

"Elijah answered, "As sure as the Lord All-Powerful lives, I promise that I will stand before the king today."

"So Obadiah went to King Ahab. He told him where Elijah was. King Ahab went to meet Elijah.

"When Ahab saw Elijah he said, "Is it you? You are the man that causes trouble in Israel!"

"Elijah answered, "I have not caused Israel trouble. You and your father's family caused all this trouble. You caused the trouble when you stopped obeying the Lord's commands and began following the false gods. "Now, tell all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel. Also bring to that place the 450 prophets of Baal.* And bring the 400 prophets of the false goddess Asherah.* Queen Jezebel supports those prophets."*

"So Ahab called all the Israelites and those prophets to Mount Carmel. "Elijah came to all the people. He said, "When will you people decide who to follow? If the Lord is the true God, then you should follow him. But if Baal is the true God, then you should follow him!"

The people said nothing. "So Elijah said, "I am the only prophet of the Lord here. I am alone. But there are 450 prophets of Baal.* "So bring two bulls. Let the prophets of Baal take one bull. Let them kill it and cut it into pieces. Then let them put the meat on the wood. But don't start the fire burning. Then I will do the

same with the other bull. And I will not start the fire burning. "You prophets of Baal will pray to your god. And I will pray to the Lord. The god that answers the prayer and starts his wood burning is the true God."

All the people agreed that this was a good idea.

"Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal,* "There are many of you. So you go first. Choose a bull and prepare it. But don't start your fire."

"So the prophets took the bull that was given to them. They prepared it. They prayed to Baal* until noon. They prayed, "Baal, please answer us!" But there was no sound. No one answered. The prophets danced around the altar that they had built. (But the fire never started.)

"At noon Elijah began to make fun of them. Elijah said, "If Baal is really a god, then maybe you should pray louder! Maybe he is thinking! Or maybe he is busy! Or maybe he is traveling! He could be sleeping! Maybe you should pray louder and wake him!" "So the prophets prayed louder. They cut themselves with swords and spears. (This was the way they worshiped.) They cut themselves until the blood flowed over them. "The afternoon passed but the fire still had not started. The prophets continued to act wild* until the time came for the evening sacrifice. But there was still no answer from Baal.* Nothing happened to the wood.*

"Then Elijah said to all the people, "Now, come to me." So all the people gathered around Elijah. The Lord's altar in Bethel, had been torn down. So Elijah fixed it. "Elijah found twelve stones. There was one stone for each of the twelve family groups. These twelve family groups were named for the twelve sons of Jacob. Jacob was the man that the Lord had called Israel. "Elijah used these stones to fix the altar to honor the Lord. Elijah dug a small ditch around the altar. It was wide enough and

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

Queen ... prophets Literally, "Those prophets eat at Jezebel's table."

act wild Or, "prophesy." This form of the Hebrew word sometimes mean to "act wild," or "to lose control of yourself."

Nothing ... wood Literally, "No one listened."

deep enough to hold about 7 gallons* of water. "Then Elijah put the wood on the altar. He cut the bull into pieces. He laid the pieces on the wood. "Then Elijah said, "Fill four jars with water. Pour the water on the pieces of meat and on the wood." Then Elijah said, "Do it again." Then he said, "Do it a third time." "The water flowed off of the altar and filled the ditch.

"It was time for the afternoon sacrifice. So the prophet Elijah went near the altar and prayed, "O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I ask you now to prove that you are the God of Israel. And prove that I am your servant. Show these people that you commanded me to do all these things. "Lord, answer my prayer. Show these people that you, O Lord, are God. Then the people will know that you are bringing them back to you."

"So the Lord sent down fire. The fire burned the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the ground around the altar. The fire also dried up all the water in the ditch. "All the people saw this happen. The people bowed down on the ground and began saying, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

"Then Elijah said, "Get the prophets of Baal! Don't let any of them escape!" So the people captured all the prophets. Then Elijah led them down to Kishon Creek. At that place he killed all the prophets.

The Rain Comes Again

"Then Elijah said to King Ahab, "Now, go eat and drink. A heavy rain is coming. "So King Ahab went to eat. At the same time, Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel. At the top of the mountain Elijah bent down. He put his head between his knees. "Then Elijah said to his servant, "Look toward the sea."

The servant went to the place where he could see the sea. Then the servant came back and said, "I saw nothing." Elijah told him to go and look again. This happened seven times. "The seventh time, the servant came back and said, "I saw a small cloud the size of a man's fist.* The cloud was coming from the sea."

Elijah told the servant, "Go to King Ahab and tell him to get his chariot* ready and go home now. If he doesn't leave now, the rain will stop him."

"After a short time, the sky was covered with dark clouds. The wind began to blow, and a heavy rain began to fall. Ahab got in his chariot and started traveling back to Jezreel. "The power of the Lord came to Elijah. Elijah tightened his clothes around him, so he could run. Then Elijah ran ahead of King Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah at Mount Sinai

19 King Ahab told Jezebel all the things that Elijah did. Ahab told her how Elijah had killed all the prophets with a sword. "So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah. Jezebel said, "I promise that before this same time tomorrow, I will kill you like you killed those prophets. If I don't succeed, then may the gods kill me."

"When Elijah heard this, he was afraid. So he ran away to save his life. He took his servant with him. They went to Beersheba, Judah. Elijah left his servant in Beersheba. "Then Elijah walked for a whole day into the desert. Elijah sat down under a bush. He asked to die. Elijah said, "I have had enough, Lord! Let me die. I am no better than my ancestors.*"

"Then Elijah lay down under the tree and slept. An angel came to Elijah and touched him. The angel said, "Get up! Eat!" "Elijah saw very near him a cake baked over coals and a jar of water. Elijah ate and drank. Then he went back to sleep.

"Later the Lord's angel came to him again. The angel said, "Get up! Eat! If you don't, you will not be strong enough to make the long trip." "So Elijah got up. He ate and drank. The food made Elijah strong enough to walk for 40 days and nights. He walked to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. "There Elijah went into a cave and stayed all night.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

about 7 gallons Literally, "2 seahs of seed."
fist A closed hand.

Then the Lord spoke to Elijah. The Lord said, "Elijah, why are you here?"

"Elijah answered, "Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you. I have always served you the best that I can. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars. They killed your prophets. I am the only prophet that is still living. And now they are trying to kill me!"

"Then the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, stand in front of me on the mountain. I will pass by you."* Then a very strong wind blew. The wind caused the mountains to break apart. It broke large rocks in front of the Lord. But that wind was not the Lord! After that wind, there was an earthquake. But that earthquake was not the Lord. "After the earthquake, there was a fire. But that fire was not the Lord. After the fire, there was a quiet, gentle voice.*

"When Elijah heard the voice* he used his coat to cover his face. Then he went and stood at the entrance to the cave. Then a voice said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?"

"Elijah answered, "Lord God All-Powerful, I have always served you the best that I can. But the people of Israel have broken their agreement with you. They destroyed your altars. They killed your prophets. I am the only prophet that is still living. And now they are trying to kill me."

"The Lord said, "Go back on the road that leads to the desert around Damascus. Go into Damascus, and anoint* Hazael as king over Aram. "Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel. Next, anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah. He will be the prophet that takes your place. "Hazael will kill many bad people., Jehu will kill anyone that escapes from Hazael's sword. And Elisha will kill anyone that escapes from Jehu's sword. "Elijah, you are not the only faithful person in Israel. Those men will kill many people. But, even after that., there will still be 7,000 people

living in Israel that never bowed down to Baal!" I will let those 7,000 people live—and none of those people ever kissed a Baal idol.

Elisha Becomes a Prophet

"So Elijah left that place and went to find Elisha son of Shaphat. Elisha was plowing 12 acres of land. Elisha was working on the last acre when Elijah came. Elijah went to Elisha. Then Elijah put his coat* on Elisha. "Elisha immediately left his cows and ran after Elijah. Elisha said, "Let me kiss my mother and father good-bye, and I will follow you."

Elijah answered, "That is fine. Go. I won't stop you.*

"Then Elisha had a special meal with his family. Elisha went and killed his cows. He used the pieces of wood that tied the cows together for the fire. Then he boiled the meat and gave it to the people. The people ate the meat. Then Elisha went and followed Elijah. Elisha became Elijah's helper.

Ben-Hadad and Ahab Go To War

20 Ben-Hadad was king of Syria. He gathered together all of his army. There were 32 kings with him. They had horses and chariots.* They attacked Samaria and fought against it. "The king sent messengers into the city to King Ahab of Israel. "This was the message, "Ben-Hadad says, 'You must give me your silver and gold. You must also give me your wives and children.'"

"The king of Israel answered, "O king, my master. I agree that I belong to you now. And everything I have belongs to you."

"Then the messengers came back to Ahab. They said, "Ben-Hadad says, 'I told you before that you must give me all of your silver and gold and your wives and your children. 'Now I want to send my men to look everywhere in

Go, stand ... you This is like the time God appeared to Moses. See Ex. 33:12-23.

voice Or, "sound."

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

coat This was a special robe that showed that Elijah was a prophet. Giving this coat to Elisha showed that Elisha was taking Elijah's place as a prophet.

I won't stop you Literally, "What have I done to you?" or "What will I do to you?"

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

your palace* and in the homes of the men who rule under you. My men will take anything they want.”

¹So King Ahab called a meeting of all the elders (*leaders*) of his country. Ahab said, “Look, Ben-Hadad is looking for trouble. First he told me that I must give him my wives, my children, my silver and my gold. I agreed to give those things to him. And now he wants to take everything.”

²But the elders (*leaders*) and all the people said, “Don’t obey him. Don’t do what he says.”

³So Ahab sent a message to Ben-Hadad. Ahab said, “I will do what you said at first. But I cannot obey your second command.”

King Ben-Hadad’s men carried the message to the king. ⁴Then they came back with another message from Ben-Hadad. The message said, “I will completely destroy Samaria. I promise that there will be nothing left of that city! There won’t be enough of that city left for my men to find any souvenirs* to take home. May God destroy me if I don’t do this!”

⁵King Ahab answered, “Tell Ben-Hadad that the man who puts on his armor should not boast as much as the man who lives long enough to take it off.”

⁶King Ben-Hadad was drinking in his tent with the other rulers. At that time the messengers came and gave him the message from King Ahab. King Ben-Hadad commanded his men to prepare to attack the city. So the men moved into their places for the battle.

⁷At the same time, a prophet went to King Ahab. The prophet said, “King Ahab, the Lord says to you, ‘Do you see that big army! I, the Lord, will allow you to defeat that army today. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’”

⁸Ahab said, “Who will you use to defeat them?”

The prophet answered, “The Lord says, ‘The young helpers of the government officials.’”

Then the king asked, “Who should command the main army?”

The prophet answered, “You will.”

⁹So Ahab gathered the young helpers of the government officials. There were 232 of these young men. Then the king called together the army of Israel. The total number was 7,000.

¹⁰At noon, King Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings helping him were drinking and becoming drunk in their tents. At this time, King Ahab’s attack began. ¹¹The young helpers attacked first. King Ben-Hadad’s men told him that soldiers had come out of Samaria. ¹²So Ben-Hadad said, “They might be coming to fight. Or they might be coming to ask for peace. Capture them alive.”

¹³The young men of King Ahab were leading the attack. The army of Israel was following them. ¹⁴But each man of Israel killed the man that came against him. So the men from Aram began to run away. The army of Israel chased them. King Ben-Hadad escaped on a horse from one of the chariots.* ¹⁵King Ahab led the army and took all horses and chariots from the army of Aram. So King Ahab caused a great defeat of the Syrian army.

¹⁶Then the prophet went to King Ahab and said, “The king of Syria, Ben-Hadad, will come to fight against you again next spring. So you should go home now and make your army stronger. And make careful plans to defend against him.”

Ben-Hadad Attacks Again

¹⁷King Ben-Hadad’s officers said to him, “The gods of Israel are mountain gods. We fought in a mountain area. So the people of Israel won. So let’s fight them on the flat land. Then we will win.” ¹⁸This is what you should do. Don’t allow the 32 kings to command the armies. Let the commanders lead their armies.

¹⁹Now you gather an army like the army that was destroyed. Gather horses and chariots like that army. Then let’s fight the Israelites on flat land. Then we will win.” Ben-Hadad followed their advice. He did what they said.

²⁰So in the spring, Ben-Hadad gathered the people of Aram. He went to Aphek to fight against Israel.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

souvenirs Things that help people remember places they have been. Literally, the Hebrew has, “handfuls of dust.”

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

²⁷The Israelites also prepared for war. The people of Israel went to fight the army of Aram. They made their camp opposite the camp of Aram. Compared to the enemy, Israel looked like two small flocks of goats, but the Aramean soldiers covered the whole area.

²⁸A man of God* came to the king of Israel with this message: "The Lord said, 'The people of Israel said that I, the Lord, am God of the mountains. They think that I am not also the God of the valleys. So I will allow you to defeat this big army. Then you will know that I am the Lord in every place!'"

²⁹The armies were camped across from each other for seven days. On the seventh day the battle began. The Israelites killed 100,000 soldiers of Aram in one day. ³⁰The survivors ran away to the city of Aphek. The wall of the city fell on 27,000 of those soldiers. Ben-Hadad also ran away to the city. He hid in a room. ³¹His servants said to him, "We heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Let's dress in rough cloth with ropes on our heads.* Then let's go to the king of Israel. Maybe he will let us live."

³²They dressed in rough cloth with ropes on their heads.* They came to the king of Israel. They said, "Your servant, Ben-Hadad, says, 'Please let me live.'"

Ahab answered, "Is he still alive? He is my brother.*"

³³Ben-Hadad's men wanted King Ahab to say something to show that he would not kill King Ben-Hadad. When Ahab called Ben-Hadad his brother, the advisers quickly said, "Yes! Ben-Hadad is your brother."

Ahab said, "Bring him to me." So Ben-Hadad came to King Ahab. King Ahab asked him to get in the chariot with him.

³⁴Ben-Hadad said to him, "Ahab, I will give you the towns that my father took from your father. And you can put shops in Damascus, like my father did in Samaria."

Ahab answered, "If you agree to this, then I will allow you to go free." So the two kings made a peace agreement. Then King Ahab let King Ben-Hadad go free.

A Prophet Speaks Against Ahab

¹One of the prophets told another prophet, "Hit me!" He told him to do this because the Lord had commanded it. But the other prophet refused to hit him. ²So the first prophet said, "You did not obey the Lord's command. So a lion will kill you when you leave this place." The second prophet left that place and a lion killed him.

³The first prophet went to another man and said, "Hit me!"

This man hit him. The prophet was hurt. ⁴So the prophet wrapped his face with a cloth. This way, no person could see who he was. The prophet went and waited for the king by the road. ⁵The king came by and the prophet said to him, "I went to fight in the battle. One of our men brought an enemy soldier to me. The man said, 'Guard this man. If he runs away, then you will have to give your life in his place. Or you will have to pay a fine of 75 pounds* of silver.' ⁶But I became busy doing other things. So the man ran away."

The king of Israel answered, "You have said that you are guilty of letting the soldier escape. So you know the answer. You must do what the man said."

⁷Then the prophet took the cloth from his face. The king of Israel saw him and knew that he was one of the prophets. ⁸Then the prophet said to the king, "The Lord says to you, 'You set free the man that I said should die. So you will take his place—you will die! And your people will take the enemies' place—your people will die!'"

⁹Then the king went back home to Samaria. He was worried and upset.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

rough cloth ... heads This showed they were being humble and that they wanted to surrender.

brother People that signed peace agreements often called each other "brother." It was like they became one family.

75 pounds Literally, "a talent."

Naboth's Field of Grapes

21 King Ahab's palace* was in the city of Samaria. Near the palace there was a field of grapes. A man named Naboth owned this field. One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your field. I want to make it a vegetable garden. Your field is near my palace.* I will give you a better grape field in its place. Or, if you prefer, I will pay you its value in money."

Naboth answered, "I will never give my land to you. This land belongs to my family."

So Ahab went home. He was angry and upset at Naboth. He did not like the things that man from Jezreel said. (Naboth had said, "I will not give you my family's land." Ahab lay down on his bed. He turned his face away and refused to eat.

Ahab's wife, Jezebel, went to him. Jezebel said to him, "Why are you upset? Why do you refuse to eat?"

Ahab answered, "I asked Naboth, the man from Jezreel, to give me his field. I told him that I would pay him the full price. Or if he preferred, I would give him another field. But Naboth refused to give his field to me."

Jezebel answered, "But you are the king over Israel! Get out of your bed. Eat something and you will feel better. I will get Naboth's field for you."

Then Jezebel wrote some letters. She signed Ahab's name to the letters. She used Ahab's own seal to seal the letters. Then she sent them to the elders (*leaders*) and important men who lived in the same town as Naboth. This is what the letter said:

Announce that there will be a day when the people will eat nothing. Then call all the people of the town together for a meeting. At the meeting, we will talk about Naboth. Find some men that will tell lies about Naboth. Those people should say that they heard Naboth speak against the king and against God. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him with rocks.

"So the elders (*leaders*) and important men of Jezreel obeyed that command. The leaders announced that there would be a day when all the people would eat nothing. On that day they called all the people together for a meeting. They put Naboth in a special place before the people. Then two men told the people that they heard Naboth speak against God and against the king. So the people carried Naboth out of the city. Then they killed him with rocks. Then the leaders sent a message to Jezebel. The message said: "Naboth has been killed."

When Jezebel heard this, she said to Ahab, "Naboth is dead. Now you can go and take the field that you wanted." So Ahab went to the field of grapes and took it for his own.

At this time the Lord spoke to Elijah. (Elijah was the prophet from Tishbe.) The Lord said, "Go to King Ahab in Samaria. Ahab will be at Naboth's field of grapes. He is there to take the field as his own. Tell Ahab that I, the Lord, say to him, 'Ahab! You killed the man Naboth. Now you are taking his land. So I tell you this! In the same place that Naboth died, you will also die. The dogs that licked Naboth's blood will lick your blood in the same place!'"

So Elijah went to Ahab. Ahab saw Elijah and said, "You have found me again. You are always against me."

Elijah answered, "Yes, I found you again. You have always used your life for sinning against the Lord. So the Lord says to you, 'I will destroy you. I will kill you and every male in your family. Your family will be the same as the family of King Jeroboam son of Nebat. And your family will become like the family of King Baasha. Both of these families were completely destroyed. I will do this to you because you have made me angry. You have caused the people of Israel to sin.' And the Lord also says, 'Dogs will eat the body of your wife Jezebel in the city of Jezreel.' Any person in your family that dies in the city will be eaten by dogs. Any person that dies in the fields, will be eaten by birds."

There is no other person that has done so many wrong things or sinned so much as Ahab.

His wife Jezebel caused him to do those things.²⁶ Ahab did a very bad sin and worshiped those blocks of wood (*idols*). This was the same thing that the Amorite people did. And the Lord took the land from them and gave it to the people of Israel.

²⁷After Elijah finished speaking, Ahab was very sad. He tore his clothes to show that he was sad. Then he put on special clothes of sadness. Ahab refused to eat. He slept in those special clothes. Ahab was very sad and upset.

²⁸The Lord said to Elijah the prophet, ²⁹"I see that Ahab has become humble before me. So, I will not cause the trouble to come to him during his life. I will wait until his son is king. Then I will cause the trouble to come to Ahab's family."

Micaiah Gives a Warning to Ahab

22 During the next two years, there was peace between Israel and Aram. ²Then, during the third year, King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to visit King Ahab of Israel.

³At this same time, Ahab asked his officials, "Remember that the king of Aram took Ramoth in Gilead from us? Why have we done nothing to get Ramoth back? It should be our town." ⁴So Ahab asked King Jehoshaphat, "Will you join with us and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth?"

Jehoshaphat answered, "Yes, I will join you. My soldiers and my horses are ready to join with your army. ⁵But first we should ask the Lord for advice."

⁶So Ahab called a meeting of the prophets. There were about 400 prophets at that time. Ahab asked the prophets, "Should I go and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth? Or should I wait for another time?"

The prophets answered, "You should go and fight now. The Lord will allow you to win."

⁷But Jehoshaphat said, "Are there any other of the Lord's prophets here? If there are, we should ask him what God says."

⁸King Ahab answered, "There is one other prophet. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him. When he speaks for the Lord, he never says anything good for me. He always

says things that I don't like."

Jehoshaphat said, "King Ahab, you should not say those things!"

⁹So King Ahab told one of his officers to go and find Micaiah.

¹⁰At that time, the two kings were wearing their royal robes. They were sitting on the thrones. This was at the judging place near the gate of Samaria. All the prophets were standing before them. The prophets were prophesying.^{*}

¹¹One of the prophets was named Zedekiah. He was the son of Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some iron horns.^{*} Then he said to Ahab, "The Lord says, 'You will use these iron horns to fight against the army of Aram. You will defeat them and destroy them.'" ¹²All the other prophets agreed with what Zedekiah said. The prophet said, "Your army should march now. They should fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. You will win the fight. The Lord will allow you to win."

¹³While this was happening, the officer went to find Micaiah. The officer found Micaiah and said to him, "All the other prophets have said that the king will succeed. So I tell you that the safest thing that you can do is to say the same thing."

¹⁴But Micaiah answered, "No! I promised that by the power of the Lord I will say the things that the Lord tells me to say!"

¹⁵Then Micaiah stood before King Ahab. The king asked him, "Micaiah, should King Jehoshaphat and I join armies? And should we go now to fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth?"

Micaiah answered, "Yes! You should go and fight them now. The Lord will let you win."

¹⁶But Ahab answered, "You are not speaking by the power of the Lord. You are saying your own words. So tell me the truth! How many times do I have to tell you? Tell me what the Lord says!"

¹⁷So Micaiah answered, "I can see what will happen. The army of Israel will be scattered

prophesying Speaking for God.

iron horns These were a symbol of great strength.

over the hills. They will be like sheep without anyone to lead them. This is what the Lord says, 'These men have no leader. They should go home and not fight.'"

"Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "See! I told you! This prophet never says anything good about me. He always says things that I don't want to hear."

"But Micaiah continued to speak for the Lord, Micaiah said, "Listen! These are the words that the Lord says! I saw the Lord sitting on his throne in heaven. His angels were standing near him. "The Lord said, 'Will any of you trick King Ahab? I want him to go and fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. Then he will be killed.' The angels did not agree about what they should do. "Then one angel went to the Lord and said, 'I will trick him!' "The Lord answered, 'How will you trick King Ahab?' The angel answered, 'I will confuse all of Ahab's prophets. I will tell the prophets to speak lies to King Ahab. The messages from the prophets will be lies.' So the Lord said, 'Good! Go and trick King Ahab. You will succeed.'"

"Micaiah finished his story. Then he said, "So this is what has happened here. The Lord has caused your prophets to lie to you. The Lord himself has decided that great trouble should come to you."

"Then the prophet Zedekiah went to Micaiah. Zedekiah hit Micaiah on the face. Zedekiah said, "Do you really believe that the Lord's power has left me and is now speaking through you?"

"Micaiah answered, "Soon trouble will come. At that time, you will go and hide in a small room. And you will know that I am speaking the truth!"

"Then King Ahab ordered one of his officers to arrest Micaiah. King Ahab said, "Arrest him and take him to Amon the governor of the city and prince Joash. "Tell them to put Micaiah in prison. Give him only bread and water to eat. Keep him there until I come home from the fight."

"Micaiah said loudly, "All you people listen to what I say! King Ahab, if you come home

alive from that fight, then the Lord has not spoken through me."

"Then King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat went to fight against the army of Aram at Ramoth. This was in the area called Gilead. "Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "We will prepare for the fight. I will wear clothes that make me look like I am not the king. But you wear your special clothes that show you are a king." So the king of Israel began the battle dressed like a person that was not a king.

"The king of Aram had 32 chariot commanders. That king ordered these 32 chariot commanders to find the king of Israel. The king of Aram told the commanders that they must kill the king. "So during the battle, these commanders saw King Jehoshaphat. The commanders thought that he was the king of Israel. So they went to kill him. Jehoshaphat began shouting. "The commanders saw that he was not King Ahab, so they did not kill him. "But a soldier shot an arrow into the air—he was not aiming at any special person. But his arrow hit Ahab, the king of Israel. The arrow hit the king in a small place where his armor did not cover his body. So King Ahab said to his chariot driver, "An arrow has hit me! Drive the chariot out of this area. We must go away from the fighting."

"The armies continued to fight. King Ahab stayed in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot. He was looking at the army of Aram. His blood flowed down and covered the bottom of the chariot. Later in the evening, the king died. "Near sunset, all men in the army of Israel were commanded to go back to their own city and land.

"So that is the way King Ahab died. Some men carried his body to Samaria. They buried him there. "The men cleaned Ahab's chariot at the pool of water in Samaria. The dogs licked King Ahab's blood from the chariot. And the prostitutes* used the water to wash themselves.

prostitute(s) A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

These things happened the way the Lord said they would happen.

³All the things that King Ahab did during the time he ruled are written in the history of the kings of Israel. And that book also tells about the ivory that the king used to make his palace* more beautiful. And the book tells about the city that the king built.

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah

⁴During the fourth year that Ahab was king of Israel, ⁵Jehoshaphat became king of Judah. Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa. ⁶Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he became king. Jehoshaphat ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. Jehoshaphat's mother was named Azubah. Azubah was the daughter of Shilhi. ⁷Jehoshaphat was good. He did like his father before him. He obeyed all the things that the Lord wanted. But Jehoshaphat did not destroy the high places.* The people continued offering sacrifices* and burning incense* at those places.

⁸Jehoshaphat made a peace agreement with the king of Israel. ⁹Jehoshaphat was very brave and fought many wars. All the things he did are written in the history of the kings of Judah. ¹⁰Jehoshaphat forced all the men and women that sold their bodies for sex to leave the places of worship. Those people had served in those places of worship during the time his father Asa was king.

¹¹During this time, the land of Edom had no king. The land was ruled by a governor. The governor was chosen by the king of Judah.

¹²King Jehoshaphat built ships that were able to sail on the ocean. Jehoshaphat sent the ships to the land of Ophir. He wanted the ships to bring back gold. But the ships were destroyed at Ezion Geber. The ships were never able to get the gold. ¹³King Ahaziah of Israel went to help Jehoshaphat. Ahaziah told Jehoshaphat that he would get them some men who were skilled with ships. But Jehoshaphat refused to accept Ahaziah's men.

¹⁴Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors.* He was buried with his ancestors in the City of David.* Then his son, Jehoram became king.

Ahaziah, King of Israel

¹⁵Ahaziah was the son of Ahab. He became king of Israel during the 17th year that King Jehoshaphat ruled Judah. Ahaziah ruled in Samaria for two years. ¹⁶Ahaziah sinned against the Lord. He did the same things as his father, Ahab, his mother Jezebel, and Jeroboam, son of Nebat had done. All these rulers led the people of Israel into more sin. ¹⁷Ahaziah worshiped and served the false god Baal, like his father did before him. So Ahaziah caused the Lord God of Israel to be very angry. The Lord was angry at Ahaziah like he had been angry at his father before him.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

died ... ancestors Literally, "slept with his ancestors."

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

2 Kings

A Message for Ahaziah

1 After Ahab died, Moab broke away from Israel's rule.

²One day, Ahaziah was on the roof* of his house in Samaria. Ahaziah fell down through the wooden bars on top of his house. He was hurt very badly. Ahaziah called messengers and told them, "Go to the priests of, Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron. Ask them if I will get well from my injuries."

³But the Lord's angel said to Elijah the Tishbite, "King Ahaziah has sent some messengers from Samaria. Go meet those men. Say to them, 'There is a God in Israel! So why are you men going to ask questions from Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' Tell King Ahaziah these things: You sent messengers to ask questions from Baal-Zebub. Since you did this thing, the Lord says: You will not get up from your bed. You will die!" Then Elijah left and told these words to Ahaziah's servants.

⁴The messengers came back to Ahaziah. Ahaziah said to the messengers, "Why did you come back so soon?"

⁵The messengers said to Ahaziah, "A man came up to meet us. He told us to go back to the king who sent us, and tell him what the Lord says. The Lord says, 'There is a God in Israel! So why did you send messengers to ask questions from Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Since you did this thing, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!'"

⁶Ahaziah said to the messengers, "What did the man look like who met you and told you these things?"

⁷The messengers answered Ahaziah, "This man wore a hairy coat* and a leather belt around his waist."

Then Ahaziah said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite!"

Fire Destroys the Captains Sent From Ahaziah

⁸Ahaziah sent a captain and 50 men to Elijah. The captain went to Elijah. At that time, Elijah was sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God,* the king says, 'Come down.'"

⁹Elijah answered the captain of 50, "If I am a man of God,* let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!"

So fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

¹⁰Ahaziah sent another captain and 50 men to Elijah. The captain said to Elijah, "Man of God,* the king says, 'Come down quickly!'"

¹¹Elijah told the captain and his 50 men, "If I am a man of God,* let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your 50 men!"

Then God's fire came down from heaven and destroyed the captain and his 50 men.

¹²Ahaziah sent a third captain with 50 men. The third captain of 50 came to Elijah. The captain fell down on his knees. The captain

roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

This man wore a hairy coat Or, "This man was a hairy man."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

begged Elijah, saying to him, "Man of God,* I ask you, please let my life and the lives of your 50 servants be valuable to you! "Fire came down from heaven and destroyed the first two captains and their 50 men. But now, have mercy and let us live!"

"The Lord's angel said to Elijah, "Go with the captain. Don't be afraid of him."

So Elijah went with the captain to see King Ahaziah.

"Elijah told Ahaziah, "There is a God in Israel. So why did you send messengers to ask questions from Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron. Since you did this thing, you will not get up from your bed. You will die!"

Jehoram Takes Ahaziah's Place

"Ahaziah died, just like the Lord said through Elijah. Ahaziah did not have a son. So Jehoram became the new king after Ahaziah. Jehoram began to rule in the second year that Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was king of Judah.

"The other things that Ahaziah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

The Lord Makes Plans to Take Elijah

2 It was near the time for the Lord to take Elijah by a whirlwind up into heaven. Elijah went with Elisha to Gilgal.

"Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won't leave you." So the two men went down to Bethel.

"The group of prophets* at Bethel came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?"

Elisha said, "Yes, I know it. Don't talk about it."

"Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to Jericho."

But Elisha said, "I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won't leave you!" So the two men went to Jericho.

"The group of prophets* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the Lord will take your master away from you today?"

Elisha answered, "Yes, I know it. Don't talk about it."

"Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, because the Lord told me to go to the Jordan River."

Elisha answered, "I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won't leave you!" So the two men went on.

"There were 50 men from the group of prophets* that followed them. Elijah and Elisha stopped at the Jordan River. The 50 men stood far away from Elijah and Elisha. "Elijah took off his coat, folded it, and hit the water with it. The water separated to the right and to the left. Then Elijah and Elisha crossed the river on dry ground.

"After they crossed the river, Elijah said to Elisha, "What do you want me to do for you before God takes me away from you?"

Elisha said, "I ask you for a double share of your spirit on me."

"Elijah said, "You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, then that will happen. But if you don't see me when I am taken from you, then it won't happen."

God Takes Elijah into Heaven

"Elijah and Elisha were walking and talking together. Suddenly, some horses and a chariot* came and separated Elijah from Elisha. The horses and the chariot were like fire! Then Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind.

"Elisha saw it, and shouted, "My father! My father! The Chariot of Israel and his horse soldiers!*"

Elisha never saw Elijah again. Elisha grabbed his own clothes and tore them to show

man of God Another name for a prophet.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets."

These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Chariot ... soldiers This probably means, "God and his heavenly army (angels)."

his sadness. "Elijah's coat had fallen to the ground, so Elisha picked it up. Elisha hit the water and said, "Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?"

"Just as Elisha hit the water, the water separated to the right and to the left! And Elisha crossed the river.

The Prophets Ask for Elijah

"When the group of prophets* at Jericho saw Elisha, they said, "Elijah's spirit is now on Elisha!" They came to meet Elisha. They bowed very low to the ground before Elisha. "They said to him, "Look, we have 50 good men. Please let them go and look for your master. Maybe the Lord's Spirit has taken Elijah up and dropped him on some mountain or into some valley."

But Elisha answered, "No, don't send men to look for Elijah!"

"The group of prophets* begged Elisha until he was embarrassed. Then Elisha said, "Fine, send the men to look for Elijah."

The group of prophets* sent the 50 men to look for Elijah. They looked three days, but they could not find Elijah. "So the men went to Jericho, where Elisha was staying. They told him that they could not find Elijah. Elisha said to them, "I told you not to go."

Elisha Makes the Water Good

"The men of the city said to Elisha, "Sir, you can see this city is in a nice place. But the water is bad. That is why the land cannot grow crops."

"Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it."

The people brought the bowl to Elisha. "Then Elisha went out to the place where the water began flowing from the ground. Elisha threw the salt into the water. He said, "The Lord said, 'I am making this water pure! From now on this water will not cause any more death or keep the land from growing crops.'"

"The water became pure. And the water is still good today. It happened just like Elisha said.

Some Boys Make Fun of Elisha

"Elisha went from that city to Bethel. Elisha was walking up the hill to the city, and some boys were coming down out of the city. They began making fun of Elisha. They said to him, "Go up, you bald headed man! Go up, you bald headed man!"

"Elisha looked back and saw them. He asked the Lord to cause bad things to happen to them. Then two bears came out of the forest and attacked the boys. There were 42 boys ripped apart by the bears.

"Elisha left Bethel and went to Mount Carmel. And from there, Elisha went back to Samaria.

Jehoram Becomes King of Israel

3 Jehoram son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria. He began to rule during Jehoshaphat's 18th year as king of Judah. Jehoram ruled 12 years. "Jehoram did the things that the Lord said were wrong. But Jehoram was not like his father and mother, because he put away the pillar that his father had made for worshiping Baal.* "But he continued to do the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat. Jeroboam caused the Israelites to sin. Jehoram did not stop the sins of Jeroboam.

Moab Breaks Away from Israel

"Mesha was the king of Moab. Mesha owned many sheep. Mesha gave the wool of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams* to the king of Israel. "But when Ahab died, the king of Moab broke away from the rule of the king of Israel.

"Then King Jehoram went out of Samaria and gathered all the men of Israel. "Jehoram

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets." These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.
rams Male sheep.

sent messengers, to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. Jehoram said, "The king of Moab has broken away from my rule. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

Jehoshaphat said, "Yes, I will go with you. I am the same as you; my people are the same as your people; and my horses are the same as your horses."

The Three Kings Ask Elisha

"Jehoshaphat asked Jehoram, "Which way should we go?"

Jehoram answered, "We should go through the Desert of Edom."

"So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. They traveled around for seven days. There was not enough water for the army or for their animals.

"Finally, the king of Israel (*Jehoram*) said, "Oh! The Lord really called us three kings together to let the Moabites defeat us!"

"But Jehoshaphat said, "Surely one of the Lord's prophets is here. Let's ask the prophet what the Lord says we should do."

One of the servants of the king of Israel said, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. Elisha was Elijah's servant."*

"Jehoshaphat said, "The Lord's word is with Elisha!"

The Three Kings Ask Elisha

So the king of Israel (*Jehoram*), Jehoshaphat, and the king of Edom went down to see Elisha.

"Elisha said to the king of Israel (*Jehoram*), "I have nothing to do with you! Go to your father's prophets, and to your mother's prophets!"

The king of Israel said to Elisha, "No, we have come to see you, because the Lord called us three kings together to let the Moabites defeat us. We need your help."

"Elisha said, "I serve the Lord All-Powerful. I promise, as sure as he lives; I

tell you the truth: I would not look at you or notice you if Jehoshaphat king of Judah were not here. "But now bring me a person who plays the harp."

When the person played the harp, the Lord's power* came on Elisha. "Then Elisha said, "This is what the Lord says: Dig holes in the valley. "This is what the Lord says: You won't see wind, you won't see rain. But that valley will be filled with water. Then you and your cows and other animals will have water to drink. "It is easy for the Lord to do. He will also let you defeat the Moabites. "You will attack every strong city and every good city. You will cut down every good tree. You will stop all springs of water. You will ruin every good field with the stones you throw at it."

"In the morning, at the time for the morning sacrifice, water began flowing through the road from Edom and filled the valley.

"The people in Moab heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So the people in Moab gathered together all the men old enough to wear armor.* They waited at the border, ready for the battle. "The people of Moab got up early that morning. The rising sun was shining on the water in the valley, and it looked like blood to the people of Moab. "The people of Moab said, "Look at the blood! The kings must have fought against each other. They must have destroyed each other. Let's go take the valuable things from the dead bodies!"

"The Moabite people came to the Israelite camp. But the Israelites came out and attacked the Moabite army. The Moabite people ran away from the Israelites. The Israelites went on into the land to fight the Moabites. "The Israelites beat down the cities. They threw their stones* at every good field in Moab. They stopped up all the springs of water. And they cut down all the good trees. The Israelites fought all the way to Kir-Hareseth. The soldiers surrounded Kir-Hareseth and attacked it, too!

power Literally, "hand."

armor The special clothes soldiers wore to protect themselves in war.

threw their stones These were probably the stones soldiers threw with slings in war.

was Elijah's servant Literally, "poured water over Elijah's hands."

"The king of Moab saw that the battle was too strong for him. So he took 700 men with swords to break through to kill the king of Edom. But they could not break through to the king of Edom. "Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would have become king after him. On the wall around the city, the king of Moab offered his son as a burnt offering. This made the people of Israel very upset. So the people of Israelite left the king of Moab, and went back to their own land.

A Prophet's Widow Asks Elisha for Help

4 A man from the group of prophets* had a wife. [This man died.] His wife cried out to Elisha, "My husband was like a servant to you. Now my husband is dead! You know he honored the Lord. But he owed money to a man. And now that man is coming to take my boys to make them his slaves!"

"Elisha answered, "How can I help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

The woman said, "I don't have anything in the house. I have only a jar of olive oil."

"Then Elisha said, "Go and borrow bowls from all your neighbors. They must be empty. Borrow plenty of bowls. "Then go to your house and close the doors. Only you and your sons will be in the house. Then pour the oil into all these bowls. Fill those bowls, and put them in a separate place."

"So the woman left Elisha, went into her house, and shut the door. Only she and her sons were in the house. Her sons brought the bowls to her and she poured oil. "She filled many bowls. Finally, she said to her son, "Bring me another bowl."

But all of the bowls were full. One of the sons said to the woman, "There aren't any more bowls." At that time, the oil in the jar was finished!

"Then the woman came and told the man of God* (Elisha). Elisha told her, "Go, sell the oil

and pay your debt. After you have sold the oil and paid your debt, you and your sons can live on the money that is left."

A Woman in Shunem Gives Elisha a Room

"One day Elisha went to Shunem. An important woman lived in Shunem. This woman asked Elisha to stop and eat at her house. So every time Elisha went through that place, he stopped there to eat food.

"The woman said to her husband, "Look, I can see that Elisha is a holy man of God. He passes by our house all the time. "Please, let's make a little room on the roof* for Elisha. Let's put a bed in this room. Let's put a table, a chair, and a lampstand there. Then when he comes to our house, he can have this room for himself."

"One day Elisha came to the woman's house. He went to this room and rested there. "Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, "Call this Shunammite woman."

The servant called the Shunammite woman, and she stood in front of Elisha. "Elisha told his servant, "Now say to this woman, 'Look, you have done your best to take care of us. What can we do for you? Do you want us to speak to the king for you, or to the captain of the army?'"

The woman answered, "I am fine living here among my own people."

"Elisha said to Gehazi, "What can we do for her?"

Gehazi answered, "I know! She doesn't have a son, and her husband is old."

"Then Elisha said, "Call her."

So Gehazi called the woman. She came and stood at his door. "Elisha said to the woman, "About this time next spring, you will be hugging your own baby boy."

The woman said, "No sir! Man of God,* don't lie to me!"

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets."

These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

room on the roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

The Woman in Shunem Has a Son

¹⁷But the woman did become pregnant. She gave birth to a son that next spring, just like Elisha said.

¹⁸The boy grew. One day, the boy went out into the fields to see his father and the men cutting the grain. ¹⁹The boy said to his father, "Oh, my head! My head hurts!"

The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother!"

²⁰The servant took the boy to his mother. The boy sat on his mother's lap until noon. Then he died.

The Woman Goes to See Elisha

²¹The woman lay the boy on the bed of the man of God* (*Elisha*). Then she shut the door and went out. ²²She called to her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys. Then I will go quickly to get the man of God (*Elisha*) and come back."

²³The woman's husband said, "Why do you want to go to the man of God (*Elisha*) today? It isn't the New Moon* or Sabbath day*."

She said, "Don't worry. Everything will be all right."

²⁴Then she put a saddle on a donkey and said to her servant, "Let's go, and hurry! Go slow only when I tell you!"

²⁵The woman went to Mount Carmel to get the man of God* (*Elisha*).

The man of God* (*Elisha*) saw the Shunammite woman coming from far away. Elisha said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, there's the Shunammite woman! ²⁶Please run now to meet her! Say to her, 'What's wrong? Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?'"

Gehazi asked the Shunammite woman these things. She answered, "Everything is fine."

²⁷But the Shunammite woman went up the hill to the man of God* (*Elisha*). She bowed

down and held Elisha's feet. Gehazi came near to pull the Shunammite woman away. But the man of God (*Elisha*) said to Gehazi, "Let her alone! She's very upset, and the Lord didn't tell me about it. The Lord hid this news from me."

²⁸Then the Shunammite woman said, "Sir, I didn't ask for a son. I told you, 'Don't fool me!'"

²⁹Then Elisha said to Gehazi, "Get ready to go. Take my walking stick and go! Don't stop to talk to anyone! If you meet any person, don't even say hello to him. If any person says hello to you, don't answer him. Put my walking stick on the child's face."

³⁰But the child's mother said, "I promise, as the Lord lives and as you live, I won't leave without you!"

So Elisha got up and followed the Shunammite woman.

³¹Gehazi arrived at the Shunammite woman's house, before Elisha and the Shunammite woman. Gehazi laid the walking stick on the child's face. But the child did not talk or show any sign that he heard anything. Then Gehazi came back to meet Elisha. Gehazi told Elisha, "The child won't wake up!"

The Shunammite Woman's Son Lives Again

³²Elisha came into the house. And there was the child, lying dead on his bed. ³³Elisha entered the room and shut the door. Elisha and the child were alone in the room now. Then Elisha prayed to the Lord. ³⁴Elisha went to the bed, and lay on the child. Elisha put his mouth on the child's mouth. Elisha put his eyes on the child's eyes. Elisha put his hands on the child's hands. Elisha stretched himself on top of the child. Then the child's body became warm.

³⁵Elisha came out of the room and walked around in the house. Then he went back into room, and put himself on the child. Then the child sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

³⁶Elisha called Gehazi and said, "Call the Shunammite woman!"

Gehazi called the Shunammite woman, and she came to Elisha. Elisha said, "Pick up your son."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month.

There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

Sabbath day Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

⁹Then the Shunammite woman went into the room, and bowed down at Elisha's feet. Then she picked up her son and went out.

Elisha and the Poisoned Soup

¹Elisha came to Gilgal again. There was a time of hunger in the land. The group of prophets* was sitting in front of Elisha. Elisha said to his servant, "Put the large pot on the fire, and make some soup for the group of prophets."

²One man went out into the field to gather herbs. He found a wild vine. He picked wild gourds from this vine and filled a pocket of his robe with them. Then he came and put the wild gourds into the pot. But the group of prophets* did not know what kind of gourds they were.

³Then they poured some of the soup for the men to eat. But when they began to eat the soup, they shouted out to Elisha, "Man of God*! There's poison in the pot!" They could not eat from the pot because the food was not safe to eat.

⁴But Elisha said, "Bring some flour." They brought flour to Elisha, and he threw it into the pot. Then Elisha said, "Pour the soup for the people so they can eat."

And there was nothing wrong with the soup!

Elisha Feeds the Group of Prophets

¹A man from Baal-Shalishah came and brought bread from the first harvest to the man of God* (Elisha). This man brought 20 loaves of barley bread and fresh grain in his sack. Then Elisha said, "Give this food to the people, so that they can eat."

²Elisha's servant said, "What? There are 100 men here. How can I give this food to all those men?"

But Elisha said, "Give the food to the people to eat. The Lord says, 'They will eat and will have food left over.'"

³Then Elisha's servant put the food in front of the group of prophets.* The group of prophets had enough to eat, and they even had food left over! This happened just like the Lord said.

Naaman's Problem

5 Naaman was the captain of the army of the king of Aram. Naaman was very important to his king.* Naaman was very important because the Lord used him to lead Aram to victory. Naaman was a great and powerful man, but he was also sick with leprosy.*

²The Aramean army sent many groups of soldiers to fight in Israel. The soldiers took people to be their slaves. One time they took a little girl from the land of Israel. This little girl became a servant of Naaman's wife. This girl said to Naaman's wife, "I wish that my master (Naaman) would meet the prophet (Elisha) who lives in Samaria. That prophet could heal Naaman of his leprosy.*"

³Naaman went to his master (the king of Aram). Naaman told the king of Aram the things that the Israelite girl said.

⁴Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So Naaman went to Israel. Naaman took some gifts with him. Naaman took 750 pounds* of silver, 6,000 pieces of gold and ten changes of clothes. Naaman took the letter from the king of Aram to the king of Israel. The letter said: "... Now, this letter is to show that I am sending my servant Naaman to you. Cure his leprosy.*"

⁵When the king of Israel had read the letter, he tore his clothes to show he was sad and upset. The king of Israel said, "Am I God? No! I don't have the power over life and death. So why did the king of Aram send a man sick with leprosy* for me to heal? Think about it, and you will see that it is a trick. The king of Aram is trying to start a fight!"

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets."

These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

king Literally, "master."

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

750 pounds Literally, "10 talents."

"Elisha, the man of God,* heard that the king of Israel was upset and, tore his clothes. Elisha sent this message to the king: "Why did you tear your clothes? Let Naaman come to me. Then he will know there is a prophet in Israel!"

"So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots* to Elisha's house and stood outside the door. "Elisha sent a messenger to Naaman. The messenger said, "Go, and wash in the Jordan River seven times. Then your skin will be healed, and you will be pure and clean."

"Naaman became angry and left. He said, "I thought Elisha would at least come out and stand in front of me and call on the name of the Lord his God. I thought he would wave his hand over my body and heal the leprosy*! "Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, are better than all the water in Israel! Why can't I wash in those rivers in Damascus and become clean?" So Naaman turned away. He was angry!

"But Naaman's servants went to him and talked to him. They said, "Father,* if the prophet told you to do some great thing, you would do it! Right? So you should obey him even if he tells you something easy. And he said, "Wash, and you will be pure and clean."

"So Naaman did the things that the man of God* (Elisha) said. Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan River seven times. And Naaman became pure and clean! Naaman's skin became soft like the skin of a baby.

"Naaman and all his group came back to the man of God* (Elisha). He stood before Elisha and said, "Look, I now know there is no God in all the earth except in Israel! Now please accept a gift from me!"

"But Elisha said, "I serve the Lord. And I promise, as the Lord lives, I will not accept any gift."

Naaman tried hard to make Elisha take the gift, but Elisha refused. "Then Naaman said,

"If you won't accept this gift, then at least do this for me. Let me have enough dirt from Israel to fill the baskets on two of my mules.* Why? Because I will never again offer any burnt offering or sacrifice to any other gods. I will offer sacrifices only to the Lord! "And I now pray the Lord will forgive me for this thing: In the future, my master (the king of Aram) will go into the temple of Rimmon to worship that false god. The king will want to lean on me for support, so I must bow down in the temple of Rimmon. I now ask the Lord to forgive me when that happens."

"Then Elisha said to Naaman, "Go in peace."

So Naaman left Elisha and went a short way. "But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God,* said, "Look, my master (Elisha) has let Naaman the Aramean go without accepting the gift that he brought! As the Lord lives, I will run after Naaman and get something from him!" "So Gehazi ran to Naaman.

Naaman saw someone running after him. He stepped down from the chariot* to meet Gehazi. Naaman said, "Is everything all right?"

"Gehazi said, "Yes, everything is all right. My master (Elisha) has sent me. He said, 'Look, two young men from the group of prophets* in the hill country of Ephraim came to me. Please give them 75 pounds* of silver and two changes of clothes!'"

"Naaman said, "Please, take 150 pounds*!" Naaman persuaded Gehazi to take the silver. Naaman put 150 pounds* of silver in two bags and took two changes of clothes. Then Naaman gave these things to two of his servants. The servants carried these things for Gehazi.

"When Gehazi came to the hill, he took these things from the servants. Gehazi sent the servants away, and they left. Then Gehazi hid

Let ... mules Naaman probably thought that the ground in Israel was holy, so he would take some with him to help him to worship the Lord in his own country.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets." These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

75 pounds Literally, "a talent."

150 pounds Literally, "2 talents."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

Father Slaves often called their masters "father," and the masters often called their slaves "children."

those things in the house.

²³Gehazi came in and stood before his master [Elisha]. Elisha said to Gehazi, "Where have you been Gehazi?"

Gehazi said, "I did not go anywhere."

²⁴Elisha said to Gehazi, "That is not true! My heart was with you when the man [Naaman] turned from his chariot* to meet you. This is not the time to take money, clothes, olives, grapes, sheep, cows, or men and women servants. ²⁵Now, you and your children will catch Naaman's disease. You will have leprosy* forever!"

When Gehazi left Elisha, Gehazi's skin was as white as snow! Gehazi was sick with leprosy.*

Elisha and the Axhead

6 The group of prophets* said to Elisha, "We are staying in that place over there. But it is too small for us. ²Let's go to the Jordan River, and cut some wood. Each of us will get a log and we will build us a place to live there."

Elisha answered, "Fine, go, and do it."

³One person said, "Please go with us."

Elisha said, "Fine, I will go with you."

⁴So Elisha went with the group of prophets.* When they arrived at the Jordan River, they began to cut down some trees. ⁵But when one man was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead slipped from the axe and fell into the water. The man shouted, "Oh, master! I borrowed that axe!"

⁶The man of God* (Elisha) said, "Where did it fall?"

The man showed Elisha the place, where the axhead fell. Then Elisha cut a stick and threw the stick into the water. The stick made the iron axhead float. ⁷Elisha said, "Pick up the axhead." Then the man reached out and took the axhead.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets."

These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Aram's King Tries to Trap Israel's King

¹The king of Aram was making war against Israel. He had a council meeting with his army officers. He said, "Hide in this place, and attack the Israelites when they come by."

²But the man of God* (Elisha) sent a message to the king of Israel. Elisha said, "Be careful! Don't go by that place! The Aramean soldiers are hiding there!"

³The king of Israel sent a message to his men at the place that the man of God* (Elisha) warned him about. And the king of Israel saved quite a few men.*

⁴The king of Aram was very upset about this. The king of Aram called his army officers and said to them, "Tell me who is spying, for the king of Israel."

⁵One of the officers of the king of Aram said, "My lord and king, not one of us is a spy! Elisha, the prophet from Israel, can tell the king of Israel many secret things—even, the words that you speak in your bedroom!"

⁶The king of Aram said, "Find Elisha and I will send men to catch him!"

The servants told the king of Aram, "Elisha is in Dothan!"

⁷Then the king of Aram sent horses, chariots,* and a large army to Dothan. They arrived at night and surrounded the city. ⁸Elisha's servant got up early that morning. The servant went outside, and he saw an army with horses and chariots all around the city!

Elisha's servant said to Elisha, "Oh, my master, what can we do?"

⁹Elisha said, "Don't be afraid! The army that fights for us is larger than the army that fights for Aram!"

¹⁰Then Elisha prayed and said, "Lord, I ask you, open my servant's eyes so he can see."

The Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and the servant saw the mountain was full of horses and chariots* of fire. They were all around Elisha!

¹¹These horses and chariots* of fire came down to Elisha. Elisha prayed to the Lord and said, "I pray that you will cause these people to become blind."

quite a few men Literally, "not one or two."

Then the Lord caused the Aramean army to become blind, as Elisha asked. "Elisha said to the Aramean army, 'This is not the right way. This is not the right city. Follow me. I will lead you to the man you are looking for.' Then Elisha led the Aramean army to Samaria."

"When they arrived at Samaria,* Elisha said, 'Lord, open these men's eyes so they can see.'"

Then the Lord opened their eyes, and the Aramean army saw they were in the city of Samaria! "The king of Israel saw the Aramean army. The king of Israel said to Elisha, 'My father, should I kill them? Should I kill them?'"

"Elisha answered, 'No, don't kill them. You would not kill people that you captured in war with your sword and with your bow and arrows. Give the Aramean army some bread and water. Let them eat and drink. Then let them go home to their master.'"

"The king of Israel prepared much food for the Aramean army. The Aramean army ate and drank. Then the king of Israel sent the Aramean army back home. The Aramean army went home to their master. The Arameans did not send any more soldiers into the land of Israel to make raids."

A Terrible Time of Hunger Hits Samaria

"After this happened, Ben-Hadad king of Aram gathered all his army and went to surround and attack the city Samaria. "The soldiers would not let people bring food into the city. So there was a time of terrible hunger in Samaria. It was so bad in Samaria that a donkey's head was sold for 80 pieces of silver. And 1 pint* of dove's dung sold for five pieces of silver."

"The king of Israel was walking on the wall around the city. A woman shouted out to him. The woman said, 'My lord and king, please help me!'"

"The king of Israel said, 'If the Lord does not help you, how can I help you? I have

nothing to give to you—there is no grain, from the threshing floor* or wine, from the winepress.'" Then the king of Israel said to the woman, "What is your trouble?"

The woman answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give me your son so that we can kill him and eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.' "So we boiled my son and ate him. Then the next day, I said to this woman, 'Give me your son so we can kill him and eat him.' But she has hidden her son!"

"When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. As the king passed by on the wall, the people saw the king was wearing under his clothes the rough cloth that showed he was sad and upset."

"The king said, 'May God punish me if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat is still on his body at the end of this day!'"

"The king sent a messenger to Elisha. Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders (leaders) were sitting with him. Before the messenger arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "Look, that son of a murderer (the king of Israel) is sending men to cut off my head! When the messenger arrives, shut the door! Hold the door and don't let him enter! I hear the sound of his master's feet coming behind him!"

"While Elisha was still talking with the elders (leaders), the messenger came to him. This was the message: "This trouble has come from the Lord! Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"

7 Elisha said, "Listen to the message from the Lord! The Lord says: 'About this time tomorrow, there will be plenty of food, and it will be cheap again. A person will be able to buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel* in the market place by the city gates of Samaria.'"

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

basket(s) Literally, "seah(s)."

shekel Or, "1/2 of an ounce."

Samaria This was the capital city of Israel—the enemy of Aram.

1 pint Literally, "1/4 cab."

²Then the officer that was close to the king* answered the man of God* (*Elisha*). The officer said, "Even if the Lord made windows in heaven, this could not happen!"

Elisha said, "You will see it with your own eyes. But you will not eat any of that food."

Lepers Find the Aramean Camp Is Empty

³There were four men sick with leprosy* near the city gate. They said to each other, "Why are we sitting here waiting to die? 'There is no food in the Samaria. If we go into the city, we will die there. If we stay here, we will die, too. So let us go to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, then we will live. If they kill us, then we will just die."

⁴So that evening the four lepers* went to the Aramean camp. They came to the edge of the Aramean camp. No people were there! "The Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots,* horses, and a large army. So the Aramean soldiers said to each other, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to come against us!"

⁵The Arameans ran away early that evening. They left everything behind. They left their tents, horses, and donkeys, and they ran for their lives.

The Lepers Take Things from the Aramean Camp

⁶When these lepers* came to where the camp began, they went into one tent. They ate and drank. Then the four lepers* carried silver, gold, and clothes out of the camp. They hid the silver, gold, and clothes. Then they came back and entered another tent. They carried things out from this tent. They went out and hid these things. ⁷Then these lepers* said to each other, "We are doing wrong! Today we have good news. But we are silent. If we wait until the sun

comes up, we will be punished. Now let us go and tell the people who live in the king's house."

The Lepers Tell the Good News

⁸So these lepers* came and called to the gate-keepers of the city. The lepers told the gate-keepers, "We went to the Aramean camp. But we did not hear any people. No people were there. The horses and donkeys were still tied up, and the tents were still standing. But the people were all gone!"

⁹Then the gate-keepers of the city shouted out and told the people in the king's house. ¹⁰It was night, but the king got up from bed. The king said to his officers, "I will tell you what the Aramean soldiers are doing to us. They know we are hungry. They left the camp to hide in the field. They are thinking, 'When the Israelites come out of the city, we will capture them alive. And then we will enter the city.'"

¹¹One of the king's officers said, "Let some men take five of the horses that are still left in the city. The horses will soon die anyway, just like all the people of Israel that are still left in the city.* Let's send these men to see what happened."

¹²So the men took two chariots* with horses. The king sent these men after the Aramean army. The king told them, "Go and see what happened."

¹³The men went after the Aramean army as far as the Jordan River. All along the road there were clothes and weapons. The Arameans had thrown these things down when they hurried away. The messengers went back to Samaria and told the king.

¹⁴Then the people ran out to the Aramean camp and took valuable things from there. ¹⁵There was plenty for everyone.* So it happened just like the Lord said. A person could buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel.*

that was close to the king Literally, "on whose arm the king leaned."

man of God Another name for a prophet.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

lepers People sick with leprosy.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

The horses ... city The Hebrew is hard to understand here.

basket(s) Literally, "seah(s)."

shekel Or, "1/2 of an ounce."

"The king chose his officer that was close to him to guard the gate. But the people ran to get food from the enemy camp. The people knocked the officer down and walked on him, and he died. So all those things happened just like the man of God* (*Elisha*) said when the king came to Elisha's house. "Elisha had said, "A person will be able to buy a basket* of fine flour or two baskets* of barley for only one shekel* in the market place by the city gates of Samaria." "But that officer had answered the man of God, "Even if the Lord made windows in heaven, this could not happen!" And Elisha had told the officer, "You will see it with your own eyes. But you will not eat any of that food." "It happened to the officer just that way. The people knocked him down at the gate and walked on him, and he died.

Elisha Tells the Shunammite Woman to Move

8 Elisha talked to the woman whose son he had brought back to life. Elisha said, "You and your family should move to another country. Why? Because the Lord has decided that there will be a time of hunger here. This time of hunger will be in this country for seven years."

"So the woman did what the man of God* said. She went with her family to stay in the land of the Philistines for seven years. "After the seven years were finished, the woman came back from the land of the Philistines.

The woman went to speak with the king. She wanted to ask him to help her get back her house and land.

"The king was talking with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God* (*Elisha*). The king said to Gehazi, "Please tell me all the great things Elisha has done."

"Gehazi was telling the king about Elisha bringing a dead person back to life. At that time, the woman whose son Elisha brought back to life went to the king. She wanted to ask

him to help her get back her house and land. Gehazi said, "My lord and king, this is the woman! And this is the son that Elisha brought back to life!"

"The king asked the woman what she wanted. And the woman told him.

Then the king chose an officer to help the woman. The king said, "Give to the woman all that belongs to her. And give her all the harvest of her land from the day she left the country until now."

Ben-Hadad Sends Hazael to Elisha

"Elisha went to Damascus. Ben-Hadad king of Aram was sick. A person told Ben-Hadad, "The man of God* has come here."

"Then the King Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, "Take a gift, and go to meet the man of God.* Ask him to ask the Lord if I will get well from my sickness."

"So Hazael went to meet Elisha. Hazael brought a gift with him. He brought all kinds of good things from Damascus. It took 40 camels to carry everything. Hazael went to Elisha. Hazael said, "Your follower* Ben-Hadad king of Aram sent me to you. He asks if he will get well from his sickness."

"Then Elisha said to Hazael, "Go and tell Ben-Hadad, 'You will live.*' But really the Lord told me, 'He will surely die.'"

Elisha Makes a Prophecy About Hazael

"Elisha kept looking at Hazael, until Hazael felt embarrassed. Then the man of God* cried. "Hazael said, "Sir, why are you crying?"

Elisha answered, "I am crying because I know the bad things you will do to the Israelites. You will burn their strong cities. You will kill their young men with swords. You will kill their babies. You will split open their pregnant women."

"Hazael said, I am not a powerful man!* I can't do these great things!"

follower Literally, "son."

You will live Some ancient Hebrew copies say, "You will surely not get well."

I am not a powerful man Literally, "I am only a dog."

man of God Another name for a prophet.
basket(s) Literally, "seal(s)."
shekel Or, "2/3 of an ounce."

Elisha answered, "The Lord showed me that you will be king over Aram."

"Then Hazael left Elisha, and went to his king.* Ben-Hadad said to Hazael, "What did Elisha say to you?"

Hazael answered, "Elisha told me that you will live."

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

"But the next day, Hazael took a cover and dipped it in water. Then he put the cover on Ben-Hadad's face and smothered him. Ben-Hadad died. So Hazael became the new king.

Jehoram Begins His Rule

"Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. Jehoram began to rule in the fifth year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. "Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. "But Jehoram lived like the kings of Israel and did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoram lived like the people from Ahab's family. Jehoram lived like this because his wife was Ahab's daughter. "But the Lord would not destroy Judah because of the promise to, his servant David. The Lord had promised David that someone from his family would always be king.

"In Jehoram's time Edom broke away from Judah's rule. The people of Edom chose a king for themselves.

"Then Jehoram and all his chariots* went to Zair. The Edomite army surrounded them. Jehoram and his officers attacked them and escaped. Jehoram's soldiers all ran away and went home. "So the Edomites broke away from the rule of Judah. And they have been free from the rule of Judah until today.

At the same time, Libnah also broke away from Judah's rule.

"All the things Jehoram did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah.

king Literally, "master."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

"Jehoram died and, was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Jehoram's son Ahaziah became the new king.

Ahaziah Begins His Rule

"Ahaziah son of Jehoram became the king of Judah in the 12th year that Joram son of Ahab was king of Israel. "Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah. She was the daughter of Omri king of Israel. "Ahaziah did the things the Lord said were wrong. Ahaziah lived like the people from Ahab's family. Ahaziah lived like this because he was Ahab's son-in-law.

Joram Is Hurt in the War Against Hazael

"Ahaziah went with Joram, Ahab's son, to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram. King Joram went back to Israel so he could get well from the wounds that he received at that place. Joram went to the area of Jezreel. Ahaziah, the son of Jehoram king of Judah, went to Jezreel to see Ahab's son, Joram.

Elisha Tells a Young Prophet to Anoint Jehu

9 Elisha the prophet called one of the group of prophets.* Elisha said to this man, "Get ready and take this small bottle of oil in your hand. Go to Ramoth-Gilead. "When you arrive there, find Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Then go in and make him get up from among his brothers. Take him to an inner room. "Take the small bottle of oil and pour the oil on Jehu's head. Say, 'This is what the Lord says: I have anointed* you to be the new king over

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

group of prophets Literally, "sons of the prophets." These people were prophets and people studying to become prophets.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

Israel.' Then open the door and run away. Don't wait!"

"So this young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth-Gilead. When the young man arrived, he saw, the captains of the army sitting. The young man said, "Captain, I have a message for you."

Jehu said, "We all are here. Which one of us is the message for?"

The young man said, "The message is for, you, captain."

"Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the young prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head. The young prophet said to Jehu, "The Lord God of Israel says, 'I am anointing* you to be the new king over the Lord's people, Israel. You must destroy the family of Ahab your king. In this way I will punish Jezebel for the deaths of my servants, the prophets, and the deaths of all the Lord's servants that were murdered. So all Ahab's family will die. I will not let any male child in Ahab's family live. It doesn't matter if that male child is a slave or a free person in Israel. I will make Ahab's family like the family of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and like the family of Baasha son of Ahijah. The dogs will eat Jezebel in the area of Jezreel. Jezebel will not be buried."

Then the young prophet opened the door and ran away.

The Servants Announce Jehu as King

"Jehu went back to his king's officers. One of the officers said to Jehu, "Is everything all right? Why did this crazy man come to you?"

Jehu answered the servants, "You know the man and the crazy things he says."

"The officers said, "No! Tell us the truth. What did he say?" Jehu told the officers the things that the young prophet said. Jehu said, "He said, 'This is what the Lord says: I have anointed you to be the new king over Israel.'"

"Then each officer quickly took his robe off and put it on the steps in front of Jehu. Then they blew the trumpet and made the announcement, "Jehu is king!"

Jehu Goes to Jezreel

"So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, made plans against Joram.

At that time, Joram and the Israelites had been trying to defend Ramoth-Gilead from Hazael king of Aram. But King Joram had to come back to Israel to get well from the injuries the Arameans gave him. (The Arameans wounded Joram when he fought against Hazael king of Aram.)

So Jehu told the officers, "If you agree that I am the new king, then don't let any person escape from the city to tell the news in Jezreel."

"Joram was resting in Jezreel. So Jehu rode in a chariot* and went to Jezreel. Ahaziah king of Judah had also come to Jezreel to see Joram.

"A guard was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu's large group coming. He said, "I see a large group of people!"

Joram said, "Send someone on a horse to meet them. Tell this man to say, 'Do you come in peace?'"

"So a man rode on a horse to meet Jehu. The rider on the horse said, "King Joram says, 'Do you come in peace?'"

Jehu said, "You have nothing to do with peace! Come and follow me."

The guard told Joram, "The messenger went to the group, but he has not come back yet."

"Then Joram sent out a second man on a horse. This man came to Jehu's group and said, "King Joram says, 'Peace.'"

Jehu answered, "You have nothing to do with peace! Come and follow me."

"The guard told Joram, "The second man went to the group, but he has not come back yet. The man driving the chariot drives like Jehu son of Nimshi. He drives crazy!"

"Joram said, "Make my chariot* ready!"

So the servant made Joram's chariot ready. Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out. Each king went out in his chariot* to meet Jehu. They met Jehu at the property of Naboth the Jezreelite.

anoint(ing) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Peace A way of saying "hello"

²²Joram saw Jehu and asked, "Do you come in peace, Jehu?"

Jehu answered, "There is no peace as long as your mother Jezebel does many acts of prostitution and witchcraft.*"

²³Joram turned the horses to run away. Joram said to Ahaziah, "It is a trick, Ahaziah!"

²⁴But Jehu pulled his bow with all his strength and shot Joram in his back.* The arrow went through Joram's heart. Joram fell dead in his chariot.*

²⁵Jehu said to his chariot driver Bidkar, "Take Joram's body up and throw it into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember that when you and I rode together with Joram's father Ahab, the Lord said this would happen to him." ²⁶The Lord said, "Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and his sons. So I will punish Ahab in this field." The Lord said that. So take Joram's body and throw it into the field, just like the Lord said!"

²⁷Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, so he ran away. He went by the garden house. Jehu followed after him. Jehu said, "Shoot Ahaziah in his chariot,* too!"

So Jehu's men shot Ahaziah, on the road to Gur near Ibleam. Ahaziah ran away to Megiddo, but he died there. ²⁸Ahaziah's servants carried Ahaziah's body in a chariot to Jerusalem. They buried Ahaziah in his tomb with his ancestors* in the City of David.*

²⁹Ahaziah became king over Judah during Joram's* eleventh year as king of Israel.

The Terrible Death of Jezebel

¹Jehu went to Jezreel, and Jezebel heard the news. She put her make-up on and fixed her hair. Then she stood by the window and looked out. ²Jehu entered the city. Jezebel said,

"Hello, you Zimri*! Just like him, you killed your master!"

³Jehu looked up at the window. He said, "Who is on my side? Who?"

Two or three eunuchs* looked out from the window, at Jehu. ⁴Jehu said to them, "Throw Jezebel down!"

Then the eunuchs* threw Jezebel down. Some of Jezebel's blood splashed on the wall and on the horses. The horses walked on Jezebel's body. ⁵Jehu went into the house and ate and drank. Then he said, "Now see about this cursed woman. Bury her, because she is a king's daughter."

⁶The men went to bury Jezebel. But they could not find her body. They could only find her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. ⁷So the men came back and told Jehu. Then Jehu said, "The Lord told his servant Elijah the Tishbite to give this message. Elijah said: 'Dogs will eat the body of Jezebel in the area of Jezreel.' ⁸Jezebel's body will be like dung on the field in the area of Jezreel. People won't be able to recognize Jezebel's body!'"

Jehu Writes the Leaders of Samaria

10 Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the rulers and leaders of Jezreel. He also sent the letters to the people that raised Ahab's sons. In the letters Jehu said, ¹"As soon as you get this letter, choose the person that is the best and most worthy among your father's sons. You have chariots* and horses. And you are living in a strong city. You also have weapons. Put the son you choose on his father's throne. Then fight for your father's family."

²But the rulers and leaders of Jezreel were very much afraid. They said, "The two kings (Joram and Ahaziah) could not stop Jehu. So we can't stop him either!"

³The man that took care of Ahab's house, the man that controlled the city, the elders, and

witchcraft Using magic or the power of Satan to do things.
in his back Literally, "between his arms."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Joram's Literally, "Joram son of Ahab."

Zimri Zimri was the man that killed Elah and the family of Baasha in Israel many years before. Read 1 Kings 16:8-12.

eunuchs Men that had their sexual organs removed. Often important officials of the king were eunuchs.

the people who raised Ahab's children, sent a message to Jehu. "We are your servants. We will do anything you tell us. We will not make any man king. Do what you think is good."

The Leaders of Samaria Kill Ahab's Children

"Then Jehu wrote a second letter to these leaders. Jehu said, 'If you support me and obey me, then cut off the heads of Ahab's sons. And bring them to me at Jezreel about this time tomorrow.'

Ahab had 70 sons. They were with the leaders of the city that raised them. When the leaders of the city received the letter, they took the king's sons and killed all 70 of them. Then the leaders put the heads of the king's sons in baskets. They sent the baskets to Jehu at Jezreel. The messenger came to Jehu and told him, 'They have brought the heads of the king's sons!'

Then Jehu said, 'Lay the heads in two piles at the city gate until morning.'

'In the morning, Jehu went out and stood before the people. He said to the people, 'You are innocent. Look, I made plans against my master. I killed him. But who killed all these sons of Ahab? You killed them! 'You should know that everything the Lord says will happen. And the Lord used Elijah to say these things about Ahab's family. Now the Lord has done the things he said he would do.'

"So Jehu killed all the people in Ahab's family living in Jezreel. Jehu killed all the important men, close friends, and priests. None of Ahab's people were left alive.

Jehu Kills Ahaziah's Relatives

"Jehu left Jezreel and went to Samaria. On the way, Jehu stopped at a place called Shepherd's Camp. He went to the house on the road to Beth-Eked, where the shepherds cut wool from their sheep. Jehu met with the relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah. Jehu said to them, 'Who are you?'

They answered, 'We are the relatives of Ahaziah, king of Judah. We have come down

to visit the king's children and the queen mother's* children.

"Then Jehu said to his men, 'Take them alive!'

Jehu's men captured Ahaziah's relatives alive. There were 42 people. Jehu killed them at the well near Beth-Eked. Jehu did not leave any person alive.

Jehu Meets Jehonadab

"After Jehu left there, he met Jehonadab son of Recab. Jehonadab was on his way to meet Jehu. Jehu greeted Jehonadab and said to him, 'Are you a faithful friend to me, as I am to you?'

Jehonadab answered, 'Yes, I am a faithful friend to you.'

Jehu said, 'If you are, then give me your hand.'

Then Jehu reached out and pulled Jehonadab up into the chariot.*

"Jehu said, 'Come with me. You can see how strong my feelings are for the Lord.'

So Jehonadab rode in Jehu's chariot.* Jehu came to Samaria and killed all Ahab's family that were still alive in Samaria. Jehu killed them all. Jehu did the things that the Lord had told Elijah.

Jehu Calls the Worshipers of Baal

"Then Jehu gathered all the people together. Jehu said to them, 'Ahab served Baal a little. But Jehu will serve Baal much! 'Now call together all the priests and prophets of Baal. And call together all the people that worship Baal. Don't let any person miss this meeting. I have a great sacrifice to give to Baal. I will kill any person that doesn't come to this meeting!'

But Jehu was tricking them. Jehu wanted to destroy the worshipers of Baal. Jehu said, 'Prepare a holy meeting for Baal.' And the priests announced the meeting. Then Jehu sent a message through all the land of Israel.

queen mother The mother of the king.
Are you a faithful friend ... you? Literally, "Is your heart true to me? My heart is true to your heart."
chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

All the worshipers of Baal came. There was not a person that stayed home. The Baal worshipers came into the temple* of Baal. The temple was filled with people.

²²Jehu said to the man that kept the robes, "Bring out the robes for all the worshipers of Baal." So that man brought out the robes for the Baal worshipers.

²³Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Recab went into the temple* of Baal. Jehu said to the worshipers of Baal, "Look around and be sure that there are no servants of the Lord with you. Be sure there are only people that worship Baal." ²⁴The worshipers of Baal went into the temple of Baal to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

But outside, Jehu had 80 men waiting. Jehu told them, "Don't let any of the people escape. If any man lets one person escape, then that man must pay with his own life."

²⁵Quickly after Jehu had finished offering the burnt offering, he said to the guards and to the captains, "Go in and kill the worshipers of Baal! Don't let any person come out of the temple alive!"

So the captains used thin swords and killed the worshipers of Baal. The guards and the captains threw the bodies of the worshipers of Baal out. Then the guards and the captains went to the inner room* of the temple* of Baal. ²⁶They brought out the memorial stones* that were in the temple of Baal and burned the temple. ²⁷Then they smashed the memorial stones of Baal. They also smashed the temple of Baal. They made the temple of Baal into a cesspool. It is still used for that even today.

²⁸So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. ²⁹But Jehu did not completely turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehu did not destroy the golden calves in Bethel and in Dan.

Jehu's Rule Over Israel

³⁰The Lord said to Jehu, "You have done well. You have done the things that I say are good. You destroyed Ahab's family the way I wanted you to. So your descendants* will rule Israel for four generations."

³¹But Jehu was not careful to live in the law of the Lord with all his heart. Jehu did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin.

Hazael Defeats Israel

³²At that time, the Lord began to cut parts from Israel. Hazael king of Aram defeated the Israelites on every border of Israel. ³³Hazael won the land east of the Jordan River—all the land of Gilead, including the land that belonged to the family groups of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh. Hazael won all the land from Aroer by the Arnon Valley to Gilead and Bashan.

The Death of Jehu

³⁴All the other great things that Jehu did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ³⁵Jehu died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Jehu in Samaria. Jehu's son Jehoahaz became the new king of Israel after him. ³⁶Jehu ruled over Israel in Samaria for 28 years.

Athaliah Destroys All the King's Sons in Judah

11 Ahaziah's mother Athaliah saw that her son was dead. Then she got up and killed all the king's family.

¹Jehosheba was King Joram's daughter and Ahaziah's sister. Joash was one of the king's sons. Jehosheba took Joash while the other children were being killed. Jehosheba hid Joash. She put Joash and his nurse in her bedroom. So Jehosheba and the nurse hid Joash from Athaliah. That way Joash was not killed.

***temple** Here this means the building where people went to worship Baal.

***inner room** Literally, "The city of the temple of Baal."

***memorial stones** Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

***descendants** A person's children and all of their future families.

***ancestors** Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

³Then Joash and Jehosheba hid in the Lord's temple.* Joash hid there for six years. And Athaliah ruled over the land of Judah.

⁴In the seventh year, Jehoiada, the high priest, sent and got the captains of the Carites and guards.* Jehoiada brought them together in the Lord's temple.* Then Jehoiada made an agreement with them. In the temple Jehoiada forced them to make a promise. Then he showed the king's son (*Joash*) to them.

⁵Then Jehoiada gave them a command. He said, "This is the thing you must do. One-third of you must come in at the start of each Sabbath day. You men will protect the king at his house. ⁶Another third of you will be at the Sur Gate. And another third will be at the gate behind the guard. This way you will be like a wall protecting Joash. ⁷At the end of each Sabbath day, two-thirds of you will guard the Lord's temple and protect King Joash. ⁸You must stay with King Joash any time he goes any place. The whole group must surround the king. Each guard must have his weapon in his hand. And you must kill any person that comes too close to you."

⁹The captains obeyed all the things that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each captain took his men. One group was to guard the king on Saturday. And the other groups were to guard the king during the rest of the week. All those men went to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰And the priest gave spears and shields to the captains. These were the spears and shields David put in the Lord's temple.* ¹¹These guards* stood with their weapons in their hands from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple. They stood around the altar* and the temple and around the king when he went to the temple. ¹²These men brought out Joash. They put the crown on Joash and give him the agreement between the king and God.*

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

guards Literally, "runners" or "messengers."

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God

agreement ... God This was probably the promise the king made to serve God. See verse 17 and 1 Sam. 10:25.

Then they anointed* him and made him the new king. They clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

¹³Queen Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people. So she went to the people at the Lord's temple. ¹⁴Athaliah saw the king by the column where the king usually stood. She also saw the leaders and men playing the trumpets for the king. She saw that all the people were very happy. She heard the trumpets, and she tore her clothes to show she was upset. Then Athaliah shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

¹⁵Jehoiada the priest gave a command to the captains that were in charge of the soldiers. Jehoiada told them, "Take Athaliah outside of the temple area. Kill any of her followers. But don't kill them in the Lord's temple."

¹⁶So the soldiers grabbed her and led her to the gate of the temple named "Horse Gate." The soldiers killed Athaliah there.

¹⁷Then Jehoiada made the agreement between the Lord and the king and the people. This agreement showed that the king and the people belonged to the Lord. Jehoiada also made the agreement between the king and the people. This agreement showed what the king would do for the people. And it showed that the people would obey and follow the king.

¹⁸Then all the people went to the temple of the false god, Baal. The people destroyed the statue of Baal, and they destroyed his altars.* They broke them into many, many pieces. The people also killed Baal's priest, Mattan, in front of the altars.

So Jehoiada, the priest put men in charge of the Lord's temple. ¹⁹The priest led all the people. They went from the Lord's temple to the king's house. The king's special guards and the captains went with the king. And all the other people followed them. They went to the entrance to the king's house. Then King Joash sat on the throne. ²⁰All the people were happy. The city was peaceful. And Queen Athaliah was killed with a sword near the king's house.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

¹¹Joash* was seven years old when he became the king.

Joash Begins His Rule

12 Joash* began to rule during Jehu's seventh year as king of Israel. Joash ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. Joash's mother was named Zibiah of Beersheba. ²Joash did the things that the Lord said were right. Joash obeyed the Lord all his life. He did the things that Jehoiada the priest taught him. ³But he did not destroy the high places.* The people still made sacrifices and burned incense at those places of worship.

Joash Orders the Temple Repaired

⁴Joash* said to the priests, "There is much money in the Lord's temple. People have given things to the temple. People have paid the temple tax when they were counted. And people have given money simply because they wanted to. You priests should take that money and repair the Lord's temple. Each priest should use the money he gets from the people he serves. He should use that money to repair the damages to the Lord's temple."

⁶But the priests did not do the repairs. In the 23rd year that Joash* was king, the priests still had not repaired the temple. ⁷So king Joash* called for Jehoiada the priest and the other priests. Joash said to Jehoiada and the other priests, "Why haven't you repaired the temple? Stop taking money from the people you serve. Stop using that money. That money must be used to repair the temple."

⁸The priests agreed to stop taking money from the people. But they also decided not to repair the temple. ⁹So Jehoiada the priest took a box and made a hole in the top of it. Then Jehoiada put the box on the south side of the altar. This box was by the door where people came into the Lord's temple. Some of the priests guarded the doorway* of the temple.

Those priests took the money people had given to the Lord, and they put that money into that box.

¹⁰Then the people began putting money into that box when they went to the temple. Whenever the king's secretary and the high priest saw there was a lot of money in the box, they came and took the money from the box. They put the money in bags and counted it. ¹¹Then they paid the workers that worked on the Lord's temple. They paid the carpenters and other builders that worked on the Lord's temple. ¹²They used that money to pay the stoneworkers and stonecutters. And they used that money to buy timber, cut stone, and everything else to repair the Lord's temple.

¹³¹⁴People gave money for the Lord's temple. But the priests could not use that money to make silver cups, snuffers,* basins, trumpets, or any gold and silver dishes. That money was used to pay the workers. And those workers repaired the Lord's temple. ¹⁵No one counted all the money or forced the workers to tell what happened to the money. Why? Because those workers could be trusted!

¹⁶People gave money at the times they offered guilt offerings and sin offerings. But that money was not used to pay the workers. That money belonged to the priests.

Joash Saves Jerusalem from Hazael

¹⁷Hazael was the king of Aram. Hazael went to fight against the city of Gath. Hazael defeated Gath. Then he made plans to go fight against Jerusalem.

¹⁸Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah had been kings of Judah. They were Joash's* ancestors.* They had given many things to the Lord. Those things were kept in the temple. Joash also had given many things to the Lord. Joash took all those and all the gold that was in the temple and in his house. Then Joash sent all those expensive things to Hazael king of Aram.

Joash Or, "Jehoash," the long form of the name "Joash."

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

doorway Literally, "threshold."

snuffers They were like small cups used to put out lamps.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

So they met at Jerusalem. Hazael did not fight against the city.

The Death of Joash

"All the great things that Joash did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah.

"Joash's officers made plans against him. They killed Joash at the house of Millo on the road that goes down to Silla. Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer were Joash's officers. Those men killed Joash.

The people buried Joash with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Joash's son Amaziah became the new king after him.

Jehoahaz Begins His Rule

13 Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 23rd year that Joash son of Ahaziah was king in Judah. Jehoahaz ruled 17 years.

"Jehoahaz did those things the Lord said were wrong. Jehoahaz followed the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehoahaz did not stop doing those things. Then the Lord was angry against Israel. The Lord gave Israel into the power of Hazael king of Aram and Hazael's son Ben-Hadad.

The Lord Has Mercy on the People of Israel

"Then Jehoahaz begged the Lord to help them. And the Lord listened to him. The Lord had seen the troubles of Israel and how the king of Aram troubled the Israelites.

"So the Lord sent a man to save Israel. The Israelites were free from the Arameans. So the Israelites went to their own homes, like they did before.

"But the Israelites still did not stop doing the sins of the family of Jeroboam that caused Israel to sin. The Israelites continued doing the

sins of Jeroboam. They also kept the Asherah poles* in Samaria.

"The king of Aram defeated Jehoahaz's army. The king of Aram destroyed most of the men in the army. He left only 50 horse soldiers, 10 chariots,* and 10,000 foot soldiers. Jehoahaz's soldiers were like chaff* blown away by the wind at the time of threshing.*

"All the great things that Jehoahaz did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. Jehoahaz died, and was buried with his ancestors*. The people buried Jehoahaz in Samaria. Jehoahaz's son Jehoash* became the new king after him.

Jehoash's Rule Over Israel

"Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria. This was during the 37th year that Joash was king of Judah. Jehoash ruled Israel for 16 years. Jehoash king of Israel did the things the Lord said were wrong. He did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. Jehoash continued to do those sins. All the great things that Jehoash did and his wars against Amaziah king of Judah are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. Jehoash* died and, was buried with his ancestors.* Jeroboam became the new king and, sat on Jehoash's throne. Jehoash* was buried at Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Jehoash Visits Elisha

"Elisha became sick. Later, Elisha died from this sickness. Jehoash,* king of Israel, went to visit Elisha. Jehoash cried for Elisha. Jehoash said, "My father, my father! Is it time for the chariots of Israel and its horses*?"

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshipped.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls from the grain.

Jehoash Or, "Joash," the short form of the name "Jehoash."

chariots ... horses This means, "Is it time for God to come and take you? See 1 Kings 2:12.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

¹¹Elisha said to Jehoash, "Take a bow and some arrows."

Jehoash took a bow and some arrows. ¹²Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." Jehoash put his hand on the bow. Then Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. ¹³Elisha said, "Open the east window." Jehoash opened the window. Then Elisha said, "Shoot."

Jehoash shot. Then Elisha said, "That is the Lord's arrow of victory! The arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek. And you will destroy them."

¹⁴Elisha said, "Take the arrows." Jehoash took the arrows. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Hit on the ground."

Jehoash hit the ground three times. Then he stopped. ¹⁵The man of God* (*Elisha*) was angry at Jehoash. Elisha said, "You should have hit five or six times! Then you would have defeated Aram until you destroyed it! But now, you will defeat Aram only three times!"

An Amazing Thing Happens at Elisha's Grave

¹⁶Elisha died, and the people buried him.

One time in the spring, a group of Moabite soldiers came to Israel. They came to take things in war. ¹⁷Some Israelites were burying a dead man, and they saw that group of soldiers. The Israelites quickly threw the dead man into Elisha's grave and ran away. As soon as the dead man touched the bones of Elisha, the dead man came back to life and stood up on his feet!

Jehoash Wins Back Cities of Israel from the Arameans

¹⁸During all the days that Jehoahaz ruled, Hazael king of Aram caused trouble to Israel. ¹⁹But the Lord was kind to the Israelites. The Lord had mercy and turned to the Israelites. Why? Because of his Agreement with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Lord would not destroy the Israelites. He did not throw them away yet.

²⁰Hazael king of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad became the new king after him. ²¹Before he died, Hazael had taken some cities in war from Jehoahaz, Jehoash's father. But now Jehoash took back these cities from Hazael's son Ben-Hadad. Jehoash* defeated Ben-Hadad three times and took back the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Begins His Rule in Judah

14 Amaziah son of Joash* king of Judah became king in the second year that Joash son of Jehoahaz was king of Israel. ²Amaziah was 25 years old when he began to rule. Amaziah ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. Amaziah's mother was Jehoaddin from Jerusalem. ³Amaziah did the things the Lord said were right. But he did not follow God completely like David his ancestor.* Amaziah did all the things that Joash his father had done. ⁴He did not destroy the high places.* The people still sacrificed and burned incense* in those places of worship.

⁵At the time that Amaziah had strong control of the kingdom, he killed the officers that had killed his father. ⁶But he did not kill the children of the murderers because of the rules written in the Book in the Law of Moses. The Lord gave this command in the Law of Moses: "Parents must not be put to death for something their children did. And children must not be put to death for something their parents did. A person should be put to death only for a bad thing that he himself did."*

⁷Amaziah killed 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. In war Amaziah took Sela and called it "Joktheel." That place is still called "Joktheel" today.

Jehoash Or, "Joash," the short form of the name "Jehoash."

Joash Or, "Jehoash," the long form of the name "Joash."

ancestor Literally, "father." This means a person that people are descended from.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

Parents ... did See Deut. 24:16.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Amaziah Wants War Against Jehoash

¹Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu king of Israel. Amaziah's message said, "Come, let us meet to fight each other!"*

²Jehoash king of Israel sent an answer to Amaziah king of Judah. Jehoash said, "The thorn bush in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar tree in Lebanon. It said, 'Give your daughter for my son to marry.' But a wild animal from Lebanon passed by and walked on the thorn bush. ³"True, you have defeated Edom. But, you have become proud because of your victory over Edom. But stay at home and brag! Don't make trouble for yourself. If you do this, you will fall, and Judah will fall with you!"

⁴But Amaziah would not listen to Jehoash's warning. So Jehoash king of Israel went to fight against Amaziah king of Judah at Beth Shemesh in Judah.* ⁵Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran home. ⁶At Beth Shemesh, Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah. Jehoash took Amaziah to Jerusalem. Jehoash broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, about 600 feet.* ⁷Then Jehoash took all the gold and silver and all the dishes in the Lord's temple and in the treasures of the king's house. Jehoash also took people to be his prisoners. Then he went back to Samaria.

⁸All the great things that Jehoash did, including how he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ⁹Jehoash died and, was buried with his ancestors.* Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Jehoash's son Jeroboam became the new king after him.

Come ... other Literally, "Come, let us look at each other's face."

Jehoash ... Judah Literally, "He and Amaziah king of Judah looked at each other in the face at Beth Shemesh which is in Judah."

about 600 feet Literally, "400 cubits."

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The Death of Amaziah

¹⁰Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. ¹¹All the great things that Amaziah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. ¹²The people made a plan against Amaziah in Jerusalem. Amaziah ran away to Lachish. But the people sent men after Amaziah to Lachish. And those men killed Amaziah in Lachish. ¹³The people brought Amaziah's body back on horses. Amaziah was buried at Jerusalem with his ancestors* in the City of David.*

Azariah Begins His Rule Over Judah

¹⁴Then all the people of Judah made Azariah the new king. Azariah was 16 years old. ¹⁵So King Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.* Then Azariah built Elath again and gave it back to Judah.

Jeroboam II Begins His Rule Over Israel

¹⁶Jeroboam son of Jehoash* king of Israel began to rule in Samaria during the 15th year that Amaziah son of Joash was king of Judah. Jeroboam ruled 41 years. ¹⁷Jeroboam did the things the Lord said were wrong. Jeroboam did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin. ¹⁸Jeroboam took back Israel's land which ran from the Lebo-Hamath to the Arabah Sea.* This happened like the Lord of Israel had told his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher. ¹⁹The Lord saw that all the Israelites had many troubles, slaves and free men. No person was left that could help Israel. ²⁰The Lord did not say that he would take away the name of Israel from the world. So the Lord used Jeroboam son of Jehoash* to save the people of Israel.

²¹All the great things that Jeroboam did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. This includes the story about

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Jehoash Or, "Joash," the short form of the name "Jehoash"

Arabah Sea The Dead Sea.

Jeroboam winning back Damascus and Hamath for Israel. (These cities had belonged to Judah.)

²⁹Jeroboam died and, was buried with his ancestors*, the kings of Israel. Jeroboam's son Zechariah became the new king after him.

Azariah's Rule Over Judah

15 Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah became king in the 27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel. ²Azariah was 16 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. Azariah's mother was named Jecoliah of Jerusalem. ³Azariah did the things that the Lord said were right, just like his father Amaziah. Azariah followed all the things his father Amaziah did. ⁴He did not destroy the high places.* People still made sacrifices and burned incense* in these places of worship.

⁵The Lord caused King Azariah to become sick with leprosy.* He was a leper until the day he died. Azariah lived in a separate house. Jotham, the king's son, took care of the king's house and judged the people.

⁶All the great things that Azariah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. ⁷Azariah died and, was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Azariah's son Jotham became the new king after him.

Zechariah's Short Rule Over Israel

¹Zechariah son of Jeroboam ruled over Samaria in Israel for six months. This was during the 38th year that Azariah was king of Judah. ²Zechariah did the things the Lord said were wrong. He did the same things his ancestors* did. He did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

⁹Shallum son of Jabesh made plans against Zechariah. Shallum killed Zechariah in Ibleam. Shallum became the new king after him. ¹⁰All the other things that Zechariah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ¹¹In this way the Lord's word came true. The Lord had told Jehu that four generations of his descendants* would be kings of Israel.

Shallum's Short Rule Over Israel

¹Shallum son of Jabesh became king of Israel, during the 39th year that Uziah was king of Judah. Shallum ruled for one month in Samaria.

²Menahem son of Gad came up from Tirzah to Samaria. Menahem killed Shallum son of Jabesh. Then Menahem became the new king after him.

³All the things Shallum did, including his plans against Zechariah, are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

Menahem's Rule Over Israel

⁴After Shallum died, Menahem defeated Tiphshah and the area around it. The people refused to open the city gate, for him. So Menahem defeated them and ripped open all the pregnant women in that city.

⁵Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel during the 39th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Menahem ruled ten years in Samaria. ⁶Menahem did the things the Lord said were wrong. Menahem did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

⁷Pul king of Assyria came to fight against Israel. Menahem gave Pul 75,000 pounds* of silver. He did this so Pul would support Menahem and make Menahem's kingdom stronger. ⁸Menahem raised the money by making all the rich and powerful men pay taxes. Menahem taxed each man 20 ounces* of silver. Then Menahem gave the money to the

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

75,000 pounds Literally, "1,000 talents."

20 ounces Literally, "50 shekels."

king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria left, and did not stay there in Israel.

²¹All the great things that Menahem did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel. ²²Menahem died and, was buried with his ancestors.* Menahem's son Pekahiah became the new king after him.

Pekahiah's Rule Over Israel

²³Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria during the 50th year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekahiah ruled two years. ²⁴Pekahiah did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Pekahiah did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

²⁵The commander of Pekahiah's army was Pekah son of Remaliah. Pekah killed Pekahiah. He killed him in Samaria at the king's palace.* Pekah had 50 men from Gilead with him when he killed Pekahiah. Then Pekah became the new king after him.

²⁶All the great things Pekahiah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

Pekah's Rule Over Israel

²⁷Pekah son of Remaliah began to rule over Israel in Samaria during the 52nd year that Azariah was king of Judah. Pekah ruled 20 years. ²⁸Pekah did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Pekah did not stop doing the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat that caused Israel to sin.

²⁹Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to fight against Israel. This was during the time that Pekah was king of Israel. Tiglath-Pileser captured Ijon, Abel-Bethmaacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, Galilee, and all the area of Naphtali. Tiglath-Pileser took the people from these places as prisoners to Assyria.

³⁰Hoshea son of Elah made plans against Pekah son of Remaliah. Hoshea killed Pekah.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

Then Hoshea became the new king after Pekah. This was during the 20th year that Jotham son of Uzziah was king of Judah.

³¹All the great things that Pekah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

Jotham Rules Over Judah

³²Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. This was during the second year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel.

³³Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. Jotham ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Jotham's mother was named Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴Jotham did the things the Lord said were right, just like his father Uzziah. ³⁵But he did not destroy the high places.* The people still made sacrifices and burned incense* at those places of worship. Jotham built the upper gate of the Lord's temple.* ³⁶All the great things that Jotham did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah.

³⁷At that time, the Lord sent Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah to fight against Judah.

³⁸Jotham died and, was buried with his ancestors.* Jotham was buried in the City of David* his ancestor.* Jotham's son Ahaz became the new king after him.

Ahaz Becomes King Over Judah

16 Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah during the 17th year that Pekah son of Remaliah was king of Israel. ²Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. Ahaz ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Ahaz did not do the things the Lord said were right. He did not obey God like his ancestor* David. ³Ahaz lived

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

ancestor Literally, "father." This means a person that people are descended from.

like the kings of Israel. He even sacrificed his son in fire.* He copied the terrible sins of the nations that the Lord forced to leave the country at the time the Israelites came. 'Ahaz made sacrifices and burned incense* at the high places* and on the hills and under every green tree.

⁷Rezin, king of Aram, and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came to fight against Jerusalem. Rezin and Pekah surrounded Ahaz, but could not defeat him. 'At that time, Rezin king of Aram took back Elath for Aram. Rezin took all the people of Judah that were living in Elath. The Arameans settled in Elath, and they still live there today.

⁷Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. The message was: "I am your servant. I am like a son to you. Come and save me from the king of Aram and the king of Israel. They have come to fight me!" 'Ahaz also took the silver and gold that was in the temple* of the Lord and in the treasuries of the king's house. Then Ahaz sent a gift to the king of Assyria. 'The king of Assyria listened to Ahaz. The king of Assyria went to fight against Damascus. The king captured that city and took the people from Damascus as prisoners to Kir. He also killed Rezin.

¹⁰King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. Ahaz saw the altar* at Damascus. King Ahaz sent a model and pattern of this altar to Uriah the priest. ¹¹Then Uriah the priest built an altar just like the model King Ahaz had sent him from Damascus. Uriah the priest built the altar this way before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.

sacrificed ... fire Literally, "made his son to pass through the fire."

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

¹²When the King arrived from Damascus, he saw the altar.* He offered sacrifices on the altar. ¹³On the altar, Ahaz burned his burnt offerings and grain offerings. He poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his fellowship offerings on this altar.

¹⁴Ahaz took the bronze altar which was before the Lord from the front of the temple. This bronze altar was between Ahaz's altar and the temple of the Lord. Ahaz put the bronze altar on the north side of his own altar. ¹⁵Ahaz gave a command to Uriah the priest. He said, "Use the large altar to burn the morning burnt offerings, the evening grain offerings, and drink offerings from all the people of this country. Sprinkle all the blood of the burnt offering and sacrifices on the large altar. But I will use the bronze altar to ask questions from God." ¹⁶Uriah the priest did everything that King Ahaz commanded him to do.

¹⁷Then King Ahaz cut up the carts and took the panels from them. He took the washing bowls off the carts. He also took the large tank off the bronze cows that stood under it. He put the large tank on a stone pavement. ¹⁸Ahaz took away the covered place for the Sabbath. The workers had built this inside the temple.* Ahaz also took away the outside entrance for the king. Ahaz took all of these from the Lord's temple and gave them to, the king of Assyria.

¹⁹All the great things that Ahaz did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. ²⁰Ahaz died and, was buried with his ancestors* in the City of David.* Ahaz's son Hezekiah became the new king after him.

Hoshea Begins His Rule Over Israel

17 Hoshea son of Elah began to rule in Samaria over Israel. This was during the 12th year that Ahaz was king of Judah. Hoshea ruled nine years. ²Hoshea did the things the Lord said were wrong. But Hoshea was not as bad as the kings of Israel that ruled before him.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

¹Shalmaneser king of Assyria came to fight against Hoshea. Hoshea became Shalmaneser servant. Hoshea paid tribute* to Shalmaneser.

²But the king of Assyria learned that Hoshea had made plans against him. Hoshea had sent messengers to the king of Egypt. The king of Egypt was named So. That year, Hoshea did not pay tribute* to the king of Assyria like he did every other year. So the king of Assyria arrested Hoshea and put him in jail.

³Then the king of Assyria traveled through Israel. He arrived at Samaria. He fought against Samaria for three years. ⁴The king of Assyria took Samaria during the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel. The king of Assyria took the Israelites as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah, on the Habor (the river of Gozan), and in the cities of the Medes. ⁵These things happened because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God.

The Lord had brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt from the rule of Pharaoh king of Egypt. But the Israelites began worshiping other gods. ⁶They began doing the same things that other people did. And the Lord had forced those people to leave their land when the Israelites came. The Israelites also chose to be ruled by kings, not by God. ⁷The Israelites secretly did things against the Lord their God. And those things were wrong!

The Israelites built high places* in all their cities—from the smallest town to the largest city. ⁸The Israelites put up memorial stones* and Asherah poles* on every high hill and under every green tree. ⁹The Israelites burned incense* there in all those places of worship. They did these things like the nations that the Lord forced out of the land before them. The

Israelites did evil things that made the Lord angry. ¹⁰They served idols.* And the Lord had said to the Israelites, "You must not do this thing."

¹¹The Lord used every prophet and every seer* to warn Israel and Judah. The Lord said, "Turn away from the evil things you do! Obey my commands and laws. Follow all the Law that I gave to your ancestors.* I used my servants the prophets to give this law to you."

¹²But the people would not listen. They were very stubborn like their ancestors.* Their ancestors did not believe the Lord their God. ¹³The people refused the Lord's laws and his Agreement that he made with their ancestors. They refused to listen to the Lord's warnings. They followed worthless idols and became nothing. They followed the nations around them. These nations did the things that the Lord warned the people of Israel not to do.

¹⁴The people stopped following the commands of the Lord their God. They made two gold statues of calves. They made Asherah poles.* They worshiped all the stars of heaven and served Baal.* ¹⁵They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They used magic and witchcraft* to try to learn the future. They sold themselves to do what the Lord said was evil to make the Lord angry. ¹⁶So the Lord became very angry at Israel and took them out of his sight. There were no Israelites left, except the family group of Judah!

The People of Judah Are Also Guilty

¹⁷But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of the Lord their God. The people of Judah lived just like the people of Israel.

tribute Money paid to a foreign king or nation to pay for being protected.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

seer A kind of prophet, a person that spoke for God. This word shows the prophet saw things in visions.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

witchcraft Using magic or the power of Satan to do things.

"The Lord rejected all the people of Israel. He brought them many troubles. He let people destroy them. And, finally, he threw them away and put them out of his sight. "The Lord tore Israel from the family of David, and the Israelites made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam pulled the Israelites away from following the Lord. Jeroboam caused the Israelites to do a great sin. "So the Israelites followed all the sins that Jeroboam did. They did not stop doing these sins "until the Lord took Israel away from his sight. And the Lord said this would happen! He sent his prophets to tell the people this would happen. So the Israelites were taken out of their country into Assyria. And they have been there to this day.

The Beginning of the Samaritan People

"The king of Assyria took the Israelites out of Samaria. Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. He put those people in Samaria. Those people took over Samaria and lived in the cities around it. "When these people began to live in Samaria, they did not honor the Lord. So the Lord sent lions to attack them. These lions killed some of those people. "Some people said to the king of Assyria, "Those people that you took away and put in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the god of that country. So that god sent lions to attack those people. The lions killed those people because those people don't know the law of the god of that country."

"So the king of Assyria gave this command: "You took some priests from Samaria. Send one of those priests that I captured back to Samaria. Let that priest go and live there. Then that priest can teach the people the law of the god of that country."

"So one of the priests that the Assyrians had carried away from Samaria came to live in Bethel. This priest taught the people how they should honor the Lord.

"But all those people made gods of their own and put them in the temples at the high

places* the Samaritans had made. Those people did this wherever they lived. "The people of Babylon made the false God, Succoth Benoth. The people of Cuthah made the false god, Nergal. The people of Hamath made the false god, Ashima. "The Avvites made the false gods, Nibhaz and Tartak. And the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to honor Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

"But those people also respected the Lord. They chose priests for the high places* from among the people. These priests made sacrifices for the people in the temples at those places of worship. "They respected the Lord, but they also served their own gods. Those people served their gods the same as they did in the countries they were taken from.

"Even today those people live like they did in the past. They do not honor the Lord. They do not obey the rules and commands of the Israelites. They do not obey the Law or the commands which the Lord gave to the children of Jacob (Israel). "The Lord made an Agreement with the people of Israel. The Lord commanded them, "You must not honor other gods. You must not worship them, or serve them, or offer sacrifices to them. "But you must follow the Lord. The Lord is the God that brought you out of Egypt. The Lord used his great power to save you. You must worship the Lord and make sacrifices to him. "You must obey the rules, laws, teachings, and commands that he wrote for you. You must obey these things all the time. You must not respect other gods. "You must not forget the Agreement that I made with you. You must not respect other gods. "No! You respect only the Lord your God! Then he will save you from all your enemies."

"But the Israelites did not listen. They kept on doing the same things they did before. "So now those other nations respect the Lord, but they also serve their own idols. Their children and grandchildren do the same thing their

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

ancestors* did. They still do those things to this day.

Hezekiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

18 Hezekiah son of Ahaz was king of Judah. Hezekiah began to rule during the third year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel. ¹Hezekiah was 25 years old when he began to rule. Hezekiah ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah.

²Hezekiah did the things the Lord said were right, just like David his ancestor.*

³Hezekiah destroyed the high places.* He broke the memorial stones* and cut down the Asherah poles.* At that time, the people of Israel burned incense* to the bronze snake made by Moses. This bronze snake was called "Nehushtan.*" Hezekiah broke this bronze snake into pieces because the people were worshipping that snake*.

⁴Hezekiah trusted in the Lord God of Israel. There was no person like Hezekiah among all the kings of Judah before him or after him. ⁵Hezekiah was very faithful to the Lord. He did not stop following the Lord. He obeyed the commands which the Lord had given to Moses. ⁶The Lord was with Hezekiah. Hezekiah was successful in everything he did.

Hezekiah broke away from the king of Assyria. Hezekiah stopped serving the king of Assyria. ⁸Hezekiah defeated the Philistines all the way to Gaza and the area around it. He defeated all the Philistine cities—from the smallest town to the largest city.

ancestor(s) Literally, "father(s)." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshipped.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Nehushtan This Hebrew name is like the words meaning "bronze" and "snake."

The Assyrians Capture Samaria

⁹Shalmaneser king of Assyria went to fight against Samaria. His army surrounded the city. (This happened during the fourth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the seventh year that Hoshea son of Elah was king of Israel.) ¹⁰After three years, Shalmaneser captured Samaria. He took Samaria during the sixth year that Hezekiah was king of Judah. (This was also the ninth year that Hoshea was king of Israel.) ¹¹The king of Assyria took the Israelites as prisoners to Assyria. He made them live in Halah, on the Habor (the river of Gozan), and in the cities of the Medes. ¹²This happened because the Israelites did not obey the Lord their God. They broke the Lord's Agreement. They did not obey all the things that Moses the Lord's servant commanded. The people of Israel would not listen to the Lord's Agreement, or do the things it taught them to do.

Assyria Gets Ready to Take Judah

¹³During the 14th year that Hezekiah was king, Sennacherib king of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated all those cities. ¹⁴Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent a message to the king of Assyria at Lachish. Hezekiah said, "I have done wrong. Leave me alone. Then I will pay anything you want."

Then the king of Assyria told Hezekiah king of Judah to pay over 11 tons* of silver and over 1 ton* of gold. ¹⁵Hezekiah gave all the silver that was in the Lord's temple* and in the king's treasuries. ¹⁶At this time, Hezekiah cut off the gold that covered the doors of the Lord's temple and the doorposts. King Hezekiah had put gold on these doors and doorposts. Hezekiah gave this gold to the king of Assyria.

11 tons Literally, "300 talents."

1 ton Literally, "30 talents."

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

The King of Assyria Sends Men to Jerusalem

¹⁷The king of Assyria sent his three most important commanders with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. Those men left Lachish and went to Jerusalem. They stood near the aquaduct* by the Upper Pool. (The Upper Pool is on the road to the Washers' Field.) ¹⁸These men called for the king. Eliakim son of Hilkiah (Eliakim was in charge of the king's house), Shebna (the secretary), and Joah son of Asaph (the record keeper) came out to meet them.

¹⁹One of the commanders said to them, "Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says:

What do you trust in? ²⁰You only say words that are nothing.* You say, "I have enough advice and power to help me in war." But who do you trust since you have broken away from my rule?

²¹You are leaning on a walking stick made of broken reed! This walking stick is Egypt. If a man leans on this walking stick, it will break and, go through his hand and hurt him! The king of Egypt is like that to all people that trust in him. ²²Maybe you will say, "We trust the Lord our God." But I know that Hezekiah took away the Lord's high places* and altars* and told Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship only in front of the altar in Jerusalem."

²³Now make this agreement with my master, the king of Assyria. I promise that I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find men to ride them. ²⁴You can't defeat one officer of the lowest of my master's officers! You depend on Egypt

to give you chariots* and horse soldiers!

²⁵I have not come against Jerusalem to destroy it without the Lord! The Lord said to me, "Go up against this country and destroy it!"

²⁶Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, "Please speak to us in Aramaic. We understand that language. Do not speak with us in the language of Judah because the people on the wall can hear us!"

²⁷But Rabshakeh said to them, "My lord did not send me to speak only to you and your king.* I also speak to the other people that sit on the wall! They will eat their own dung and drink their own urine with you!"

²⁸Then the commander shouted loudly in the Jewish language, "Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹The king says, 'Don't let Hezekiah fool you! He can't save you from my power!' ³⁰Don't let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord! Hezekiah says, 'The Lord will save us! The king of Assyria will not defeat this city!' ³¹But don't listen to Hezekiah!

"The king of Assyria says this: 'Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you can eat from his own grapes, his own fig tree, and drink water from his own well. ³²You can do this until I come and take you away to a land like your own land. It is a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and fields full of grapes, a land of olives and honey. Then you can live, and not die. But don't listen to Hezekiah! He is trying to change your mind. He is saying, 'The Lord will save us.' ³³Did any of the gods of the other nations save his land from the king of Assyria? No! ³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did

aquaduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another.

words ... nothing Literally, "a word of the lips."

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

because the people ... hear us They did not want the people of Jerusalem that sat on the city wall to understand the terrible things that the commander was saying.

king Literally, "master."

eat ... you The Assyrian army planned to surround Jerusalem and not let people bring any food or water into the city. He thought the people would become hungry enough to eat their own waste.

they save Samaria from me? No! "Did any of the gods in the other countries save their land from me? No! Can the Lord save Jerusalem from me? No!"

*But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander because King Hezekiah had given them a command. He said, "Don't say anything to him."

"Eliakim son of Hilkiah (Eliakim was in charge of the king's house), Shebna (the secretary), and Joah son of Asaph (the record keeper) came to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah the things that the Assyrian commander had said.

Hezekiah Sends His Officers to Isaiah the Prophet

19 King Hezekiah heard those things, and he tore his clothes and put on the rough cloth that showed he was sad and upset. Then he went into the Lord's temple.*

"Hezekiah sent Eliakim (Eliakim was in charge of the king's house), Shebna (the secretary), and the elders of the priests to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the rough cloth that showed they were sad and upset. "They said to Isaiah, "Hezekiah says, "This is a day of trouble, a day to show we are wrong. It is like the time for babies to be born, but there is no strength to give birth to them. "The commander's master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the Lord your God will hear all those things. Maybe the Lord will prove the enemy is wrong! So pray for the people that are still left alive."

"King Hezekiah's officers went to Isaiah. "Isaiah said to them, "Give your master Hezekiah this message: 'The Lord says: Don't be afraid of the things that the officers of the king of Assyria have said to make fun of me. 'I am putting a spirit in him. He will hear a rumor. Then he will run back to his own

country. And I will cause him to be killed by a sword in his own country.'"

The King of Assyria Warns Hezekiah Again

"The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. So the commander found his king fighting against Libnah.*

"The king of Assyria heard a rumor about Tirhakah king of Ethiopia. The rumor said, "Tirhakah has come to fight against you!"

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again. The king of Assyria gave a message to these messengers. He said these things: "Say this to Hezekiah king of Judah: "Don't let the God that you trust fool you. He says, 'The king of Assyria will not defeat Jerusalem!' "You have heard the things the kings of Assyria have done to all the other countries. We destroyed them completely! Will you be saved? No! "The gods of those nations did not save their people. My ancestors* destroyed them all. They destroyed Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people of Eden in Tel Assar! "Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah? "They are all finished!"

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

"Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then Hezekiah went up to the Lord's temple* and laid the letters out in front of the Lord. "Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, "Lord, the God of Israel who sits as King above the Cherub angels.* You are the God—you alone—of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth! "Lord, please listen to me. Lord, open your eyes, and see this letter. Hear the words that Sennacherib sent to insult the living God! "It is true, Lord. The kings of

Libnah A town in Judah.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Assyria did destroy all those nations! ¹⁴They did throw the gods of the nations into the fire. But those were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that men made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. ¹⁵So now, Lord our God, save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the kingdoms on earth will know that you, Lord, are the only God.”

¹⁶Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah. He said, “The Lord God of Israel says this, ‘You have prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria. I have heard you.’

¹⁷“This is the Lord’s message about Sennacherib:

The virgin daughter of Zion (*Jerusalem*)
hates you;

She makes fun of you.

The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her
head behind your back.

¹⁸ Who did you insult and make fun of?

Who did you speak against?

You acted like you were better than
him!

You were against the Holy One of
Israel!

¹⁹ You used your messengers to insult the
Lord.

You said,

“I came with my many chariots* to the
high mountains.

I came deep inside Lebanon.

I cut down the tallest cedar trees of
Lebanon,

and the best fir trees of Lebanon.

I entered into Lebanon’s highest,
deepest forest.

²⁰ I dug wells, and drank water from new
places.

I dried up the rivers of Egypt
and walked on that country.”

²¹ But haven’t you heard?

I (*God*) planned it long ago;
from very old times I planned it.

And now, I make it happen.

I let, you change strong cities to piles of
rocks.

²² The people living in the cities had no
power.

Those people were scared and
confused.

The people were like the grass of the
field;

Like the green plants;

Like the grass on the housetops that
dies.

²³ You get up and sit down in front of me.
And I know when you come in and go
out.

And I know when you make yourself
turn against me.

²⁴ You turned against me.

I heard your proud insults.

So I will put my hook in your nose,

And I will put my bit* in your mouth.

Then I will turn you back and make
you leave the way you came.”

The Lord’s Message for Hezekiah

²⁵“This will be the sign to prove I will help
you: This year you will eat the grain that
grows by itself. Next year you will eat the grain
that comes up from that seed. But in the third
year you will gather the grain you planted. You
will plant fields of grapes and eat the grapes
from them. ²⁶The people that have escaped and
are left in the family of Judah will again begin
to grow. ²⁷Why? Because a few people will
remain alive. They will go out from Jerusalem.
People that have escaped will go out from
Mount Zion. The Lord’s strong feelings* will
do this.

²⁸So the Lord says this about the king of
Assyria:

He will not come into this city.

He will not shoot an arrow in this city.

He will not come against this city with

bit A piece of metal people put in a horse’s mouth to control
the horse.

strong feelings Or, “zeal” The Hebrew word means
strong feelings like zeal, jealousy, and love.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

shields.

He will not build up a hill of dirt to attack this city.

³³ He will go back the same way he came.

He will not come into this city.

The Lord says this!

³⁴ I will protect this city and save it.

I will do this for myself and for my servant David.

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

¹That night, the angel of the Lord went out and killed 185,000 people in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies.

²So Sennacherib king of Assyria left and went back to Nineveh where he stayed. ³One day Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple* of Nisroch, his god. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword. Then Adrammelech and Sharezer escaped into the land of Ararat.* And Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon became the new king after him.

Hezekiah Is Sick and Near Death

20 At that time, Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to Hezekiah. Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "The Lord says, 'Put your house in order, because you will die. You will not live!'"

¹Hezekiah turned his face to the wall.* He prayed to the Lord and said, ²"Lord, remember that I have truly served you with all my heart. I have done the things that you say are good." Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

³Before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, the word of the Lord came to him. The Lord said, ⁴"Go back and tell this to Hezekiah, the leader of my people: 'The Lord, the God of your ancestor* David says, "I have heard your

prayer and I have seen your tears. So I will hear you. On the third day, you will go up to the temple* of the Lord. ⁵And I will add 15 years to your life. I will save you and this city from the power of the king of Assyria. I will protect this city. I will do this for myself and because of the promise I made to my servant David.'"

⁶Then Isaiah said, "Make a mixture of figs* and put it on the sore place."

So they took the mixture of figs and put it on Hezekiah's sore place. Then Hezekiah got well.

The Sign that Showed Hezekiah Would Get Well

¹Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What will be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I will go up to the temple of the Lord on the third day?"

²Isaiah said, "Which do you want? Should the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?" This is the sign for you from the Lord to show that the Lord will do the thing he said he would do."

³Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten steps. No, make the shadow go back ten steps."

⁴Then Isaiah prayed to the Lord, and the Lord made the shadow move back ten steps. It went back on the steps that it had already been on.

Hezekiah Shows His Treasures to the Men from Babylon

¹At that time, Merodach-Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah. Merodach-Baladan did this because he heard Hezekiah had been sick. ²Hezekiah welcomed the men from Babylon, and showed them all the valuable things in his house. He showed him the silver, the gold, the spices, the expensive perfume, the weapons,

mixture of figs This was used like medicine.

the ... steps This may mean the steps of a special building outside that Hezekiah used like a clock. When the sun shone on the steps, the shadows showed what time of the day it was.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Ararat The ancient country of Urartu, an area in Eastern Turkey.

face ... wall This wall probably faced the temple.

ancestor Literally, "father." This means a person that people are descended from.

and everything in his treasuries. There was nothing in all Hezekiah's house and kingdom that he did not show them.

"Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from?"

Hezekiah said, "They came from a faraway country, from Babylon."

"Isaiah said, "What have they seen in your house?"

Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all the things in my house. There is nothing in all my treasuries that I did not show them."

"Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from the Lord. "The time is coming when all the things in your house and all the things your ancestors* have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left! The Lord says this. "The Babylonians will take your sons. And your sons will become eunuchs* in the palace of the king of Babylon."

"Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "This message from the Lord is good."

Hezekiah also said, "Fine, if there will be real peace during my lifetime!"

"All the great things that Hezekiah did, including his work on the pool and the aquaduct* to bring water into the city, are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. "Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors.* And Hezekiah's son Manasseh became the new king after him.

Manasseh Begins His Evil Rule Over Judah

21 Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to rule. He ruled 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hephzibah.

"Manasseh did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Manasseh did the terrible things the other nations did. (And the Lord forced

those nations to leave their country when the Israelites came.) "Manasseh built again the high places* that his father Hezekiah had destroyed. Manasseh also built altars* for Baal* and made an Asherah pole,* just like Ahab king of Israel. Manasseh worshiped and served the stars of heaven. "Manasseh built altars to honor false gods, in the Lord's temple. (This is the place the Lord was talking about when he said, "I will put my name in Jerusalem.") "Manasseh built altars for the stars of heaven in the two courtyards of the Lord's temple. "Manasseh sacrificed his son and burned him on the altar.* Manasseh used different ways of trying to know the future. He visited mediums* and wizards.*

Manasseh did more and more things that the Lord said were wrong. This caused the Lord to be angry. "Manasseh made a carved statue of Asherah.* He put this statue in the temple. The Lord had said to David and to David's son Solomon about this temple: "I have chosen Jerusalem from all the cities in Israel. I will put my name in the temple in Jerusalem forever. "I will not cause the people of Israel to leave the land which I gave to their ancestors.* I will let the people stay in their land if they obey all the things I commanded them and all the teachings that my servant Moses gave them." "But the people did not listen to God. Manasseh did more evil things than all the nations that lived in Canaan before Israel came., And the Lord destroyed those nations when the people of Israel came to take their land.,

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah pole These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

sacrificed ... altar Literally, "Made his son pass through the fire.

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

eunuchs Men that had their sexual organs removed. Often important officials of the king were eunuchs.

aquaduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another.

¹⁰The Lord used his servants the prophets to say these things: "Manasseh king of Judah has done these hated things and has done more evil than the Amorites before him. Manasseh also has caused Judah to sin because of his idols.*

¹¹So the Lord of Israel says, 'Look! I will bring so much trouble on Jerusalem and Judah that any person who hears about it will be shocked.* ¹²I will stretch the measuring line of Samaria* and the plumb bob* of Ahab's family over Jerusalem. A man wipes a dish, and then he turns it upside down. I will do that to Jerusalem. ¹³There will still be a few of my people left. But I will leave those people. I will give them to their enemies. Their enemies will take them prisoners—they will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. ¹⁴Why? Because my people did the things that I said were wrong. They have made me angry with them since the day their ancestors* came up out of Egypt. ¹⁵And Manasseh killed many innocent people. He filled Jerusalem from one end to another with blood. And all those sins are in addition to the sins that caused Judah to sin. Manasseh caused Judah to do the things that the Lord said were wrong."

¹⁶All the things that Manasseh did, including the sins that he did, are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. ¹⁷Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors.* Manasseh was buried in the Garden of Uzza. This garden was at his own house. Amon son of Manasseh became the new king after him.

Amon's Short Rule

¹Amon was 22 years old when he began to rule. He ruled two years in Jerusalem. His

mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz from Jotbah.

²Amon did the things the Lord said were wrong, just like his father Manasseh. ³Amon lived just like his father. Amon worshiped and served the same idols* his father did. ⁴Amon left the Lord, the God of his ancestors*, and did not live the way the Lord wanted.

⁵Amon's servants made plans against him, and killed him in his own house. ⁶The common people killed all the officers that made plans against King Amon. Then the people made Amon's son Josiah the new king after him.

⁷The other things that Amon did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. ⁸Amon was buried in his grave at the Garden of Uzza. Amon's son Josiah became the new king.

Josiah Begins His Rule Over Judah

22 Josiah was eight years old when he began to rule. He ruled 31 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. ²Josiah did the things that the Lord said were right. Josiah followed God like his ancestor* David. Josiah obeyed God's teachings—he didn't change any of them.*

Josiah Orders the Temple Repaired

¹During the 18th year that Josiah was king, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the Lord's temple.* Josiah said, "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest. He must get the money which the gate-keepers have gathered from the people. This money was brought into the temple of the Lord. ²Then the priests must give the money to the workers that supervise the work on the Lord's temple. The priests must use the money

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

will be shocked Literally, "both his ears will tingle."

measuring ... Samaria Workers used a string with a weight to mark a straight line at the end of a stone wall. The pieces of stone that were outside the line were chipped off and thrown away. This was like God "throwing away" Samaria and Ahab's family of kings.

plumb bob A weight, such as a piece of lead, used to keep a measuring line straight up.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

ancestor Literally, "father." This means a person that people are descended from.

Josiah obeyed ... them Literally, "Josiah did not turn to the right or to the left."

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

to pay the workers to repair the Lord's temple. "There are carpenters, stone masons, and stonecutters. Use the money to buy timber and cut stone to fix the temple. 'Don't count the money that you give to the workers. Those workers can be trusted."

The Book of the Law Is Found in the Temple

¹Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the Lord's temple!"² Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and Shaphan read it.

³Shaphan the secretary came to King Josiah and told him. Shaphan said, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was in the temple. They gave it to the workers that supervise the work on the Lord's temple."

⁴Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has also given a book to me." Then Shaphan read the book to the king.

⁵When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes to show he was upset.⁶ Then the king gave a command to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant. ⁷King Josiah said, "Go and ask the Lord what we should do. Ask the Lord for me, for the people, and for all Judah. Ask about the words of this book that was found. The Lord is angry at us. Why? Because our ancestors* did not listen to the words of this book. They did not do all the things written for us!"

Josiah Sends His Men to Huldah the Prophetess

¹"So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the woman prophet.* Huldah was the wife of

Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas. He took care of the priests' clothes. Huldah was living in Jerusalem in the second quarter. They went and talked with Huldah.

²Then Huldah said to them, "The Lord God of Israel says: Tell the man that sent you to me: ³"The Lord says this: I am bringing trouble on this place and on the people that live here. These are the troubles that are mentioned in the book that the king of Judah read. ⁴"The people of Judah have left me and have burned incense* to other gods. They made me very angry. They made many idols.* That is why I will show my anger against this place. My anger will be like a fire that can't be stopped!"

⁵¹⁹"Josiah, the king of Judah, sent you to ask advice from the Lord. Tell Josiah these things: 'The Lord God of Israel said the words that you heard. You heard the things I said about this place and the people that live here. Your heart was soft, and you felt sorry when you heard those things. I said that terrible things would happen to this place (*Jerusalem*). And you tore your clothes to show your sadness, and you began to cry. That is why I heard you.' The Lord says this. ²⁰"I will bring you to be with your ancestors.* You will die and go to your grave in peace. Your eyes will not see all the trouble that I am bringing on this place (*Jerusalem*).'"

Then Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah told the king.

The People Hear the Law

23 King Josiah told all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. ²Then the king went up to the Lord's temple. All the people of Judah and the people that lived in Jerusalem went with him. The priests, the prophets, and all the people—from the least important to the most important—went with him. Then he read the Book of the Agreement. This was the Book of the Law that was found in the Lord's temple. Josiah read the book so all the people could hear it.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

¹The king stood by the column and made an agreement with the Lord. He agreed to follow the Lord and to obey his commands, the Agreement, and his rules. He agreed to do this with all his heart and soul. He agreed to obey the Agreement written in this book. All the people stood to show they supported, the king's, agreement.

⁴Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the other priests, and the gatekeepers, to bring out of the Lord's temple* all the dishes and things that were made to honor Baal,* Asherah,* and the stars of heaven. Then Josiah burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron. Then they carried the ashes to Bethel.

⁵The kings of Judah had chosen some ordinary men to serve as priests. These men were not from the family of Aaron! Those false priests were burning incense* at the high places* in every city of Judah and all the towns around Jerusalem. They burned incense to honor Baal,* the sun, the moon, the constellations, and all the stars in the sky. But Hezekiah stopped those false priests.

⁶Josiah removed the Asherah Pole* from the Lord's temple.* He took the Asherah pole outside the city to the Kidron Valley and burned it there. Then he beat the burnt pieces into dust and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people.*

⁷Then King Josiah broke down the houses

of the male prostitutes* that were in the Lord's temple. Women also used those houses and made little tent covers to honor the false goddess Asherah.

⁸At that time, the priests did not bring the sacrifices to Jerusalem and offer them on the altar in the temple. The priests lived in cities all over Judah. And they burned incense* and offered sacrifices at the high places* in those cities. Those high places were everywhere, from Geba to Beersheba. And the priests ate their unleavened bread in those towns with the ordinary people—not at the special place for priests in the temple in Jerusalem. But King Josiah defiled (*ruined*) those high places and brought the priests to Jerusalem. Hezekiah also destroyed the high places that were on the left, by Joshua Gate. (Joshua was the ruler of the city.)

⁹Topheth was a place in the Valley of Hinnom's Son where people killed their children and burned them on an altar to honor the false god Molech.* Josiah defiled (*ruined*) that place so people could not use that place again. ¹⁰In the past, the kings of Judah had put some horses and a chariot* near the entrance to the Lord's temple. This was near the room of an important official named Nathan-Melech. The horses and chariot were to honor the sun god.* Josiah removed the horses and burned the chariot.

¹¹In the past, the kings of Judah had built altars on the roof of Ahab's building. King Manasseh had also built altars in the two courtyards of the Lord's temple. Josiah destroyed all those altars and threw the broken pieces into Kidron Valley.

¹²In the past, King Solomon built some high places* on Destroyer Hill near Jerusalem. The high places were on the south side of that hill. King Solomon built one of those places of

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

high place(s) Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Asherah Pole These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshipped.

scattered ... people This was a strong way of showing that the Asherah pole could never be used again.

male prostitutes Men who used their bodies for sexual sin.

people ... Molech Literally, "people made their son or daughter pass through fire to Molech."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

horses ... sun god The people thought the sun was a god that drove his chariot (the sun) across the sky each day.

worship to honor Ashtoreth, that horrible thing the people of Sidon worship. King Solomon also built one to honor Chemosh, that horrible thing the people of Moab worship. And King Solomon built one high place to honor Milcom, that horrible thing the people of Ammon worship. But King Josiah defiled (*ruined*) all those places of worship. "King Josiah broke all the memorial stones* and Asherah poles.* Then he scattered dead men's bones over that place.*

"Josiah also broke down the altar and high place* at Bethel. Jeroboam son of Nebat had made this altar. Jeroboam caused Israel to sin.* Josiah broke down both that altar and the high place. Josiah broke the stones of the altar to pieces. Then he beat it into dust. And he burned the Asherah pole. "Josiah looked around and saw graves on the mountain. He sent men, and they took the bones from those graves. Then he burned the bones on the altar. In this way, Josiah defiled (*ruined*) the altar. This happened according to the message from the Lord that the man of God* announced.* The man of God announced these things when Jeroboam stood beside the altar.

Then Josiah looked around and say the grave of the man of God.*

"Josiah said, "What is that monument I see?"

The people of the city told him, "It is the grave of the man of God* that came from Judah. This man of God told about the things you have done to the altar at Bethel. He said those things a long time ago."

"Josiah said, "Leave the man of God* alone. Don't move his bones."

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Asherah poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

scattered ... place This was the way he defiled (*ruined*) those places so they could not be used for places of worship.

high place(s) Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Jeroboam ... sin See 1 Kings 12:26-30.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

announced See 1 Kings 13:1-3.

"Josiah also destroyed all the temples at the high places* in the cities of Samaria. The kings of Israel had built those temples. And that made the Lord very angry. Josiah destroyed those temples, just like he destroyed the place of worship at Bethel.

"Josiah killed all the priests of the high places that were in Samaria. He killed the priests on those altars. He burned men's bones on the altars. In this way he ruined those places of worship. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

The People of Judah Celebrate Passover

"The King Josiah gave a command to all the people. He said, "Celebrate Passover for the Lord your God. Do this the same as it is written in this Book of the Agreement."

"The people had not celebrated a Passover like this since the days that the judges ruled Israel. None of the kings of Israel or the kings of Judah ever had such a big celebration for Passover. "They celebrated this Passover for the Lord in Jerusalem during Josiah's 18th year as king.

"Josiah destroyed the mediums,* wizards,* the house gods, the idols,* and all the horrible things people worshiped in Judah and Jerusalem. Josiah did this to obey the Law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the Lord's temple.*

"There had never been a king like Josiah before. Josiah turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his strength.* No king had followed all the Law of Moses like Josiah. And there has never been another king like Josiah since that time.

"But the Lord did not stop being angry at the people of Judah. The Lord was still angry at them for all the things that Manasseh had done. "The Lord said, "I have taken Israel from their

medium(s) A person that tries to communicate with the spirits of dead people.

wizard(s) A person that tries to use evil spirits to do magic.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

with all his heart ... strength See Deut. 6:4,5.

land. I will do the same to Judah. I will take Judah out of my sight. I will not accept Jerusalem. Yes, I chose that city, but I will destroy the temple* there. And that is the place I was talking about when I said, 'My name will be there.'"

"All the other things that Josiah did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah.

The Death of Josiah

"In Josiah's time, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went to fight against the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went to fight against Pharaoh Neco. But in Megiddo, Pharaoh Neco saw Josiah and then killed him. "Josiah's servants carried the dead Josiah in a chariot* from Megiddo and took him to Jerusalem. They buried Josiah in his own grave.

Then the common people took Josiah's son Jehoahaz and anointed* him. They made Jehoahaz the new king.

Jehoahaz Becomes King of Judah

"Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. "Jehoahaz did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoahaz did all the same things that his ancestors* had done.

"Pharaoh Neco captured Jehoahaz at Riblah in the country of Hamath. So Jehoahaz could not rule in Jerusalem. Pharaoh Neco forced Judah to pay 7,500 pounds* of silver and 75 pounds* of gold.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

7,500 pounds Literally, "100 talents"

75 pounds Literally, "1 talent."

"Pharaoh Neco made Josiah's son Eliakim the new king. Eliakim took the place of Josiah his father. Pharaoh Neco changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. And Pharaoh Neco took Jehoahaz away to Egypt. Jehoahaz died in Egypt. "Jehoiakim gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh. But Jehoiakim made the common people pay taxes and used that money to give to Pharaoh Neco. So each person paid his share of silver and gold. And King Jehoiakim gave the money to Pharaoh Neco.

"Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah. "Jehoiakim did the things that the Lord said were wrong. Jehoiakim did all the same things his ancestors* had done.

King Nebuchadnezzar Comes to Judah

24 In the time of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the country of Judah. Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar for three years. Then Jehoiakim turned against Nebuchadnezzar and broke away from his rule. "The Lord sent groups of Babylonians, Arameans, Moabites, and Ammonites to fight against Jehoiakim. The Lord sent those groups to destroy Judah. This happened just like the Lord said. The Lord used his servants the prophets to say those things.

"The Lord commanded those things to happen to Judah. In this way, he would take them out of his sight. He did this because of all the sins that Manasseh did. "The Lord did this because Manasseh killed many innocent people. Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with their blood. And the Lord would not forgive those sins.

"The other things that Jehoiakim did are written in the Book of History about the Kings of Judah. "Jehoiakim died and, was buried with his ancestors.* Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin became the new king after him.

"The king of Egypt did not leave Egypt any more because the king of Babylon had captured all the land, from the brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Nebuchadnezzar Captures Jerusalem

⁸Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to rule. He ruled three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan from Jerusalem. ⁹Jehoiachin did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He did all the same things that his father had done.

¹⁰At that time, the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and surrounded it. ¹¹Then Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city. ¹²Jehoiachin king of Judah went out to meet the king of Babylon. Jehoiachin's mother, his officers, leaders, and officials also went with him. Then the king of Babylon captured Jehoiachin. This was during the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

¹³Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem all the treasures in the Lord's temple* and all the treasures in the king's house. Nebuchadnezzar cut up all the golden dishes that Solomon king of Israel had put in the Lord's temple. This happened just like the Lord said.

¹⁴Nebuchadnezzar captured all the people of Jerusalem. He captured all the leaders and other wealthy people. He took 10,000 people and made them prisoners. Nebuchadnezzar took all the skilled workers and craftsmen. No person was left, except the poorest of the common people. ¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin to Babylon as a prisoner. Nebuchadnezzar also took the king's mother, his wives, officers, and the leading men of the land. Nebuchadnezzar took them from Jerusalem to Babylon as prisoners. ¹⁶The king of Babylon also took all 7,000 of the soldiers and 1,000 of the skilled workers and craftsmen. These men were all soldiers and able to fight in war. The king of Babylon took them to Babylon as prisoners.

¹⁷The king of Babylon made Mattaniah the new king. He took Jehoiachin's place. Mattaniah was Jehoiachin's uncle. The king of Babylon changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah Begins His Rule

¹⁸Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 11 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah. ¹⁹Zedekiah did the things the Lord said were wrong. Zedekiah did all the same things that Jehoiachin did.

²⁰These things happened to Jerusalem and Judah because of the Lord's anger. In the same way, the Lord threw them away from himself.

Nebuchadnezzar Ends Zedekiah's Rule

Zedekiah broke away from the rule of the king of Babylon.

25 So Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came with all his army to fight against Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar made a camp around Jerusalem. They built a wall of dirt around Jerusalem. He did this to keep people from going in or out of the city. This happened in the ninth year, tenth month, and tenth day of Nebuchadnezzar's rule.

²Nebuchadnezzar's army stayed around Jerusalem until the eleventh year that Zedekiah was king of Judah. ³On the ninth day of the fourth month, the time of hunger was terrible in the city. There was no food for the common people.

⁴Then Nebuchadnezzar's army made a hole in the city wall. That night King Zedekiah and all his soldiers ran away. They ran away through the gate between the two walls by the king's garden. The Babylonian army was around the city. But Zedekiah and his army escaped on the road to the desert. ⁵The Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah and caught him near Jericho. All Zedekiah's army ran away and left him alone.

⁶The Babylonians took King Zedekiah to the king of Babylon at Riblah. The king of Babylon decided to punish Zedekiah. They killed Zedekiah's sons in front of him. Then they put out Zedekiah's eyes. They put chains on him and took him to Babylon.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is Destroyed

⁹Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem on the seventh day of the fifth month of the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. Nebuzaradan was the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's bodyguards. ¹⁰Nebuzaradan burned the Lord's temple* and the king's house. Nebuzaradan also burned all the houses in Jerusalem. He destroyed even the largest houses.

¹¹Then the Babylonian army that was with Nebuzaradan pulled down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹²And Nebuzaradan captured all the people that were still left in the city. Some of the people had agreed to obey King Nebuchadnezzar. But Nebuzaradan captured all those people too! He took every person that was left in the city. ¹³Nebuzaradan let only the poorest of the common people stay there. He let those poor people stay and grow grapes and become farmers.

¹⁴The Babylonian soldiers broke into pieces the bronze columns that were in the Lord's temple.* They also broke into pieces the bronze carts and the large bronze tank that were in the Lord's temple. Then the Babylonian soldiers took the bronze pieces to Babylon. ¹⁵The Babylonians also took the pots, shovels, snuffers,* spoons, and all the bronze dishes that were used in the Lord's temple. ¹⁶Nebuzaradan took all the firepans and bowls. All those made of gold he took for the gold and all those of silver he took for the silver. ¹⁷This is a list of the things he took: two columns, one tank,* and the carts that Solomon made for the Lord's temple. The bronze of these things was too heavy to be weighed. ¹⁸Each column was approximately 27 feet* tall. The capitals* on the columns were made from bronze. Each

capital was 4½ feet* tall. On each capital there was a design like a net and pomegranates.* All of this was made from bronze. Both columns had the same kind of design.

The People of Judah Taken as Prisoners

¹⁹Then Nebuzaradan took Seraiah the high priest, Zephaniah the second priest, and the three men that guarded the entrance. ²⁰Nebuzaradan took one Jewish officer. He was the commander of the army. Nebuzaradan also took five of the king's advisers* that were found in the city. And he took the army captain's secretary. The army captain's secretary was the person that gathered together the common people and chose them to be soldiers. Nebuzaradan also took 60 other men that were found in the city. These men were just ordinary men. ²¹Then Nebuzaradan took all these people to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²²The king of Babylon killed them at Riblah in the country of Hamath. So the people of Judah were led away as prisoners from their land.

Nebuchadnezzar Makes Gedaliah Governor of Judah

²³Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon left some people in the land of Judah. He made Gedaliah son of Ahikam governor over those people in Judah. (Ahikam was the son of Shaphan.)

²⁴When all the army captains and their men heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. These army captains were Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, Jaazaniah son of the Maachathite. ²⁵Then Gedaliah made promises to these army captains and their men. Gedaliah said to them, "Don't be afraid of the Babylonian officers. Live in the country, and serve the king of Babylon. Then everything will be all right with you."

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

snuffers They were like small cups used to put out lamps.

tank A very large basin with water.

27 feet Literally, "18 cubits."

capital(s) The decorated caps of stone or wood on the top of columns.

4½ feet Literally, "3 cubits."

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it.

Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

king's advisers Literally, "men that saw the king's face."

²⁵But in the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah son of Elishama, from the king's family, came with ten men and killed Gedaliah. Ishmael and these ten men also killed the Jews and Babylonians that were with Gedaliah at Mizpah.

²⁶Then all the people, from the least important to the most important, and the army leaders ran away to Egypt. They ran away because they were afraid of the Babylonians.

²⁷Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, let* Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison. This happened in the 37th year after Jehoiachin king

of Judah was captured. This was on the 27th day of the twelfth month from the time that Evil-Merodach began to rule. ²⁸Evil-Merodach spoke kindly to Jehoiachin. Evil-Merodach put Jehoiachin's throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him in Babylon. ²⁹Evil-Merodach took away Jehoiachin's prison clothes (and gave him new clothes). Then Jehoiachin ate at the same table with Evil-Merodach. He did this every day for the rest of his life. ³⁰So King Evil-Merodach gave Jehoiachin every meal he ate for the rest of his life.

1 Chronicles

Family History from Adam to Noah

1 ^{1,3}Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.*

⁴The sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

The Sons of Japheth

¹The sons of Japheth were Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras.

⁴The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah.

⁷The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim.

The Sons of Ham

¹The sons of Ham were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan.

³The sons of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah, and Sabteca. The sons of Raamah were Sheba and Dedan.

¹⁰Nimrod, a descendant* of Cush, grew up to become the strongest and bravest soldier in the world.

¹¹Mizraim (*Egypt*) was the father of the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, ¹²Pathrus, Casluh, and Caphtor. The Philistine people came from Casluh.

¹³Canaan was the father of Sidon. Sidon was his first child. Canaan was also the father of the

Hittites, ¹⁴the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, ¹⁵the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, ¹⁶the Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the people from Hamath.

The Sons of Shem

¹⁷Shem's sons were Elam, Asshur, Arpaxad, Lud, and Aram. Aram's sons were Uz, Hul, Gether, and Meshech.

¹⁸Arpaxad was the father of Shelah. Shelah was the father of Eber.

¹⁹Eber had two sons. One son was named Peleg,* because the people on the earth were divided into different languages during his lifetime. Peleg's brother was named Joktan.

²⁰Joktan was the father of Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, ²¹Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, ²²Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, ²³Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these men were Joktan's sons: ²⁴Shem, Arpaxad, Shelah, ²⁵Eber, Peleg, Reu, ²⁶Serug, Nahor, Terah, ²⁷and Abram. (Abram is also called Abraham.)

Abraham's Family

²⁸Abraham's sons were Isaac and Ishmael. ²⁹These are their descendants*:

Hagar's Sons

Ishmael's first son was Nebaioth. Ishmael's other sons were Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, ²⁹Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad, Tema, ³¹Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. Those were Ishmael's sons.

Peleg This name means "division."

Adam ... Noah This list of names gives the name of a man, followed by his descendants.

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

Keturah's Sons

¹²Keturah was Abraham's woman servant.* She gave birth to Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. Jokshan's sons were Sheba and Dedan.

¹³Midian's sons were Ephah, Ephher, Hanoah, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.

Sarah's Sons

¹⁴Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac's sons were Esau and Israel.*

¹⁵Esau's sons were Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.

¹⁶Eliphaz's sons were Teman, Omar, Zepho,* Gatam, and Kenaz. Also Eliphaz and Timna had a son named Amalek.

¹⁷Reuel's sons were Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

The Edomites from Seir

¹⁸Seir's sons were Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

¹⁹Lotan's sons were Hori and Homam. Lotan had a sister named Timna.

²⁰Shobal's sons were Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. Zibeon's sons were Aiah and Anah.

²¹Anah's son was Dishon. Dishon's sons were Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Keran.

²²Ezer's sons were Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan. Dishan's sons were Uz and Aran.

The Kings of Edom

²³These are the names of the kings of Edom. There were kings in Edom long before there were kings in Israel. Their names were: Bela son of Beor. The name of Bela's city was Dinhabah.

²⁴When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah became the new king. Jobab came from Bozrah.

woman servant Or, "concubine." A woman who was like a wife to a man.

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Gen. 32:28.

Zepho Or, "Zephi."

²⁵When Jobab died, Husham became the new king. Husham was from the country of the Temanite people.

²⁶When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad became the new king. Hadad defeated Midian in the country of Moab. Hadad's city was named Avith.

²⁷When Hadad died, Samlah became the new king. Samlah was from Masrekah.

²⁸When Samlah died, Shaul became the new king. Shaul was from Rehoboth by the Euphrates River.

²⁹When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Achbor became the new king.

³⁰When Baal-Hanan died, Hadad became the new king. Hadad's city was named Pau.* Hadad's wife was named Mehetabel. Mehetabel was Matred's daughter. Matred was Me-Zahab's daughter. ³¹Then Hadad died.

The leaders of Edom were Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, ³²Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, ³³Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, ³⁴Magdiel, and Iram. This is a list of the leaders of Edom.

Israel's Sons

2 Israel's* sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, ²Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

Judah's Sons

¹Judah's sons were Er, Onan, and Shelah. Bathshua* was their mother. Bathshua was a woman from Canaan. The Lord saw that Judah's first son, Er, was evil. That is why the Lord killed Er. ²Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar gave birth to Perez and Zerah.* So Judah had five sons.

³Perez's sons were Hezron and Hamul.

⁴Zerah had five sons. They were: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda.

Pau Or, "Pai."

Bathshua This name means, "the daughter of Shua." See Genesis 38:2.

Judah's ... Zerah Judah had sexual relations with his own daughter-in-law Tamar and caused her to be pregnant. See Genesis 38:12-30.

⁷Zimri's son was Carmi. Carmi's son was Achan.* Achan was the man that kept the things he took in battle. He was supposed to give all those things to God.

⁸Ethan's son was Azariah.

⁹Hezron's sons were Jerahmeel, Ram, and Caleb.*

Ram's Sons

¹⁰Ram was Amminadab's father. And Amminadab was Nahshon's father. Nahshon was the leader of the people of Judah.*

¹¹Nahshon was Salmon's father. Salmon was Boaz's father. ¹²Boaz was Obed's father. Obed was Jesse's father. ¹³Jesse was Eliab's father.

Eliab was Jesse's first son. Jesse's second son was Abinadab. His third son was Shimea.

¹⁴Nethanel was Jesse's fourth son. Jesse's fifth son was Raddai. ¹⁵Ozem was Jesse's sixth son,

and David was his seventh son. ¹⁶Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's three sons were Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. ¹⁷Abigail was Amasa's mother. Amasa's father was Jether. Jether was from the Ishmaelite people.

Caleb's Children

¹⁸Caleb was Hezron's son. Caleb had children with his wife Azubah. Azubah was the daughter of Jerioth.* Azubah's sons were Jeshar, Shobab, and Ardon. ¹⁹When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath. Caleb and Ephrath had a son. They named him Hur. ²⁰Hur was Uri's father. Uri was Bezalel's father.

²¹Later, when Hezron was 60 years old, he married Makir's daughter. Makir was the father of Gilead. Hezron had sexual relations with Makir's daughter and she gave birth to Segub. ²²Segub was Jair's father. Jair had 23 cities in the country of Gilead. ²³But Geshur and Aram took Jair's villages. Among them

was Kenath and the small towns around it. There were 60 small towns in all. All of these towns belonged to the sons of Makir, the father of Gilead.

²⁴Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah. After he died, his wife Abijah had his son. That son was named Ashhur. Ashhur was the father of Tekoa.

Jerahmeel's Children

²⁵Jerahmeel was Hezron's first son. Jerahmeel's sons were Ram, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. Ram was Jerahmeel's first son. ²⁶Jerahmeel had another wife named Atarah. Onam's mother was Atarah.

²⁷Jerahmeel's first son, Ram, had sons. They were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

²⁸Onam's sons were Shammai and Jada. Shammai's sons were Nadab and Abishur.

²⁹Abishur's wife was named Abihail. They had two sons. Their names were Ahban and Molid.

³⁰Nadab's sons were Seled and Appaim. Seled died without having children.

³¹Appaim's son was Ishi. Ishi's son was Sheshan. Sheshan's son was Ahlai.

³²Jada was Shammai's brother. Jada's sons were Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without having children.

³³Jonathan's sons were Peleth and Zaza. This was the list of Jerahmeel's children.

³⁴Sheshan did not have sons. He only had daughters. Sheshan had a servant from Egypt named Jarha. ³⁵Sheshan let his daughter marry Jarha. They had a son. His name was Attai.

³⁶Attai was Nathan's father. Nathan was Zabad's father. ³⁷Zabad was Ephlal's father. Ephlal was Obed's father. ³⁸Obed was Jehu's father. Jehu was Azariah's father. ³⁹Azariah was Helez's father. Helez was Eleasah's father.

⁴⁰Eleasah was Sismai's father. Sismai was Shallum's father. ⁴¹Shallum was Jekamiah's father. And Jekamiah was Elishama's father.

Caleb's Family

⁴²Caleb was Jerahmeel's brother. Caleb had some sons. His first son was Mesha. Mesha

Achan Literally, "Achar." See Joshua 7:11.

Caleb Literally, "Kelubai."

Nahshon ... Judah Nahshon was leader of the family group of Judah at the time the people of Israel came out of Egypt. See Numbers 1:7; 2:3; 7:12.

Caleb ... Jerioth Or "Caleb had children with Azubah his wife and with Jerioth."

was Ziph's father. Mareshah was Hebron's father.

"Hebron's sons were Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. "Shema was Raham's father. Raham was Jorkeam's father. Rekem was Shammai's father. "Shammai's son was Maon. Maon was Beth Zur's father.

"Caleb's woman servant* was named Ephah. Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza, and Gazez. Haran was Gazez's father.

"Jahdai's sons were Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

"Maacah was another woman servant* of Caleb. Maacah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhana. "Maacah was also the mother of Shaaph and Sheva. Shaaph was Madmannah's father. Sheva was the father of Macbenah and Gibeaz. Caleb's daughter was Acsah.

"This is a list of Caleb's descendants:* Hur was Caleb's first son. He was born to Ephrathah. Hur's sons were Shobal, the founder* of Kiriath Jearim, "Salma, the founder of Bethlehem, and Hareph, the founder of Beth Gader.

"Shobal was the founder* of Kiriath Jearim. This is a list of Shobal's descendants:* Haroeh, half the people in Manaht; "and the family groups from Kiriath Jearim. These are the Ithrite people, the Puthite people, the Shumathite people, and the Mishraite people. The Zorathite people and the Eshtaolite people came from the Mishraite people.

"This is a list of Salma's descendants:* The people from Bethlehem, Netophath, Atroth Beth Joab, half the people from Manaht, the Zorite people, "and the families of scribes* that lived at Jabez, Tirath, Shimeath, and Sucath. These scribes are the Kenite people that came from Hammath. Hammath was the founder* of Beth Recab.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

founder Literally, "father," the person that started the city.

scribes Men that wrote down and copied books and letters.

These men spent so much time with those writings that they often became experts at knowing what those scriptures (writings) meant.

David's Sons

3 Some of David's sons were born in the town of Hebron. This is a list of David's sons: David's first son was Amnon. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam. She was from the town of Jezreel.

The second son was Daniel. His mother was Abigail from Carmel Judah.

"The third son was Absalom. His mother was Maacah, daughter of Talmai. Talmai was the king of Geshur.

The fourth son was Adonijah. His mother was Haggith.

"The fifth son was Shephatiah. His mother was Abital.

The sixth son was Ithream. His mother was Eglah, David's wife. "These six sons were born to David in Hebron. David ruled there seven years and six months.

David was king in Jerusalem 33 years. "These are the children born to David in Jerusalem:

There were four children from Bathsheba. Bathsheba was Ammiel's daughter: Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. "Nine other children were: Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet. "They were all David's sons. David had other sons by women servants.* Tamar was David's daughter.*

Kings of Judah after David's Time

"Solomon's son was Rehoboam. And Rehoboam's son was Abijah. Abijah's son was Asa. Asa's son was Jehoshaphat. "Jehoshaphat's son was Jehoram. Jehoram's son was Ahaziah. Ahaziah's son was Joash. "Joash's son was Amaziah. Amaziah's son was Azariah. Azariah's son was Jotham. "Jotham's son was Ahaz. Ahaz's son was Hezekiah. Hezekiah's son was Manasseh. "Manasseh's son was Amon. Amon's son was Josiah.

"This is a list of Josiah's sons: The first son was Johanan. The second son was Jehoiakim. The third son was Zedekiah. The fourth son was Shallum.

David's daughter Literally, "their sister."

¹⁶Jehoiakim's sons were Jehoiachin, his son, and Zedekiah, his son.*

David's Family Line After Babylon Defeats Judah

¹⁷This is a list of Jehoiachin's children after Jehoiachin became a prisoner in Babylon. His children were: Shealtiel, ¹⁸Malkiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

¹⁹Pedaiah's sons were Zerubbabel and Shimei. Zerubbabel's sons were Meshullam and Hananiah. Shelomith was their sister. ²⁰Zerubbabel had five other sons also. Their names were Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-Hesed.

²¹Hananiah's son was Pelatiah. And his son was Jeshaiah.* And his son was Rephaiah. And his son was Aman. And his son was Obadiah. And his son was Shecaniah.*

²²This is a list of Shecaniah's descendants*: Shemaiah. Shemaiah had six sons: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat.

²³Neariah had three sons. They were Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam.

²⁴Elioenai had seven sons. They were Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani.

Other Family Groups of Judah

4 This is a list of Judah's sons. They were Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.

¹Shobal's son was Reaiah. Reaiah was Jahath's father. Jahath was the father of Ahumai and Lahad. The Zorathite people are descendants* of Ahumai and Lahad.

²Etam's sons were Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash. And they had a sister named Hazelelponi.

³Penuel was Gedor's father. And Ezer was Hushah's father.

Jehoiakim's sons ... son This can be interpreted in two ways: (1) "This Zedekiah was the son of Jehoiakim and the brother of Jehoiachin," (2) "This Zedekiah is the son of Jehoiachin and the grandson of Jehoiakim."

Jeshaiah Or, "Isaiah."

Verse 21 The Hebrew is hard to understand in this verse.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

These were Hur's sons. Hur was Ephrathah's first son. And Ephrathah was the founder* of Bethlehem.

⁴Tekoa's father was Ashhur. Tekoa had two wives. Their names were Helah and Naarah ⁵Naarah had Ahuzzam, Hopher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These were the sons Naarah had with Ashhur. ⁶The sons of Helah were Zereth Zohar, Ethnan, and Koz. ⁷Koz was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah. Koz also was the father of the family groups of Aharhel. Aharhel was Harum's son.

⁸Jabez was a very good man. He was better than his brothers. His mother said, "I have named him Jabez* because I was in much pain when I had him." ⁹Jabez prayed to the God of Israel. Jabez said, "I wish you would truly bless me. I wish you would give me more land. Be near me and don't let anyone hurt me. Then I won't have any pain." And God gave Jabez what he asked for.

¹⁰Kelub was Shuhah's brother. Kelub was Mehir's father. Mehir was Eshton's father. ¹¹Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah and Tehinnah. Tehinnah was the father of I Nahash.* Those men were from Rechab.

¹²The sons of Kenaz were Othniel and Seraiah. Othniel's sons were Hathath and Meonothai. ¹³Meonothai was Ophrah's father.

And Seraiah was Joab's father. Joab was the founder* of the Ge Harashim.* Those people used that name because they were skilled workers.

¹⁴Caleb was Jephunneh's son. Caleb's son were Iru, Elah, and Naam. Elah's son was Kenaz.

¹⁵Jehallelel's sons were Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel.

¹⁶Ezrah's sons were Jether, Mered, Ephraim and Jalon. Mered was the father of Miriam Shammai, and Ishbah. Ishbah was the father of Eshtemoa. Mered had a wife from Egypt. Sh

founder Literally, "father," the person that started the city.

Jabez This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "pain."

Tehinnah ... Nahash Or, "Tehinnah was the founder of the city of Nahash." It means "city."

Ge Harashim This name also means, "Valley of the Skilled Workers."

had Jered, Heber, and Jekuthiel. Jered was Gedor's father. Heber was Soco's father. And Jekuthiel was Zanoah's father. These were the sons of Bithiah. Bithiah was Pharaoh's daughter. She was Mered's wife from Egypt.

¹⁹Mered's wife was Naham's sister. Mered's wife was from Judah.* The sons of Mered's wife were the father of Keilah and Eshtemoa. Keilah was from the Garmite people. And Eshtemoa was from the Maacathite people.

²⁰Shimon's sons were Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan, and Tilon.

Ishi's sons were Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

²¹⁻²²Shelah was Judah's son. Shelah had Er, Laadah, Jokim, the men from Cozeba, Joash, and Saraph. Er was the father of Lecah. Laadah was the father of Mareah and the family groups of linen* workers at Beth Ashbea. Joash and Saraph married Moabite women. Then they went back to Bethlehem.* The writings about this family are very old. ²³Those sons of Shelah were workers that made things from clay. They lived in Netaim and Gederah. They lived in those towns and worked for the king.

Simeon's Children

²⁴Simeon's sons were Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul. ²⁵Shaul's son was Shallum. Shallum's son was Mibsam. Mibsam's son was Mishma.

²⁶Mishma's son was Hammuel. Hammuel's son was Zaccur. Zaccur's son was Shimei. ²⁷Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters. But Shimei's brothers did not have many children. Shimei's brothers did not have large families. Their families were not large like the other family groups in Judah.

²⁸Shimei's children lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, ²⁹Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, ³⁰Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, ³¹Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and Shaaraim. They lived in those towns until David became king.

³²The five villages near these towns were Etam,

Ain, Rimmon, Token, and Ashan. ³³There were also other villages as far away as Baalath. This is where they lived. And they also wrote the history about their family.

³⁴This is the list of men who were leaders of their family groups. They were Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah (Amaziah's son), Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, Joshibiah son of Seraiah, Seraiah son of Asiel, Elieonai, Jaakobah, Jeshohai, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, and Ziza (Shiphi's son). Shiphi was Allon's son, and Allon was Jedaiah's son. Jedaiah was Shimri's son, and Shimri was Shemaiah's son.

These men's families grew to be very large. ³⁵They went to the area outside the town of Gedor to the east side of the valley. They went to that place to look for fields for their sheep and cows. ³⁶They found good fields with plenty of grass. They found plenty of good land there. The land was peaceful and quiet. Ham's descendants* lived there in the past. ³⁷This happened during the time that Hezekiah was king of Judah. Those men came to Gedor and fought against the Hamite people. They destroyed the Hamite peoples' tents. Those men also fought against the Meunite people that lived there. These men destroyed all the Meunite people. There are no Meunite people in this place even today. So those men began to live there. They lived there because the land had grass for their sheep.

³⁸Five hundred Simeonite people went to the hill country of Seir. Ishi's sons led those men. Those sons were, Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephah, and Uzziel. The Simeonite men fought against the people living in that place. ³⁹There were only a few Amalekite people still living. And these Simeonite people killed them. Since that time until now those Simeonite people have lived in Seir.

Reuben's Descendants

5 ¹Reuben was Israel's first son. Reuben should have received the special privileges of the oldest son. But Reuben had sexual

Mered's ... Judah This is from the ancient Greek translation.

linen A type of cloth.

married ... Bethlehem Or, "They ruled in Moab and Jashubi Lehem."

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

relations with his father's wife. So those privileges were given to Joseph's sons. In the family history, Reuben's name is not listed as the first son. Judah became stronger than his brothers, so the leaders came from his family. But Joseph's family got the other privileges that belong to the oldest son. Reuben's sons were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

These are the names of Joel's descendants: Shemaiah was Joel's son. Gog was Shemaiah's son. Shimei was Gog's son. *Micah was Shimei's son. Reaiah was Micah's son. Baal was Reaiah's son. *Beerah was Baal's son. Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, forced Beerah to leave his home. So Beerah became the king's prisoner. Beerah was a leader of the family group of Reuben.

*Joel's brothers and all his family groups are listed just as they are written in the family histories: Jeiel was the first son, then Zechariah, *and Bela. Bela was Azaz's son. Azaz was Shema's son. Shema was Joel's son. They lived in the area of Aroer all the way to Nebo and Baal Meon. *Bela's people lived to the east as far as the edge of the desert, near the Euphrates River. They lived in that place because they had many cows in the land of Gilead. *When Saul was king, Bela's people fought a war against the Hagarite people. They defeated the Hagarite people. Bela's people lived in the tents that had belonged to the Hagarite people. They lived in those tents and traveled throughout the area east of Gilead.

Gad's Descendants

*The people from the family group of Gad lived near the people from the family group of Reuben. The Gadite people lived in the area of Bashan, all the way to the town of Salecah. *Joel was the first leader in Bashan. Shapham was the second leader. Then Janai became the leader.* *The seven brothers in their families were Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan,

Zia, and Eber. *Those men were descendants* of Abihail. Abihail was Huri's son. Huri was Jaroah's son. Jaroah was Gilead's son. Gilead was Michael's son. Michael was Jeshishai's son. Jeshishai was Jahdo's son. Jahdo was Buz's son. *Ahi was Abdiel's son. Abdiel was Guni's son. Ahi was the leader of their family.

*The people in the family group of Gad lived in the area of Gilead. They lived in the area of Bashan, in the small towns around Bashan, and in all the fields in the area of Sharon all the way to the borders.

*During the time of Jotham and Jeroboam all these people's names were written in the family history of Gad. Jotham was the king of Judah and Jeroboam was the king of Israel.

Some Soldiers Skilled In War

*From half of Manasseh's family group are from the family groups of Reuben and Gad there were 44,760 brave men ready for war. They were skilled in war. They carried shields and swords. And they were also good with bows and arrows. *They started a war against the Hagarite people and the people of Jeti Naphish, and Nodab. *Those men from the family groups of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad prayed to God in the war. They asked God to help them because they trusted him. So God helped them. God allowed them to defeat the Hagarite people. And they also defeated the other people who were with the Hagarite people. *They took the animals that belonged to the Hagarite people. They took 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys, and 100,000 people. *Many Hagarite people were killed because God helped the people of Reuben win the war. Then those people from the family groups of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad lived in the land of the Hagarite people. They lived there until the time when the army of Babylon took the people of Israel and made them prisoners in Babylon.

*Half of Manasseh's family group lived in the area of Bashan all the way to Baal Hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. They became a very large group of people.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Then ... leader Or, "Then there was Janai. And then Shaphat was in Bashan."

²⁰These were the family leaders from half of Manasseh's family group: Ephraim, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were all strong and brave men. They were famous men. And they were leaders in their families. ²¹But those leaders sinned against the God that their ancestors* worshiped. They began worshiping the false gods of the people living there—and those were the people God destroyed.

²²The God of Israel made Pul want to go to war. Pul was the king of Assyria. He was also named Tiglath-Pileser. He fought against the people from the family groups of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad. He forced them to leave their homes and made them prisoners. Pul brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and near the Gozan River. Those family groups from Israel have lived in those places since that time until today.

The Descendants of Levi

6 Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹Kohath's sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

²Amram's children were Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.

Aaron's sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ⁴Eleazar was Phinehas's father. Phinehas was Abishua's father. ⁵Abishua was Bukki's father. Bukki was Uzzi's father. ⁶Uzzi was Zerariah's father. Zerariah was Meraioth's father. ⁷Meraioth was Amariah's father. Amariah was Ahitub's father. ⁸Ahitub was Zadok's father. Zadok was Ahimaaz's father. ⁹Ahimaaz was Azariah's father. Azariah was Johanan's father. ¹⁰Johanan was Azariah's father. (Azariah is the person that served as priest in the temple that Solomon built in Jerusalem.) ¹¹Azariah was Amariah's father. Amariah was Ahitub's father. ¹²Ahitub was Zadok's father. Zadok was Shallum's father. ¹³Shallum was Hilkiah's father. Hilkiah was

Azariah's father. ¹⁴Azariah was Seraiah's father. Seraiah was Jehozadak's father.

¹⁵Jehozadak was forced to leave his home when the Lord sent Judah and Jerusalem away. Those people were made prisoners in another country. The Lord used Nebuchadnezzar to take the people of Judah and Jerusalem prisoners.

Other Descendants of Levi

¹⁶Levi's sons were Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

¹⁷The names of Gershon's sons were Libni and Shimei.

¹⁸Kohath's sons were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.

¹⁹Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi.

This is a list of the families in the family group of Levi. They are listed with their fathers' names first:

²⁰These were Gershon's descendants*: Libni was Gershon's son. Jahath was Libni's son. Zimmah was Jahath's son. ²¹Joah was Zimmah's son. Iddo was Joah's son. Zerah was Iddo's son. Jeatherai was Zerah's son.

²²These were Kohath's descendants*: Amminadab was Kohath's son. Korah was Amminadab's son. Assir was Korah's son. ²³Elkanah was Assir's son. Ebiasaph was Elkanah's son. Assir was Ebiasaph's son. ²⁴Tahath was Assir's son. Uriel was Tahath's son. Uzziab was Uriel's son. Shaul was Uzziab's son.

²⁵Elkanah's sons were Amasai and Ahimoth. ²⁶Zophai was Elkanah's son. Nahath was Zophai's son. ²⁷Eliab was Nahath's son. Jeroham was Eliab's son. Elkanah was Jeroham's son. Samuel was Elkanah's son.

²⁸Samuel's sons were Joel the oldest son, and Abijah the second son.

²⁹These are Merari's sons: Mahli was Merari's son, Libni was Mahli's son, Shimei was Libni's son. Uzziab was Shimei's son. ³⁰Shimea was Uzziab's son. Haggiah was Shimea's son. Asaiah was Haggiah's son.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

The Temple Musicians

¹These are the men that David chose to take care of the music at the tent of the Lord's house after the Box of the Agreement* was put there.

²These men served by singing at the Holy Tent.* The Holy Tent is also called the Meeting Tent. And these men served until Solomon built the Lord's temple* in Jerusalem. They served by following the rules given to them for their work.

³These are the names of the men and their sons that served with music:

The descendants* of the Kohathite people were: Heman the singer. Heman was Joel's son. Joel was Samuel's son. ⁴Samuel was Elkanah's son. Elkanah was Jeroham's son. Jeroham was Eliel's son. Eliel was Toah's son. ⁵Toah was Zuph's son. Zuph was Elkanah's son. Elkanah was Mahath's son. Mahath was Amasai's son. ⁶Amasai was Elkanah's son. Elkanah was Joel's son. Joel was Azariah's son. Azariah was Zephaniah's son. ⁷Zephaniah was Tahath's son. Tahath was Assir's son. Assir was Ebiasaph's son. Ebiasaph was Korah's son. ⁸Korah was Izhar's son. Izhar was Kohath's son. Kohath was Levi's son. Levi was Israel's* son.

⁹Heman's relative was Asaph. Asaph served by Heman's right side. Asaph was Berekiah's son. Berekiah's was Shimea's son. ¹⁰Shimea was Michael's son. Michael was Baaseiah's son. Baaseiah was Malkijah's son. ¹¹Malkijah was Ethni's son. Ethni was Zerah's son. Zerah was Adaiah's son. ¹²Adaiah was Ethan's son. Ethan was Zimmah's son. Zimmah was Shimei's son. ¹³Shimei was Jahath's son. Jahath was Gershon's son. Gershon was Levi's son.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Holy Tent Also called the "tabernacle." The people would go to this tent to meet with God. The people used this tent until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Genesis 32:28.

¹⁴Merari's descendants* were the relative of Heman and Asaph. They were the singing group on Heman's left side. Ethan was Kishi's son. Kishi was Abdi's son. Abdi was Malluch's son. ¹⁵Malluch was Hashabiah's son. Hashabiah was Amaziah's son. Amaziah was Hilkiiah's son. ¹⁶Hilkiiah was Amzi's son. Amzi was Bani's son. Bani was Shemer's son. ¹⁷Shemer was Mahli's son. Mahli was Mushi's son. Mushi was Merari's son. Merari was Levi's son.

¹⁸Heman's and Asaph's brothers were from the family group of Levi. The family group of Levi were also called Levites. The Levites were chosen to do the work in the Holy Tent.* The Holy Tent was God's house. ¹⁹But only Aaron's descendants* were permitted to burn incense on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense. Aaron's descendants did all the work in the Most Holy Place* in God's house. They also did the ceremonies to make the people of Israel pure.* They followed all the rules and laws that Moses commanded. Moses was God's servant.

Aaron's Descendants

¹These were Aaron's sons: Eleazar was Aaron's son. Phinehas was Eleazar's son. Abishua was Phinehas' son. ²Bukki was Abishua's son. Uzzi was Bukki's son. Zerachiah was Uzzi's son. ³Meraioth was Zerachiah's son. Amariah was Meraioth's son. Ahitub was Amariah's son. ⁴Zadok was Ahitub's son. Ahimaaz was Zadok's son.

Homes for the Levite Families.

¹These are the places where Aaron's descendants* lived. They lived in their camp

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

Most Holy Place The most important room in the temple. The Box of the Agreement with the Cherub Angels on it was in this room. This was like God's throne. Once each year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into this room to do the ceremony that atoned (covered or erased) the sins of the people of Israel.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover or erase a person's sins."

in the land that was given to them. The Kohathite families got the first share of the land that was given to the Levite people.³⁹ They were given the town of Hebron and the fields around it. This was in the area of Judah.⁴⁰ But the fields farther from town and the villages near the town of Hebron were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh.⁴¹ The descendants of Aaron were given the city of Hebron. Hebron was a city of safety.* They were also given the cities of Libnah, Jattir, Eshtemoa,⁴² Hilen, Debir,⁴³ Ashan, Juttah, and Beth Shemesh. They got all those cities and the fields around them.⁴⁴ The people from the family group of Benjamin were given the cities of Gibeon, Geba, Alemeth, and Anathoth. They got all those cities and the fields around them.

Thirteen cities were given to the Kohathite families.

⁴⁵The rest of Kohath's descendants* got ten towns from half of Manasseh's family group.

⁴⁶The family groups that were the descendants* of Gershon got 13 cities. They got those cities from the family groups of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and the part of Manasseh living in the area of Bashan.

⁴⁷The family groups that were the descendants* of Merari got 12 cities. They got those cities from the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun. They got those cities by throwing lots.*

⁴⁸So the Israelite people gave those towns and fields to the Levite people.⁴⁹ All those cities came from the family groups of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. They decided which Levite family got which city by throwing lots.*

⁵⁰The family group of Ephraim gave some of the Kohathite families some towns. Those towns were chosen by throwing lots.*⁵¹ They were given the city of Shechem. Shechem is a city of safety.* They were also given the towns

of Gezer,⁵² Jokneam, Beth Horon,⁵³ Aijalon, and Gath Rimmon. They also got fields with those towns. Those towns were in the hill country of Ephraim.⁵⁴ And from half of Manasseh's family group the Israelite people gave the towns of Aner and Bileam to the Kohathite families. Those Kohathite families also got fields with those towns.

Other Levite Families Get Homes

⁵⁵The Gershonite families got the towns of Golan in the area of Bashan and Ashtaroth from half of Manasseh's family group. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁵⁶⁻⁵⁷The Gershonite families also got the towns of Kedesh, Daberath, Ramoth, and Gannim from the family group of Issachar. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁵⁸⁻⁵⁹The Gershonite families also got the towns of Mashal, Abdon, Hukok, and Rehob from the family group of Asher. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁶⁰The Gershonite families also got the towns of Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon, and Kiriathaim from the family group of Naphtali. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁶¹The rest of the Levite people are the Merarite families. They got the towns of Jokneam, Kartah, Rimmono, and Tabor from the family group of Zebulun. They also got the fields near those towns.

⁶²⁻⁶³The Merarite families also got the towns of Bezer in the desert, Jahzah, Kedemoth, and Mephaath from the family group of Reuben. The family group of Reuben lived on the east side of the Jordan River, east of the city of Jericho. These Merarite families also got the fields near those towns.

⁶⁴⁻⁶⁵And the Merarite families got the towns of Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer from the family group of Gad. They also got the fields near those towns.

Issachar's Descendants

7 Issachar had four sons. Their names were Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron.

city of safety Any city where an Israelite could run and be safe from angry relatives if he accidentally killed someone. See Joshua 20:1-9.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

¹Tola's sons were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Samuel. They were all leaders of their families. Those men and their descendants* were strong soldiers. Their families grew until by the time David was king, there were 22,600 men ready for war.

²Uzzi's son was Izrahiah. Izrahiah's sons were Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them were leaders of their families. Their family history shows they had 36,000 soldiers ready for war. They had a large family because they had many wives and children.

³The family history shows there were 87,000 strong soldiers in all the family groups of Issachar.

Benjamin's Descendants

⁴Benjamin had three sons. Their names were Bela, Beker, and Jediah.

⁵Bela had five sons. Their names were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri. They were leaders of their families. Their family history shows they had 22,034 soldiers.

⁶Beker's sons were Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elieonai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. They all were Beker's children. Their family history shows who the family leaders were. And their family history also shows they had 20,200 soldiers.

⁷Jediael's son was Bilhan. Bilhan's sons were Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar. All of Jediael's sons were leaders of their families. They had 17,200 soldiers ready for war.

⁸The Shuppites and Huppites were the descendants* of Ir. Hushim was the son of Aher.

Naphtali's Descendants

⁹Naphtali's sons were Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum.

And these are the descendants* of Bilhah.*

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Bilhah Jacob's woman servant and the mother of Dan and Naphtali. See Genesis 30:4-8.

¹⁰These are Manasseh's descendants*:

Manasseh had Asriel with his Aramean woman servant.* She also had Makir. Makir was Gilead's father.* ¹¹Makir married a woman from the Huppites and Shuppites people. Her name was Maacah. Makir's sister was also named Maacah. Maacah's other name was Zelophehad. Zelophehad had only daughters.

¹²Makir's wife Maacah had a son. Maacah named this son Peresh. Peresh's brother was named Sheresh. Sheresh's sons were Ulam and Rekem.

¹³Ulam's son was Bedan.

These were the descendants* of Gilead. Gilead was Makir's son. Makir was Manasseh's son. ¹⁴Makir's sister Hammeleketh* had Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

¹⁵Shemida's sons were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

Ephraim's Descendants

¹⁶These were the names of Ephraim's descendants.* Ephraim's son was Shuthelah. Shuthelah's son was Bered. Bered's son was Tahath. Tahath's son was Eleadah. ¹⁷Eleadah's son was Tahath. Tahath's son was Zabadi. Zabadi's son was Shuthelah.

Some men that grew up in the city of Gath killed Ezer and Elead. This happened because Ezer and Elead went there to steal cows and sheep from those men in Gath. ¹⁸Ephraim was the father of Ezer and Elead. He cried for many days because Ezer and Elead were dead. Ephraim's family came to comfort him. ¹⁹Then Ephraim had sexual relations with his wife. Ephraim's wife became pregnant and had a son. Ephraim named this new son Beriah* because something bad had happened to his family. ²⁰Ephraim's daughter was Sheerah. Sheerah built Lower Beth Horon and Upper Beth Horon and Lower Uzen Sheerah and Upper Uzen Sheerah.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

Makir ... father Or, "Makir was the founder of Gilead."

Hammeleketh Or, "The woman that ruled," or "queen."

Beriah This is like the Hebrew word meaning, "bad," or "trouble."

²Rephah was Ephraim's son. Resheph was Rephah's son. Telah was Resheph's son. Tahan was Telah's son. ³Ladan was Tahan's son. Ammihud was Ladan's son. Elishama was Ammihud's son. ⁴Nun was Elishama's son. Joshua was Nun's son.

⁵These are the cities and lands where Ephraim's descendants* lived: Bethel and the villages near it, Naaran to the east, Gezer and the villages near it on the west, and Shechem and the villages near it all the way to Ayyah and the villages near it. ⁶Along the borders of Manasseh's land were the towns of Beth Shean, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor, and the small towns near them. The descendants of Joseph lived in these towns. Joseph was the son of Israel.*

Asher's Descendants

⁷Asher's sons were Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah. Their sister was named Serah.

⁸Beriah's sons were Heber and Malkiel. Malkiel was Birzaith's father.

⁹Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer, Hotham, and of their sister Shua.

¹⁰Japhlet's sons were Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were Japhlet's children.

¹¹Shomer's sons were Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram.

¹²Shomer's brother's name was Helem. Helem's sons were Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.

¹³Zophah's sons were Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, ¹⁴Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera.

¹⁵Jether's sons were Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara.

¹⁶Ulla's sons were Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.

¹⁷All these men were descendants* of Asher. They were leaders of their families. They were the best men. They were soldiers and great leaders. Their family history shows 26,000 soldiers ready for war.

The Family History of King Saul

8 Benjamin was Bela's father. Bela was Benjamin's first son. Ashbel was Benjamin's second son. Aharah was Benjamin's third son. ²Nohah was Benjamin's fourth son. And Rapha was Benjamin's fifth son.

³Bela's sons were Addar, Gera, Abihud, Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

⁴These were the descendants* of Ehud. They were leaders of their families in Gaba. They were forced to leave their homes and move to Manahath. Ehud's descendants were Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. Gera forced them to leave their homes. Gera was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

⁵Shaharaim divorced his wives Hushim and Baara in Moab. After he did this he had some children with another wife. ⁶Shaharaim had Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, Jeuz, Sakia, and Mirmah with his wife Hodesh. They were leaders of their families. ⁷Shaharaim and Hushim had two sons named Abitub and Elpaal.

⁸Elpaal's sons were Eber, Misham, Shemed, Beriah, and Shema. Shemed built the towns of Ono and Lod and the small towns around Lod. Beriah and Shema were the leaders of the families living in Aijalon. Those sons forced the people that lived in Gath to leave.

⁹Beriah's sons were Shashak and Jeremoth, ¹⁰Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, ¹¹Michael, Ishpah, and Joha. ¹²Elpaal's sons were Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, ¹³Ishmerai, Iziah, and Jobab.

¹⁴Shimei's sons were Jakim, Zicri, Zabdi, ¹⁵Eliezer, Zillethai, Eliel, ¹⁶Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath.

¹⁷Shashak's sons were Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, ¹⁸Abdon, Zicri, Hanan, ¹⁹Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, ²⁰Iphdeiah, and Penuel.

²¹Jeroham's sons were Shamsheirai, Shehariah, Athaliah, ²²Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zicri.

²³All these men were leaders of their families. They were listed in their family

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Gen. 32:28.

histories as leaders. They lived in Jerusalem.

²Jeiel was Gibeon's father. He lived in the town of Gibeon. Jeiel's wife was named Maacah. ³Jeiel's oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, ⁴Gedor, Ahio, Zeker, and Mikloth. ⁵Mikloth was the father of Shimeah. These sons also lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

⁶Ner was Kish's father. Kish was Saul's father. And Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal.

⁷Jonathan's son was Merib-Baal. Merib-Baal was Micah's father.

⁸Micah's sons were Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

⁹Ahaz was Jehoaddah's father. Jehoaddah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri. Zimri was Moza's father. ¹⁰Moza was Binea's father. Raphah was Binea's son. Eleasah was Raphah's son. And Azel was Eleasah's son.

¹¹Azel had six sons. Their names were Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these sons were Azel's children.

¹²Azel's brother was Eshek. Eshek had some sons. These were Eshek's sons: Ulam was Azel's oldest son. Jeush was Eshek's second son. Eliphelet was Eshek's third son. ¹³Ulam's sons were strong soldiers that were very good with bows and arrows. They had many sons and grandsons. In all, there were 150 sons and grandsons.

All these men were Benjamin's descendants.*

9 The names of all the people of Israel were listed in their family histories. Those family histories were put in the Book of History about the Kings of Israel.

The People In Jerusalem

The people of Judah were made prisoners and forced to go to Babylon. They were taken to that place because they were not faithful to God. ²The first people to come back and live in

their own lands and towns were some Israelites: priests, Levites, and servants that work in the temple.*

³These are the people from the family groups of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh that lived in Jerusalem:

⁴Uthai was Ammihud's son. Ammihud was Omri's son. Omri was Imri's son. Imri was Bani's son. Bani was a descendant* of Perez. Perez was Judah's son.

⁵The Shilonite people that lived in Jerusalem were: Asaiah was the oldest son and Asaiah had sons.

⁶The Zerahite people that lived in Jerusalem were: Jeuel and their relatives. There were 691 of them in all.

⁷These are the people from the family group of Benjamin that lived in Jerusalem: Salu was Meshullam's son. Meshullam was Hodaviah's son. Hodaviah was Hassenuah's son. ⁸Ibneiah was Jeroham's son. Elah was Uzzi's son. Uzz was Micri's son. And Meshullam was Shephatiah's son. Shephatiah was Reuel's son. Reuel was Ibnijah's son. ⁹The family history of Benjamin shows there were 956 of them living in Jerusalem. All these men were leaders in their families.

¹⁰These are the priests that lived in Jerusalem: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, Jakin, and ¹¹Azariah. Azariah was Hilkiah's son. Hilkiah was Meshullam's son. Meshullam was Zadok's son. Zadok was Meraioth's son. Meraioth was Ahitub's son. Ahitub was the important official responsible for God's temple.* ¹²Also there was Jeroham's son, Adaiah. Jeroham was Pashhur's son. Pashhur was Malkijah's son. And then was Adiel's son, Maasai. Adiel was Jahzerah's son. Jahzerah was Meshullam's son. Meshullam was Meshillemith's son. Meshillemith was Immer's son.

¹³There were 1,760 priests. They were leaders of their families. They were responsible for the work of serving in God's temple.*

¹⁴These are the people from the family group of Levi that lived in Jerusalem:

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship
descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

Hasshub's son, Shemaiah. Hasshub was Azrikam's son. Azrikam was Hashabiah's son. Hashabiah's was a descendant* of Merari.¹³ Also living in Jerusalem were Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah. Mattaniah was Mica's son. Mica was Zicri's son. Zicri was Asaph's son.¹⁴ Obadiah was Shemaiah's son. Shemaiah was Galal's son. Galal was Jeduthun's son. And Asa's son, Berekiah lived in Jerusalem. Asa was Elkanah's son. Elkanah lived in the small towns near the people of Netophah.

¹⁵These are the gatekeepers that lived in Jerusalem: Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their relatives. Shallum was their leader.¹⁶ Now these men stand next to the King's Gate on the east side. They were the gatekeepers from the family group of Levi.¹⁷ Shallum was Kore's son. Kore was Ebiasaph's son. Ebiasaph was Korah's son. Shallum and his brothers were gatekeepers. They were from the family of Korah. They had the job of guarding the gates to the Holy Tent.* They did this just like their ancestors* had done before them. Their ancestors had the job of guarding the entrance to the Holy Tent.²⁰ In the past, Phinehas was in charge of the gatekeepers. Phinehas was Eleazar's son. The Lord was with Phinehas.²¹ Zechariah was the gatekeeper at the entrance to the Holy Tent.

²²In all there were 212 men that were chosen to guard the gates of the Holy Tent.* Their names were written in their family histories in their small towns. David and Samuel the seer* chose those men because they could be trusted.²³ The gatekeepers and their descendants* had the responsibility of guarding the gates of the Lord's house, the Holy Tent.²⁴ There were

gates on the four sides: east, west, north, and south.²⁵ The gatekeepers' relatives that lived in the small towns had to come and help them at certain times. They came and helped the gatekeepers for seven days each time.

²⁶There were four gatekeepers that were the leaders of all the gatekeepers. They were Levite men. They had the job of caring for the rooms and treasures in God's temple.*²⁷ They stayed up all night guarding God's temple. And they had the job of opening God's temple every morning.

²⁸Some of the gatekeepers had the job of caring for the dishes used in the temple* services. They counted these dishes when they were brought in. They also counted these dishes when they were taken out.²⁹ Other gatekeepers were chosen to care for the furniture and those special dishes. They also took care of the flour, wine, oil, incense,* and special oil.*³⁰ But it was the priests that had the job of mixing the special oil.

³¹There was a Levite named Mattithiah that had the job of baking the bread used for the offerings. Mattithiah was Shallum's oldest son. Shallum was from the Korah family.³² Some of the gatekeepers that were in the Korah family had the job of preparing the bread put on the table every Sabbath.*

³³The Levites that were singers and leaders of their families stayed in the rooms at the temple.* They did not have to do other work because they were responsible for the work in the temple day and night.

³⁴All these Levites were leaders of their families. They were listed as leaders in their family histories. They lived in Jerusalem.

King Saul's Family History

³⁵Jeiel was Gibeon's father. Jeiel lived in the town of Gibeon. Jeiel's wife was named

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

Holy Tent Also called the "tabernacle." The people would go to this tent to meet with God. The people used this tent until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

special oil Or "perfume." This might be the oil used to anoint priests, prophets, and kings. See Exodus 30:22-38.

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

Maacah. *Jeiel's oldest son was Abdon. Other sons were Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, *Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. *Mikloth was Shimeam's father. Jeiel's family lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.

*Ner was Kish's father. Kish was Saul's father. And Saul was the father of Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal.

*Jonathan's son was Merib-Baal. Merib-Baal was Micah's father.

*Micah's sons were Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz. *Ahaz was Jadah's father. Jadah was Jarah's father. *Jarah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri. Zimri was Moza's father. *Moza was the father of Binea. Rephaiah was Binea's son. Eleasah was Rephaiah's son. And Azel was Eleasah's son.

*Azel had six sons. Their names were: Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. Those were Azel's children.

The Death of King Saul

10 The Philistine people fought against the people of Israel. The people of Israel ran away from the Philistines. Many Israelite people were killed on Mount Gilboa. *The Philistines continued chasing Saul and his sons. They caught them and killed them. The Philistines killed Saul's sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua. *The fighting became heavy around Saul. The archers* shot Saul with their arrows and wounded him.

Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Pull out your sword and use it to kill me. Then those foreigners* will not hurt and make fun of me when they come."

But Saul's armor-bearer* was afraid. He refused to kill Saul. Then Saul used his own sword to kill himself. He fell on the point of his sword. *The armor-bearer saw that Saul was

dead. Then he also killed himself. He fell on the point of his own sword and died. *So Saul and three of his sons died. All of Saul's family died together.

*All the people of Israel living in the valley saw that their own army had run away. They saw that Saul and his sons were dead. So they left their towns and ran away. Then the Philistine people came into the towns the people of Israel had left. And the Philistine people lived in those towns.

*The next day, the Philistine people came to take valuable things from the dead bodies. They found Saul's body and the bodies of his sons on Mount Gilboa. *The Philistines took things from Saul's body. They took Saul's head and armor. They sent messengers through all their country to tell the news to their false gods and to their people. *The Philistines put Saul's armor in the temple of their false gods. They hung Saul's head in the temple of Dagon.*

*All the people living in the town of Jabesh Gilead heard everything the Philistine people had done to Saul. *All the brave men from Jabesh Gilead went to get the bodies of Saul and his sons. They brought them back to Jabesh Gilead. Those brave men buried the bones of Saul and his sons under the large tree in Jabesh. Then they fasted* for seven days.

Saul died because he was not faithful to the Lord. Saul did not obey the Lord's word. Saul also went to a medium and asked her for advice *instead of asking the Lord. That is why the Lord killed Saul and gave the kingdom to Jesse's son David.

David Becomes King Over Israel

11 All the people of Israel came to David at the town of Hebron. They said, to

Ahaz ... father Hebrew has only, "Ahaz was the father of Jarah."

archers Soldiers that use bows and arrows in war.

armor-bearer A young man that carried a soldier's weapons.

foreigners Men from other countries that are not circumcised. This showed that those men did not share in the special agreement with God.

Dagon The national god of the Philistine people. Its head, arms, and body looked like a person, and its lower body was like the tail of a fish.

fast(ed) To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

medium A person that lets a spirit take control of him and let him tell things that would happen in the future. See 1 Samuel 28:7-19.

David, "We are your own flesh and blood.* ²In the past, you led us in war. You led us even though Saul was the king. The Lord said to you 'David, you will be the shepherd of my people, the people of Israel. You will become the leader over my people.'"

³All the leaders of Israel came to King David at the town of Hebron. David made an agreement with those leaders in Hebron before the Lord. The leaders anointed* David. That made him king over Israel. The Lord promised this would happen. The Lord had used Samuel to make that promise.

David Defeats Jerusalem

"David and all the people of Israel went to the city of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was called Jebus at that time. The people living in that city were named Jebusites. The people that lived in the city ¹said to David, "You can't get inside our city." But David did defeat those people. David took over the fortress* of Zion.* This place became the City of David.

"David said, "The person that leads the attack on the Jebusite people will become the commander over all my army." So Joab led the attack. Joab was Zeruih's son. Joab became the commander of the army.

¹Then David made his home in the fortress.* That is why it is named the City of David. ²David built the city around the fort. He built it from the Millo* to the wall around the city. Joab repaired the other parts of the city. ³David continued to grow greater. And the Lord All-Powerful was with him.

David's Mighty Heroes

¹⁰This is a list of the leaders over David's mighty heroes. These heroes gave support to David's kingdom. All the people of Israel also supported David's kingdom. These heroes and all the people of Israel made David king. That is what God had promised would happen.

¹¹This is a list of David's mighty heroes:

Jashobeam was from the Hacmonite people. Jashobeam was the leader of the officers.* Jashobeam used his spear to fight with 300 men. He killed all 300 of those men at one time.

¹²Eleazar was another one of David's mighty heroes. Eleazar was Dodai's son. Dodai's was from Ahoah. Eleazar was one of The Three Heroes. ¹³Eleazar was with David at Pasmammim. The Philistine people came to that place to fight a war. There was a field full of barley at that place. That is where the people of Israel ran away from the Philistine people. ¹⁴But then they stopped in the middle of that field and fought the Philistines and killed them. And so the Lord gave the people of Israel a great victory.

¹⁵Once, David was at the cave of Adullam and the Philistine army was down in the Valley of Rephaim. Three of the 30 heroes crawled all the way to that cave to join David.

¹⁶Another time, David was in the fortress,* and a group from the Philistine army was in Bethlehem. ¹⁷David was thirsty, so he said, "I wish I had some water from that well near the city gate in Bethlehem."¹⁸

¹⁹Then the Three Heroes fought their way through the Philistine army and took water out of the well of Bethlehem near the city gate. The Three Heroes took the water to David. But David refused to drink the water. ²⁰David said, "May God keep me from drinking this water! These men risked their lives to get this water for me. So it would be like I am drinking their blood if I drink this water." So David poured out the water as a drink offering to the Lord.

officers Or this might mean "30" or "The Three." See 2 Samuel 23:8.

well ... Bethlehem This was David's hometown. That is why David thought about drinking water from that well.

We are ... blood A way of saying they were David's relatives.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Millo The Millo was probably a raised platform of land southeast of the temple area in Jerusalem.

The Three Heroes did many brave things like that.

More of David's Mighty Heroes

²Abishai was the leader of the Three* Heroes. He fought 300 men with his spear and killed them. Abishai became famous like the Three Heroes. ³Abishai was more famous than the Three Heroes. He became their leader even though he was not one of them.

⁴Benaiah son of Jehoiada was a brave fighter from Kabzeel. Benaiah did great things. He killed two of the best men from the country of Moab. He also went down into a hole in the ground and killed a lion there. This happened on a day when it was snowing. ⁵And Benaiah killed a man from Egypt. That man was about 7½ feet* tall. That man from Egypt had a spear that was very large and heavy. It was like a large pole on a weaver's loom.* And Benaiah had only a club. But Benaiah took the spear from the Egyptian. Benaiah used that Egyptian's own spear and killed him. ⁶These were the things Benaiah son of Jehoiada did. Benaiah became famous like the Three Heroes. ⁷Benaiah had more honor than any of the Three Heroes, but he was not of them. David chose Benaiah to be the leader of his bodyguards.

⁸The mighty heroes were: Asahel, Joab's brother; Elhanan, Dodai's son (Elhanan was from the town of Bethlehem.);* ⁹Shammoth from the Harorite people; Helez from the Pelonite people; ¹⁰Ira, Ikesh's son (Ira was from the town of Tekoa.); Abiezer from the town Anathoth; ¹¹Sibbecai from the Hushathite people; Ilai from Ahoah; ¹²Maharai from the Netophathite people; Heled, Baanah's son (Heled was from the Netophathite people.); ¹³Ithai, Ribai's son (Ithai was from the town of Gibeah in Benjamin.); Benaiah, from the Pirathonite people; ¹⁴Hurai from the valleys of Gaash; Abiel from the Arbathite people;

¹⁵Azmaveth from the Baharumite people; Eliahba from the Shaalbonite people; ¹⁶Hashem's sons (Hashem was from the Gizonite people.); Jonathan, Shagee's son (Jonathan was from the Hararite people.); ¹⁷Ahiam, Sacar's son (Ahiam was from the Hararite people.); Eliphai, Ur's son; ¹⁸Hepher from the Mekerathite people; Ahijah from the Pelonite people; ¹⁹Hezro from the Carmelite people; Naarai, Ezbai's son; ²⁰Joel, Nathan's brother; Mibhar, Hagri's son; ²¹Zelek from the Ammonite people; Naharai from Beeroth (Naharai was Joab's armor-bearer. Joab was Zeruiah's son.); ²²Ira from the Ithrite people; Gareb from the Ithrite people; ²³Uriah from the Hittite people; Zabad, Ahlai's son; ²⁴Adina, Shiza's son (Shiza was from the family group of Reuben. Adina was the leader of the family group of Reuben. He also was the leader of the Three Heroes with him.); ²⁵Hanan, Maacah's son; Joshaphat from the Mithnite people; ²⁶Uzzia from the Ashterathite people; Shama and Jeiel, Hotham's sons (Hotham was from the Aroerite people.); ²⁷Jediael, Shimri's son; Joha from the Tizite people (Joha was Jediael's brother.); ²⁸Eliel from the Mahavite people; Jeribai and Joshaviah, Elnaam's sons; Ithmah from the Moabite people; ²⁹Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel from the Mezobaite people.

The Brave Men Who Joined David

12 This is a list of the men who came to David. David was at the town of Ziklag. David was still hiding from Saul son of Kish. These men helped David in battle. ²These men could shoot arrows from their bows with their right or left hand. They could also throw stones from their slings* with their right or left hand. They were Saul's relatives from the family group of Benjamin. Their names were:

³Ahiezer, their leader, and Joash (Ahiezer and Joash were Shemaah's sons. Shemaah was from the Gibeathite people); Jeziel and Pelet (Jeziel and Pelet were Azmaveth's sons); Beracah and Jehu from the town of Anathoth. ⁴Ishmaiah from the town of Gibeon (Ishmaiah

Three Or, "30."

7½ feet Or, "5 cubits."

loom A machine used for making cloth.

Elhanan ... Bethlehem Or, "Elhanan, his nephew from Bethlehem," or "Elhanan, son of Dodo from Bethlehem."

sling(s) A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

was a hero with the Three Heroes and he was also a leader of the Three Heroes); Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad from the Gederathite people; ⁴Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, and Shemariah; Shephatiah from Haripha; ⁵Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, all from the family group of Korah; ⁷Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from the town of Gedor.

The Gadites

¹Part of the family group of Gad joined David at his fortress* in the desert. They were brave soldiers trained for war. They were skilled with the shield and spear. They looked as fierce as lions. And they could run as fast as gazelles* in the mountains.

²Ezer was the leader of the army from the family group of Gad. Obadiah was the second in command. Eliab was the third in command. ³Mishmannah was the fourth in command. Jeremiah was the fifth in command. ⁴Attai was the sixth in command. Eliel was the seventh in command. ⁵Johanan was the eighth in command. Elzabad was the ninth in command. ⁷Jeremiah was the tenth in command. Macbannai was the eleventh in command.

⁸Those men were leaders of the Gadite army. The weakest from that group could fight 100 enemy soldiers. The strongest from that group could fight 1,000 enemy soldiers. ⁹The people from the family group of Gad were the soldiers that went across the Jordan River in the first month of the year. That was a time of year when the Jordan River was flooding. They chased away all the people living in the valleys. They chased those people to the east and to the west.

Other Soldiers Join David

¹⁶Other men from the family groups of Benjamin and Judah also came to David at the fortress.* ¹⁷David went out to meet them. David said to them, "If you have come in peace to

help me, I welcome you. Join with me. But if you have come to spy on me when I have done nothing wrong, then may the God of our ancestors* see what you did, and punish you."

¹⁸Then the Spirit* came to Amasai. Amasai was the leader of the 30* Heroes. Amasai said,

"We belong to you, David!
We are with you, son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you!
Peace to people that help you,
Because your God helps you!"

Then David welcomed these men. He made them leaders in his army.

²⁰Some of the men from the family group of Manasseh also joined David. They joined David when he went with the Philistines to fight Saul. But David and his men did not really help the Philistines. The Philistine leaders talked about David helping them, but then they decided to send him away. Those rulers said, "If David goes back to his master Saul, then our heads will be cut off!" ²¹These were the men from Manasseh that joined David when he went to the town of Ziklag: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai. All of them were generals* from the family group of Manasseh. ²²They helped David fight against bad men. Those bad men were going around the country and stealing things from people. All these men of Manasseh were brave soldiers. They became leaders in David's army.

²³More and more men came every day to help David. So David had a large and powerful army.

Other Men Join David at Hebron

²⁴These are the numbers of the men that came to David at the town of Hebron. These men were ready for war. They came to give Saul's kingdom to David. That is what the Lord said would happen. This is their number:

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Spirit Or, "spirit."

30 Or "Three."

generals Literally, "leaders over 1,000 men."

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

gazelles Animals like deer.

¹From the family group of Judah there were 6,800 men ready for war. They carried shields and spears.

²From the family group of Simeon there were 7,100 men. They were brave soldiers ready for war.

³From the family group of Levi there were 4,600 men. ⁴Jehoiada was in that group. He was a leader from Aaron's family. There were 3,700 men with Jehoiada. ⁵Zadok was also in that group. He was a brave young soldier. He came with 22 officers from his family.

⁶From the family group of Benjamin there were 3,000 men. They were Saul's relatives. Most of those men stayed faithful to Saul's family until that time.

⁷From the family group of Ephraim there were 20,800 men. They were brave soldiers. They were famous men in their own families.

⁸From half of Manasseh's family group there were 18,000 men. They were called by name to come and make David king.

⁹From the family of Issachar there 200 men that were leaders. Those men understood the right thing for Israel to do at the right time. Their relatives were with them and under their command.

¹⁰From the family group of Zebulun there were 50,000 men. Those men were trained soldiers. They were ready for war with every kind of weapon. They were very faithful to David.

¹¹From the family group of Naphtali there were 1,000 officers. They had 37,000 men with them. Those men carried shields and spears.

¹²From the family group of Dan there were 28,600 men ready for war.

¹³From the family group of Asher there were 40,000 trained soldiers ready for war.

¹⁴From the east side of the Jordan River, there were 120,000 men from the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. Those men had every kind of weapon.

¹⁵All those men were brave fighters. They came to the town of Hebron fully agreed to make David king of all Israel. All the other people of Israel also agreed that David should be king. ¹⁶The men spent three days at Hebron

with David. They ate and drank, because their relatives had prepared food for them. ¹⁷Also, their neighbors from the areas where the family groups of Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali live brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and cows. They brought much flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine, oil, cattle, and sheep. The people in Israel were very happy.

Bringing Back The Box of the Agreement

13 David talked with all the officers of his army. ²Then David called the people of Israel together. He said to them: "If you think it is a good idea, and if it is what the Lord wants, let us send a message to our brothers in all the areas of Israel. Let's also send the message to the priests and Levites that live with our brothers in their towns and the fields near those towns. Let the message tell them to come and join us. ³Let's bring the Box of the Agreement* back to us in Jerusalem. We did not take care of the Box of the Agreement while Saul was king." ⁴So all the people of Israel agreed with David. They all thought it was the right thing to do.

⁵So David gathered all the people of Israel from the Shihor River in Egypt to the town of Lebo Hamath. They came together to bring the Box of the Agreement* back from the town of Kiriath Jearim. ⁶David and all the people of Israel with him went to Baalah of Judah. (Baalah is another name for Kiriath Jearim.) They went there to bring out the Box of the Agreement. That Box of the Agreement is the Box of God the Lord. He sits above the Cherub angels.* It is the Box that is called by the Lord's Name.

⁷The people moved the Box of the Agreement* from Abinadab's house. They put it on a new wagon. Uzzah and Ahio were driving the wagon.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

"David and all the people of Israel were celebrating before God. They were praising God and singing songs. They were playing harps,* lyres,* drums, cymbals,* and trumpets.

"They came to Kidon's threshing floor.* The bulls pulling the wagon stumbled. And the Box of the Agreement* almost fell. Uzzah reached out with his hand to catch the Box. "The Lord became very angry at Uzzah. The Lord killed Uzzah because he touched the Box. So Uzzah died there in front of God. "God showed his anger at Uzzah. And this made David angry. Since that time until now that place has been called "Perez Uzzah."

"David was afraid of God that day. David said, "I can't bring the Box of the Agreement* here to me!" "So David did not take the Box of the Agreement with him to the City of David.* He left the Box of the Agreement at Obed-Edom's house. Obed-Edom was from the city of Gath. "The Box of the Agreement stayed with Obed-Edom's family in his house for three months. The Lord blessed Obed-Edom's family and everything Obed-Edom owned.

David's Kingdom Grows

14 Hiram was king of the city of Tyre. Hiram sent messengers to David. Hiram also sent logs from cedar trees, stonecutters* and carpenters* to David. Hiram sent them to build a house for David. "Then David could see that the Lord had really made him king of Israel. The Lord made David's

kingdom very large and powerful. God did this because he loved David and the people of Israel.

"David married more women in the city of Jerusalem. And he had more sons and daughters. "These are the names of David's children born in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, "Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, "Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, "Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

"The Philistine people heard David had been anointed* king of Israel. So, all the Philistine people went to look for David. David heard about it. Then he went out to fight the Philistine people. "The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim and stole their things. "David asked God, "Should I go and fight the Philistine people? Will you let me defeat them?"

The Lord answered David, "Go. I will let you defeat the Philistine people."

"Then David and his men went up to the town of Baal Perazim. There David and his men defeated the Philistine people. David said, "Waters break out from a broken dam. In the same way, God has broken through my enemies! God has done this through me." That is why that place is named Baal Perazim.* "The Philistine people had left their idols at Baal Perazim. David ordered his men to burn those idols.

Another Victory Over the Philistine people

"The Philistines attacked the people living in the Valley of Rephaim again. "David prayed to God again. God answered David's prayer. God said, "David, don't go in front of the Philistine people when you attack. Instead, go around them. Hide in the place where the balsam trees are. "Climb the trees." From the top of the trees you will hear the sounds of

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

lyres An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a ringing noise.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

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Perez Uzzah This means "the outburst at Uzzah."

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

stonecutters Men that cut stones and build things with them.

carpenters Men that build things with wood.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

Baal Perazim This name means, "the Lord breaks through."

marching. At that time, attack the Philistines. I (God) will go out in front of you and defeat the Philistine army!" ¹⁶David did what God told him to do. So David and his men defeated the Philistine army. They killed Philistine soldiers all the way from the town of Gibeon to the town of Gezer. ¹⁷So David became famous in all the countries. The Lord made all nations afraid of David.

The Box of the Agreement Brought to Jerusalem

15 David built houses for himself in the City of David.* Then he built a place to put the Box of the Agreement.* He set up a tent for it. ²Then David said, "Only the Levites are permitted to carry the Box of the Agreement. The Lord chose them to carry the Box of the Agreement and to serve him forever."

³David got all the people of Jerusalem together to bring the Box of the Agreement* to the place he had made for it. ⁴David called together the descendants* of Aaron and the Levites. ⁵There were 120 people from Kohath's family group. Uriel was their leader. ⁶There were 220 people from Merari's family group. Asaiah was their leader. ⁷There were 130 people from Gershon's family group. Joel was their leader. ⁸There were 200 people from Elizaphan's family group. Shemaiah was their leader. ⁹There were 80 people from Hebron's family group. Eliel was their leader. ¹⁰There were 112 people from Uzziel's family group. Amminadab was their leader.

David Talks to the Priests and Levites

¹¹Then David asked the priests Zadok and Abiathar to come to him. David also asked these Levites to come to him: Uriel, Asaiah,

Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. ¹²David said to them, "You are the leaders from the family group of Levi. You and the other Levites must make yourselves holy.* Then bring the Box of the Agreement* to the place I have made for it. ¹³The last time we did not ask the Lord how to carry the Box of the Agreement. You Levites did not carry it, and that is why the Lord punished us."

¹⁴Then the priests and Levites made themselves holy* so they could carry the Box of the Agreement* of the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁵The Levites used the special poles to carry the Box of the Agreement on their shoulders, the way Moses commanded. They carried the Box just like the Lord said.

The Singers

¹⁶David told the Levite leaders to get their brothers, the singers. The singers were to take their lyres,* harps, and cymbals* and sing happy songs.

¹⁷Then the Levites got Heman and his brothers, Asaph and Ethan. Heman was Joel's son. Asaph was Berechiah's son. Ethan was Kushaiah's son. These men were from the Merari family group. ¹⁸There was also a second group of Levites. They were Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel. These men were the Levite guards.

¹⁹The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan played bronze cymbals.* ²⁰Zechariah, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah played the alamothe* lyres.*

²¹Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azariah played the sheminith* harps. This was their job forever. ²²The Levite leader Kenaniah was in charge of

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

holy This means "prepared to serve the Lord."

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a ringing noise.

alamoth We don't know the exact meaning of this word, but it probably means "high-pitched."

sheminith We don't know the exact meaning of this word, but it probably means "low-pitched."

the singing. Kenaniah had this job because he was very skilled at singing.

²Berekiah and Elkanah were two of the guards for the Box of the Agreement.* ³The priests Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer had the job of blowing trumpets, as they walked, in front of the Box of the Agreement. Obed-Edom and Jehiah were the other guards for the Box of the Agreement.

⁴David, the elders (*leaders*) of Israel, and the generals went to get the Box of the Agreement.* They brought it out from Obed-Edom's house. Everyone was very happy! ⁵God helped the Levites that carried the Box of the Agreement. They sacrificed* seven bulls and seven rams. ⁶All the Levites that carried the Box of the Agreement wore robes made from fine linen.* Kenaniah, the man in charge of the singing, and all the singers had robes made from fine linen. David also wore a robe made from fine linen. And David also wore an ephod* made of fine linen.

⁷So all the people of Israel brought up the Box of the Agreement.* They shouted, they blew rams' horns and trumpets, and they played cymbals,* lyres,* and harps.

⁸When the Box of the Agreement* arrived at the City of David,* Michal looked through a window. Michal was Saul's daughter. She saw King David dancing and playing around. And she lost her respect for David—she thought he was being foolish.

16 The Levites brought the Box of the Agreement* and put it inside the tent

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sacrifice(d) To offer a gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

linen A type of cloth.

ephod We do not know exactly what this was. It may have been a special vest or coat, like the High Priest of Israel wore (see Exodus 28). Or it may have been an idol.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a ringing noise.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.

David had set up for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to God.

⁹After David had finished giving the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he used the Lord's name to bless the people. ¹⁰Then he gave a loaf of bread, some dates, and raisins to every Israelite man and woman.

¹¹Then David chose some of the Levites to serve before the Box of the Agreement.* Those Levites had the job of celebrating and giving thanks and praise to the Lord, the God of Israel.

¹²Asaph was the leader of the first group. Asaph's group played the cymbals.* Zechariah was the leader of the second group. The other Levites were: Uzziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel. These men played the lyres* and harps. ¹³Benaiah and Jahaziel were the priests that always blew the trumpets before the Box of the Agreement. ¹⁴That was the time that David first gave to Asaph and his brothers the job of singing praises to the Lord:

David's Song of Thanks

- Praise the Lord.
Call on his name.
Tell people about the great things the Lord has done.
- Sing to the Lord.
Sing praises to the Lord.
Tell about all his wonderful works.
- Be proud of the Lord's holy name;
Let all people that look to the Lord for help be happy.
- Look to the Lord and his strength;
Always go to him for help.
- Remember the wonderful things the Lord has done.
Remember his decisions, and the powerful things he has done.
- Children of Israel, servant of the Lord,
you descendants* of Jacob,
you are the Lord's chosen people.
- The Lord is our God,

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

- His power is everywhere.
- ¹⁵ Remember his Agreement;
He gave those commandments for a
thousand generations.
- ¹⁶ It is the Agreement the Lord made with
Abraham.
It is the promise the Lord made to Isaac.
- ¹⁷ The Lord made it a law for the people of,
Jacob.
It is the Agreement with Israel* that
will last forever.
- ¹⁸ The Lord said to Israel:
"I will give the land of Canaan to you.
The promised land will belong to
you."
- ¹⁹ God's people were only a few in number.
They were strangers in the land.
- ²⁰ They went from one nation to another.
They went from one kingdom to
another.
- ²¹ But the Lord did not let anyone hurt
them.
The Lord scolded kings because he
loved Israel—
- ²² The Lord told those kings:
"Don't hurt my chosen people,
Don't hurt my prophets."
- ²³ Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Each day you must tell the good news
about the Lord saving us.
- ²⁴ Tell all nations about the Lord's glory.
Tell all people about the Lord's
wonderful works.
- ²⁵ The Lord is great;
The Lord should be greatly praised.
The Lord should be honored more than
other gods—
- ²⁶ Because all the gods of those people
are only idols.*
- But the Lord made the skies.
- ²⁷ The Lord has glory and honor;
The Lord is like a bright and shining
light.
- ²⁸ Families and people,

- praise the Lord's glory and power!
- ²⁹ Praise the Lord's glory.
Show honor to his name.
Bring your offering to the Lord.
Worship the Lord and his holy beauty.
- ³⁰ The whole earth should shake with fear in
front of the Lord!
But he made the earth strong,
the world won't move.
- ³¹ Let the earth and skies be happy.
Let people everywhere say,
"The Lord rules!"
- ³² Let the sea and everything in it shout!
Let the fields and everything in them
show their joy!
- ³³ The trees of the forest will sing with joy
in front of the Lord!
Why? Because the Lord is coming.
He is coming to judge the world.
- ³⁴ Oh, thank the Lord—he is good.
The Lord's love continues forever.
- ³⁵ Say to the Lord,
"Save us, O God our Savior.
Gather us together,
and save us from the other nations.
Then we can praise your holy name;
Then we can praise you with our songs."
- ³⁶ Bless the Lord God of Israel forever and
forever.

All the people said "Amen!" They praised
the Lord!

³⁷Then David left Asaph and his brothers
there in front of the Box of the Agreement.*
David left them there to serve in front of it
every day. ³⁸David also left Obed-Edom and 68
other Levites to serve with Asaph and his
brothers. Obed-Edom and Hosah were guards.
Obed-Edom was Jeduthun's son.

³⁹David left Zadok the priest and the other
priests that served with him in front of the

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Gen. 32:28.
idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the
Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten
Commandments written on them and the other things that
proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in
the Sinai Desert.

Lord's tent* at the high place* in Gibeon. "Every morning and evening Zadok and the other priests offered burnt offerings on the altar of burnt offerings. They did this to follow the rules written in the Law of the Lord which the Lord had given Israel. "Heman and Jeduthun and all the other Levites were chosen by name to sing praises to the Lord, because the Lord's love continues forever! "Heman and Jeduthun were with them. They had the job of blowing the trumpets and playing cymbals.* They also had the job of playing other musical instruments when songs were sung to God. Jeduthun's sons guarded the gates.

"After the celebration, all the people left. Each person went to his own home. And David also went home to bless his family.

God's Promise to David

17 After David had moved into his house, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Look, I am living in a house made of cedar wood, but the Box of the Agreement* sits under a tent. I want to build a temple* for God."

"Nathan answered David, "You may do what you want to do. God is with you."

"But that night the word of God came to Nathan. "God said, "Go and tell these things to my servant David: The Lord says, 'David, you are not the person to build a house for me to live in. "Since the time I brought Israel out of Egypt until now, I have not lived in a house. I have moved around in a tent. I chose people to be special leaders for the people of Israel. Those leaders were like shepherds for my

people. While I was going around in Israel to different places, I never said to any of those leaders: Why haven't you built a house of cedar wood for me?"

"Now, tell these things to my servant David: The Lord All-Powerful says, 'I took you from the fields and from taking care of the sheep. I made you king of my people Israel. 'I have been with you everywhere you went. I went ahead of you and I killed your enemies. Now I will make you one of the most famous men on earth. 'I am giving this place to my people Israel. They will plant their trees, and they will sit in peace under those trees. They won't be bothered anymore. Evil people won't hurt them like they did at first. "Those bad things happened, but I chose leaders to care for my people Israel. And I will also defeat all your enemies.

"I tell you that the Lord will build a house for you.* "When you die, and you join your ancestors,* then I will let your own son be the new king. The new king will be one of your sons. And I will make his kingdom strong. "Your son will build a house for me. I will make your son's family rule forever. "I will be his Father, and he will be my son. Saul was the king before you. And I took away my support from Saul. But I will never stop loving your son. "I will put him in charge of my house and kingdom forever. His rule will continue forever!"

"Nathan told David about the vision* and about all of the things that God had said.

David's Prayer

"Then King David went to the Holy Tent, and sat before the Lord. David said, "Lord God, you have done so much for me and my family. And I don't understand why. "Besides all those

Lord's tent Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "meeting tent." The people would go to this tent to meet with God. The people used this tent until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

high place A place for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

cymbals Brass plates that were hit together to make a ringing noise.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

I tell ... you This does not mean a real house. It means the Lord would make men from David's family kings for many, many years.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

things, you let me know what will happen to my family in the future. You have treated me like a very important man. "What more can I say? You have done so much for me. And I am only your servant. You know that. "Lord, you have done this wonderful thing for me. And you did it because you wanted to. "There is no one like you, Lord. There is no God except you. We have never heard of any god doing wonderful things like those! "Is there any other nation like Israel? No! Israel is the only nation on earth that you have done these wonderful things for. You took us out of Egypt and you made us free. You made yourself famous! You went in front of your people, and forced other people to leave their land for us! "You took Israel to be your people forever. And Lord, you became their God!

"Lord, you made this promise to me and my family. Now, keep your promise forever. Do what you said you would! "Show that you can be trusted! And may people honor your name forever. Then people will say, 'The Lord All-Powerful is Israel's God!' I am your servant! Please let my family be strong and continue before you.

"My God, you told me that you will build a house for me.* So I, your servant, decided to pray to you. "Lord, you are God. You have promised this good thing to me. "Lord, you have been so kind to bless my family! You promised it will continue before you forever. You have blessed my family, Lord, so my family will be blessed forever."

David Wins Over Different Nations

18 Later David attacked the Philistine people. He defeated them. He took the town of Gath and the other small towns around it from the Philistine people.

"Then David defeated the country of Moab. The Moabite people became David's servants. They brought tribute* to David.

My God ... me This does not mean a real house. It means the Lord would make men from David's family kings for many, many years.

tribute Money and gifts paid by one king to the king that defeated him.

"David also fought against Hadadezer's army. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. David fought against that army all the way to the town of Hamath. David did this because Hadadezer tried to spread his kingdom all the way to the Euphrates River. "David took from Hadadezer 1,000 chariots, 7,000 chariot drivers, and 20,000 soldiers. David also crippled most of Hadadezer's horses that were used for pulling chariots. But David saved enough horses to pull 100 chariots.

"The Aramean people from the city of Damascus came to help Hadadezer. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. But David defeated and killed 22,000 Aramean soldiers. "Then David put fortresses* in the city of Damascus in Aram. The Aramean people became David's servants and brought tribute* to him. So the Lord gave victory to David everywhere he went.

"David took the gold shields from Hadadezer's army leaders and brought them to Jerusalem. "David also took much bronze from the towns of Tebah and Cun. Those towns belonged to Hadadezer. Later, Solomon used this bronze to make the bronze tank, the bronze columns, and other things made from bronze for the temple.*

"Tou was king of the city of Hamath. Hadadezer was the king of Zobah. Tou heard that David had defeated all of Hadadezer's army. "So Tou sent his son Hadoram to King David to ask for peace and to bless him. He did this because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him. Hadadezer had been at war with Tou before. Hadoram gave David all kinds of things made of gold, silver, and bronze. "King David made those things holy and gave them to the Lord. David did the same thing with all the silver and gold he had gotten from Edom, Moab, the Ammonite people, the Philistine people, and Amalekite people.

"Abishai son of Zeruiah killed 18,000 Edomite people in the Valley of Salt. "Abishai

fortresses A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

also put fortresses* in Edom and all the Edomite people became David's servants. The Lord gave David victory everywhere he went.

David's Important Officials

"David was king over all of Israel. He did what was right and fair for everyone. ¹³Joab son of Zeruiah was the commander of David's army. Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud wrote about the things David did. ¹⁴Zadok and Abimelech were the priests. Zadok was Ahitub's son, and Abimelech was Abiathar's son. Shavsha was the scribe.* ¹⁵Benaiah was responsible for leading the Kerethite and Pelethite people.* Benaiah was Jehoiada's son. And David's sons were important officials. They served at King David's side.

The Ammonites Shame David's Men

19 Nahash was king of the Ammonite people. Nahash died, and his son became the new king. ²Then David said, "Nahash was kind to me, so I will be kind to Hanun, Nahash's son." So David sent messengers to comfort Hanun about the death of his father. David's messengers went to the country of Ammon to comfort Hanun.

³But the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, "Don't be fooled. David didn't really send these men to comfort you or to honor your dead father! No, David sent his servants to spy on you and your land. David really wants to destroy your country!" ⁴So Hanun arrested David's servants and cut off their beards.* Hanun also cut their clothes off at the hip. Then he sent them away.

⁵David's men were too embarrassed to go home. Some people went to David and told him what happened to his men. So King David sent this message to his men: "Stay in the town of

Jericho until your beards grow again. Then you can come back home."

⁶The Ammonite people saw they had caused themselves to become hated enemies of David. Then Hanun and the Ammonite people used 75,000 pounds* of silver to buy chariots and chariot drivers from Mesopotamia.* They also got chariots and chariot drivers from the towns of Maacah and Zobah in Aram. ⁷The Ammonite people bought 32,000 chariots. They also paid the king of Maacah and his army to come and help them. The king of Maacah and his people came and set up a camp near the town of Medeba. The Ammonite people themselves came out of their towns and got ready for battle.

⁸David heard that the Ammonite people were getting ready for war. So he sent Joab and the whole army of Israel to fight the Ammonite people. ⁹The Ammonites came out and got ready for battle. They were near the city gate. The kings that had come to help stayed out in the fields by themselves.

¹⁰Joab saw that there were two army groups ready to fight against him. One group was in front of him and the other group was behind him. So Joab chose some of the best soldiers of Israel. He sent them out to fight against the army of Aram. ¹¹Joab put the rest of the army of Israel under Abishai's command. Abishai was Joab's brother. Those soldiers went out to fight against the Ammonite army. ¹²Joab said to Abishai, "If the army from Aram is too strong for me, then you must help me. But if the Ammonite army is too strong for you, then I will help you." ¹³Let's be brave and strong while we fight for our people and for the cities of our God! May the Lord do what he thinks is right."

¹⁴Joab and the army with him attacked the army from Aram. The army from Aram ran away from Joab and his army. ¹⁵The Ammonite army saw that the army from Aram was running away, so they also ran away. They ran away from Abishai and his army. The Ammonites went back to their city, and Joab went back to Jerusalem.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often became an expert at knowing the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

Kerethite ... people These were the king's bodyguards.
cut ... beards It was against the Law of Moses for an Israelite man to cut off his beard.

75,000 pounds Literally, "1,000 kikars."

Mesopotamia Literally, "Aram Naharaim."

¹⁶The Aramean leaders saw that Israel had defeated them. So they sent messengers to get help from the Aramean people living east of the Euphrates River. Shophach was the commander of Hadadezer's army from Aram. Shophach also led those other Aramean soldiers.

¹⁷David heard the news that the people of Aram were gathering for battle. So David gathered all the people of Israel. David led them across the Jordan River. They came face to face with the Arameans. David got his army ready for battle and they attacked the Arameans. ¹⁸The Arameans ran away from the Israelites. David and his army killed 7,000 Aramean chariot drivers and 40,000 Aramean soldiers. David and his army also killed Shophach the commander of the Aramean army.

¹⁹When Hadadezer's officers saw that Israel had defeated them, they made peace with David. They became David's servants. So the Arameans refused to help the Ammonites again.

Joab Destroys the Ammonites

20 In the spring,* Israel out to battle. That was the time of year when kings went out to battle, but David stayed in Jerusalem. The army of Israel went to the country of Ammon and destroyed it. Then they went to the city of Rabbah. The army camped around the city—they stayed there to keep people from going in or out of the city. Joab and the army of Israel fought against the city of Rabbah until they destroyed it.

²David took the crown from their king's* head. That gold crown weighed about 75 pounds.* There were valuable stones in the crown. The crown was put on David's head. Then David had a great many valuable things brought out of the city of Rabbah. ³David brought out the people in Rabbah and forced them to work with saws, iron picks, and axes.

In the spring The Hebrew says, "At the return of the year."
their king's Or, "Milcom," the god of the Ammonite people.

75 pounds Literally, "1 kikar."

David did the same thing to all the cities of the Ammonite people. Then David and all the army went back to Jerusalem.

Philistine Giants Are Killed

⁴Later the people of Israel had war with the Philistine people at the town of Gezer. At that time, Sibbecai from Hushah killed Sippai. Sippai was one of the sons of the giants. So those Philistine people became like slaves to the Israelites.

⁵Another time, the people of Israel again had war against the Philistine people. Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi. Lahmi was Goliath's brother. Goliath was from the town of Gath. Lahmi's spear was very big and heavy. It was like the large pole on a loom.*

⁶Later, the Israelites fought another war with the Philistine people at the town of Gath. In this town there was a very large man. He had 24 fingers and toes. That man had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. He also was a son of the giants. ⁷So when that man made fun of Israel, Jonathan killed him. Jonathan was Shimea's son. Shimea was David's brother.

⁸Those Philistine men were sons of the giants from the town of Gath. David and his servants killed those giants.

David Sins By Counting Israel

21 Satan was against the people of Israel. He encouraged David to count the people of Israel. ²So David said to Joab and the leaders of the people, "Go and count all the people of Israel. Count everyone in the country—from the town of Beersheba all the way to the town of Dan. Then tell me, so I will know how many people there are."

³But Joab answered, "May the Lord make his nation 100 times as large! Sir, all the people of Israel are your servants. Why do you want to do this thing, my lord and king? You will make all the people of Israel guilty of sin!"

loom A machine for making cloth from thread.

⁴But King David was stubborn. Joab had to do what the king said. So Joab left and went through all the country of Israel counting the people. Then Joab came back to Jerusalem⁵ and told David how many people there were. In Israel there were 1,100,000 men who could use a sword. And there were 470,000 men in Judah who could use a sword. ⁶Joab did not count the family groups of Levi and Benjamin. Joab did not count those family groups because he did not like King David's order. ⁷David had done a bad thing in God's sight. So God punished Israel.

God Punishes Israel

⁸Then David said to God, "I have done something very foolish. I have done a very bad sin by counting the people of Israel. Now, I beg you to take the sin away from me, your servant."

⁹⁻¹⁰Gad was David's seer.* The Lord said to Gad, "Go and tell David: 'This is what the Lord says: I am going to give you three choices. You must choose one of them. Then I will punish you the way you choose.'"

¹¹⁻¹²Then Gad went to David. Gad said to David, "The Lord says, 'David, choose which punishment you want: three years without enough food, or three months of running away from your enemies while they use their swords to chase you, or three days of punishment from the Lord. Terrible sicknesses will spread through the country, and the Lord's angel will go through Israel destroying the people.' David, God sent me. Now, you must decide which answer I will give to him."

¹³David said to Gad, "I am in trouble! I don't want some man to decide my punishment. The Lord is very merciful, so let the Lord decide how to punish me."

¹⁴So the Lord sent terrible sicknesses to Israel, and 70,000 people died. ¹⁵God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But when the angel started to destroy Jerusalem, the Lord saw it and felt sorry. So the Lord decided not to destroy Jerusalem. The Lord said to the angel

who was destroying, "Stop! That is enough!" The angel of the Lord was standing at the threshing floor* of Araunah the Jebusite.*

¹⁶David looked up and saw the Lord's angel in the sky. The angel was holding his sword over the city of Jerusalem. Then David and the elders (*leaders*) bowed with their faces touching the ground. David and the elders (*leaders*) were wearing the special clothes to show their sadness. ¹⁷David said to God, "I am the one that sinned! I gave the order for the people to be counted! I was wrong! The people of Israel did not do anything wrong! Lord my God, punish me and my family! But stop the terrible sicknesses that is killing your people!"

¹⁸Then the angel of the Lord spoke to Gad. He said, "Tell David to build an altar* to worship the Lord. David must build that altar near the threshing floor* of Araunah the Jebusite.*" ¹⁹Gad told those things to David, and David went to Araunah's threshing floor.

²⁰Araunah was threshing* the wheat. Araunah turned around and saw King David. Araunah's four sons ran away to hide. ²¹David went to Araunah. Araunah left the threshing floor. He walked to David bowed with his face to the ground in front of him.

²²David said to Araunah, "Sell me your threshing floor.* I will pay you the full price. Then I can use the area to build an altar* to worship the Lord. Then the terrible sicknesses will be stopped."

²³Araunah said to David, "Take this threshing floor*! You are my lord and king. Do anything you want. Look, I will also give you cows for the burnt offering.* I will give the wooden floor boards so you can burn them for the fire on the altar.* And I will give the wheat

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Jebusite A person that lived in Jerusalem before the Israelites took the city. "Jebus" was the old name for Jerusalem.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls from the grain.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

for the grain offering. I will give all this to you!"

²But King David answered Araunah, "No, I will pay you the full price. I won't take anything that is yours and give it to the Lord. I won't give offerings that cost me nothing."

³So David gave Araunah about 15 pounds* of gold for the place. ⁴David built an altar* for worshipping the Lord there. David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. David prayed to the Lord. The Lord answered David by sending fire down from heaven. The fire came down on the altar of burnt offering. ⁵Then the Lord commanded the angel to put his sword back into its sheath.*

⁶David saw that the Lord had answered him on the threshing floor* of Araunah, so David offered sacrifices to the Lord. ⁷(The Holy Tent* and the altar of burnt offerings were at the high place* in the town of Gibeon. Moses had made the Holy Tent while the people of Israel were in the desert. ⁸David could not go to the Holy Tent to speak with God because he was afraid. David was afraid of the angel of the Lord and his sword.)

22 David said, "The temple* of the Lord God and the altar for burning offerings for the people of Israel will be built here."

David Makes Plans for the Temple

¹David gave an order for all foreigners living in Israel to be gathered together. David chose stonecutters* from that group of foreigners. Their job was to cut stones ready to

be used for building God's temple.* ²David got iron for making nails and hinges for the gate doors. David also got more bronze than could be weighed. ³And David got more cedar logs than could be counted. The people from the cities of Sidon and Tyre brought many cedar logs to David.

⁴David said, "We should build a very great temple* for the Lord. But my son Solomon is young and he hasn't learned the things he needs to know. The Lord's temple should be very great. It should be famous in all the nations because of its greatness and beauty. That is why I will make plans for building the Lord's temple." So David made many plans for building the temple, before he died.

⁵Then David called for his son Solomon. David told Solomon to build the temple* for the Lord God of Israel. ⁶David said to Solomon, "My son, I wanted to build a temple for the name of the Lord my God. ⁷But the Lord said to me, 'David, you have fought many wars and you have killed many people. So you can't build a temple for my name. ⁸But you have a son that is a man of peace. I will give your son a time of peace. His enemies around him will not bother him. His name is Solomon.* And I will give Israel peace and quiet during the time that Solomon is king. ⁹Solomon will build a temple for my name. Solomon will be my son, and I will be his Father. And I will make Solomon's kingdom strong. And someone from his family will rule Israel forever!'"

¹⁰David also said, "Now, son, may the Lord be with you. May you be successful and build the temple* for the Lord your God, like he said you would. ¹¹The Lord will make you the king of Israel. May the Lord give you wisdom and understanding so you can lead the people and obey the law of the Lord your God. ¹²And you will have success, if you are careful to obey the rules and laws that the Lord gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid.

15 pounds Literally, "600 shekels."

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

sheath The case for carrying swords.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Holy Tent Also called the "tabernacle." The people would go to this tent to meet with God. The people used this tent until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

high place(s) Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for worshipping God.

stonecutters Men that cut stones and build things with them.

Solomon This name is like the Hebrew word meaning, "peace."

¹⁴"Solomon, I have worked hard making plans for building the Lord's temple.* I have given 3,750 tons* of gold. And I have given about 37,500 tons* of silver. I have given so much bronze and iron that it can't be weighed. And I have given wood and stone. Solomon, you can add to them. ¹⁵You have many stonecutters* and carpenters.* You have men skilled in every kind of work. ¹⁶They are skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. You have more skilled workers than can be counted. Now begin the work. And may the Lord be with you."

¹⁷Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon. ¹⁸David said to these leaders, "The Lord your God is with you. He has given you a time of peace. The Lord helped me to defeat the people living around us. The Lord and his people are now in control of this land. ¹⁹Now give your heart and soul to the Lord your God, and do the things he says. Build the holy place of the Lord God. Build the temple* for the Lord's name. Then bring the Box of the Agreement* and all the other holy things into the temple."

Plans for the Levites to Serve in the Temple

23 David became an old man, so he made his son Solomon the new king of Israel. ²David gathered all the leaders of Israel. He also gathered the priests and Levites. ³David counted the Levites that were 30 years old and older. All together there were 38,000 Levites. ⁴David said, "24,000 Levites will supervise the work of building the Lord's temple.* 6,000 Levites will be policemen and judges. ⁵4,000 Levites will be gatekeepers. And 4,000 Levites will be musicians. I made special

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship. 3,750 tons Literally, "100,000 kikars."

37,500 tons Literally, "1,000,000 kikars."

stonecutters Men that cut stones and build things with them.

carpenters Men that build things with wood.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

musical instruments for them. They will use those instruments to praise the Lord."

⁶David separated the Levites into three groups. They were the family groups of Levi's three sons, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

The Gershon Family Group

⁷From the family group of Gershon there were Ladan and Shimei. ⁸Ladan had three sons. His oldest son was Jehiel. His other sons were Zethan and Joel. ⁹Shimei's sons were Shelomoth, Haziël, and Haran. These three sons were leaders in Ladan's families.

¹⁰Shimei had four sons. They were Jahath, Ziza, Jeush, and Beriah. ¹¹Jahath was the oldest son and Ziza was the second son. But Jeush and Beriah did not have many children. So Jeush and Beriah were counted like one family.

The Kohath Family Group

¹²Kohath had four sons. They were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ¹³Amram's sons were Aaron and Moses. Aaron was chosen to be very special. Aaron and his descendants* were chosen to be special forever and ever. They were chosen to prepare the holy things for the Lord's service. Aaron and his descendants were chosen to burn the incense* before the Lord. They were chosen to serve the Lord as priests. They were chosen to use the Lord's name and give blessings to the people forever.

¹⁴Moses was the man of God.* Moses's sons were part of the family group of Levi. ¹⁵Moses's sons were Gershom and Eliezer. ¹⁶Gershom's oldest son was Shubael. ¹⁷Eliezer's oldest son was Rehabiah. Eliezer had no other sons. But Rehabiah had very many sons.

¹⁸Izhar's oldest son was Shelomith.

¹⁹Hebron's oldest son was Jeriah. Hebron's second son was Amariah. Jahaziel was the third son, and Jekameam was the fourth son.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

²Uzziel's oldest son was Micah, and Isshiah was his second son.

The Merari Family Group

²Merari's sons were Mahli and Mushi. Mahli's sons were Eleazar and Kish. ²Eleazar died without having sons. He only had daughters. Eleazar's daughters married their own relatives. Their relatives were Kish's sons. ²Mushi's sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth. There were three sons in all.

The Levites' Work

²These were Levi's descendants.* They were listed by their families. They were the leaders of families. Each person's name was listed. The people that were listed were 20 years old or older. They served in the Lord's temple.*

²David had said, "The Lord God of Israel has given peace to his people. The Lord has come to Jerusalem to live there forever. ²So the Levites don't need to carry the Holy Tent* or any of the things used in its services any more."

²David's last instructions for the people of Israel was to count the descendants* from the family group of Levi. They counted the Levite men that were 20 years old and older.

²The Levites had the job of helping Aaron's descendants* in the service of the Lord's temple.* The Levites also cared for the temple yard and the side rooms in the temple. They had the job of making all holy things pure. It was their job to serve in God's temple. ²They were responsible for putting the special bread on the table in the temple. They also were responsible for the flour, the grain offerings, and the bread made without yeast. They were also responsible for the baking pans and the

mixed offerings. They did all the measuring. ²The Levites stood every morning and gave thanks and praise to the Lord. They also did this every evening. ²The Levites prepared all the burnt offerings* to the Lord on the special days of rest, at the New Moon* celebrations, and at all the special holidays. They served before the Lord every day. There were special rules for how many Levites should serve each time. ²So the Levites did all the things they were supposed to do. They took care of the Holy Tent.* They took care of the Holy Place.* And they helped their relatives, the priests, Aaron's descendants. The Levites helped the priests with the services at the Lord's temple.

The Groups of the Priests

24 These were the groups of Aaron's sons: Aaron's sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. ²But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did. And Nadab and Abihu had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. ²David separated the family groups of Eleazar and Ithamar into two different groups. David did that so those groups could do the duties of work they were given to do. David did this with the help of Zadok and Ahimelech. Zadok was a descendant* of Eleazar, and Ahimelech was a descendant of Ithamar. ²There were more leaders from Eleazar's family than from Ithamar's. There were 16 leaders from Eleazar's family and there were eight leaders from Ithamar's family. ²Men were chosen from each family. They were chosen by throwing lots.* Some of the men were chosen to be in charge of the Holy Place.* And other men were chosen to serve as priests. All of these men were from the families of Eleazar and Ithamar.

descendant(s) A person's children and all their future families.

temple Here this means the Holy Tent at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord.

Holy Tent Also called the "tabernacle." The people would go to this tent to meet with God. The people used this tent until Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Shemaiah was the secretary. He was Nethanel's son. Shemaiah was from the family group of Levi. Shemaiah wrote the names of those descendants.* He wrote those names in front of King David and these leaders: Zadok the priest, Ahimelech, and the leaders from the families of the priests and of the Levites. Ahimelech was Abiathar's son. Each time they threw the lots* a man was chosen, and Shemaiah wrote down that man's name. So they divided the work among the men from families of Eleazar and Ithamar.

- ⁷ The first group was Jehoiarib's group.
The second group was Jedaiah's group.
- ⁸ The third group was Harim's group.
The fourth group was Seorim's group.
- ⁹ The fifth group was Malkijah's group.
The sixth group was Mijamin's group.
- ¹⁰ The seventh group was Hakkoz's group.
The eighth group was Abijah's group.
- ¹¹ The ninth group was Jeshua's group.
The tenth group was Shecaniah's group.
- ¹² The eleventh group was Eliashib's group.
The twelfth group was Jakim's group.
- ¹³ The thirteenth group was Huppah's group.
The fourteenth group was Jeshebeab's group.
- ¹⁴ The fifteenth group was Bilgah's group.
The sixteenth group was Immer's group.
- ¹⁵ The seventeenth group was Hezir's group.
The eighteenth group was Happizzzez's group.
- ¹⁶ The nineteenth group was Pethahiah's group.
The twentieth group was Jehezkel's group.
- ¹⁷ The twenty-first group was Jakin's group.
The twenty-second group was Gamul's group.

secretary A man that wrote down and copied books and letters.

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

- ¹⁸ The twenty-third group was Delaiah's group.
The twenty-fourth group was Maaziah's group.

¹⁹These were the groups chosen to serve in the Lord's temple.* They obeyed Aaron's rules for serving in the temple. The Lord God of Israel had given those rules to Aaron.

The Other Levites

²⁰These are the names of the rest of Levi's descendants*:

- From Amram's descendants: Shubael.
- From Shubael's descendants: Jehdeiah.
- ²¹ From Rehabiah: Isshiah. (Isshiah was the oldest son.)
- ²² From Izhar family group: Shelomoth.
From Shelomoth's family: Jahath.
- ²³ Hebron's oldest son was Jeriah.
Amariah was Hebron's second son.
Jahaziel was his third son,
and Jekameam was his fourth son.
- ²⁴ Uzziel's son was Micah.
Micah's son was Shamir.
- ²⁵ Isshiah was Micah's brother. Isshiah's son was Zechariah.
- ²⁶ Merari's* descendants were Mahli, Mushi, and Jaaziah his son.
- ²⁷ Jaaziah son of Merari had sons named Shoham and Zaccur.
- ²⁸ Mahli's son was Eleazar. But Eleazar did not have sons.
- ²⁹ Kish's son was Jerahmeel.
- ³⁰ Mushi's sons were Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

Those are the leaders of Levite families. They are listed by their families. ³¹They were chosen for special jobs. They threw lots* like their relatives, the priests. The priests were Aaron's descendants.* They threw lots in front of David the king, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the leaders of the priests' and Levite families. The

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Merari The Hebrew in verses 26 and 27 is very hard to understand.

older families and the younger families were treated the same when their jobs were chosen.

The Music Groups

25 David and the leaders of the army separated Asaph's sons for special service. Asaph's sons were Heman and Jeduthun. Their special service was to prophesy* God's message by using harps, lyres,* and cymbals.* Here is a list of the men that served this way:

¹From Asaph's family: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah. King David chose Asaph to prophesy.* And Asaph led his sons.

²From Jeduthun's family: Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiiah, Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah. There were six of them. Jeduthun led his sons. Jeduthun used harp* to prophesy* and give thanks and praise to the Lord.

³Heman's sons that served were Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael, and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth. ⁴All these men were Heman's sons. Heman was David's seer.* God promised to make Heman strong. So Heman had many sons. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. ⁵Heman led all his sons in singing in the Lord's temple.* Those sons used cymbals,* lyres,* and harps. That was their way of serving in God's temple. King David chose those men. ⁶Those men and their relatives from the family group of Levi were trained to sing. There were 288 men that learned to sing praises to the Lord. ⁷They threw lots* to choose the different kinds of work each person was to do. Every person was treated the same. Young and old were treated the same. And the teacher was treated the same as the student.

prophesy To announce God's message.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

cymbals A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

temple Here this means the Holy Tent at Shiloh where people went to worship the Lord.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

⁸First, there were 12 men chosen from Asaph's (Joseph), sons and relatives.

Second, there were 12 men chosen from Gedaliah's sons and relatives.

¹⁰Third, there were 12 men chosen from Zaccur's sons and relatives.

¹¹Fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Izri's sons and relatives.

¹²Fifth, there were 12 men chosen from Nethaniah's sons and relatives.

¹³Sixth, there were 12 men chosen from Bukkiah's sons and relatives.

¹⁴Seventh, there were 12 men chosen from Asarelah's sons and relatives.

¹⁵Eighth, there were 12 men chosen from Jeshaiiah's sons and relatives.

¹⁶Ninth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattaniah's sons and relatives.

¹⁷Tenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shimei's sons and relatives.

¹⁸Eleventh, there were 12 men chosen from Azarel's sons and relatives.

¹⁹Twelfth, there were 12 men chosen from Hashabiah's sons and relatives.

²⁰Thirteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Shubael's sons and relatives.

²¹Fourteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mattithiah's sons and relatives.

²²Fifteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Jerimoth's sons and relatives.

²³Sixteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hananiah's sons and relatives.

²⁴Seventeenth, there were 12 men chosen from Joshbekashah's sons and relatives.

²⁵Eighteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Hanani's sons and relatives.

²⁶Nineteenth, there were 12 men chosen from Mallothi's sons and relatives.

²⁷Twentieth, there were 12 men chosen from Eliathah's sons and relatives.

²⁸Twenty-first, there were 12 men chosen from Hothir's sons and relatives.

²⁹Twenty-second, there were 12 men chosen from Giddalti's sons and relatives.

³⁰Twenty-third, there were 12 men chosen from Mahazioth's sons and relatives.

³¹Twenty-fourth, there were 12 men chosen from Romamti-Ezer's sons and relatives.

The Gate Keepers

26 The Groups of the Gatekeepers: These are the gatekeepers from the Korah family. Meshelemiah and his sons. (Meshelemiah was Kore's son. He was from Asaph's family group.) ²Meshelemiah had sons. Zechariah was the oldest son. Jediel was the second son. Zebadiah was the third son. Jathiel was the fourth son. ³Elam was the fifth son. Jehohanan was the sixth son. And Eliehoenai was the seventh son.

⁴Obed-Edom and his sons. Obed-Edom's oldest son was Shemaiah. Jehoabad was his second son. Joah was his third son. Sacar was his fourth son. Netanel was his fifth son. ⁵Ammiel was his sixth son. Issachar was his seventh son. And Peullethai was his eighth son. God truly blessed Obed-Edom. ⁶*Obed-Edom's son was Shemaiah. Shemaiah also had sons. Shemaiah's sons were leaders in their father's family because they were brave soldiers. ⁷Shemaiah's sons were Othni, Rephael, Obed, Elzabad, Elihu, and Semakiah. Elzabad's relatives were skilled workers. ⁸All those men were Obed-Edom's descendants.* Those men and their sons and relatives were powerful men. They were good guards. Obed-Edom had 62 descendants.

⁹Meshelemiah had sons and relatives that were powerful men. In all there were 18 sons and relatives.

¹⁰These are the gatekeepers from the Merari family. There was Hosah. Shimri was chosen to be the first son. Shimri was not really the oldest, but his father chose him to be the firstborn* son. ¹¹Hilkiah was his second son. Tebaliah was his third son. And Zechariah was his fourth son. In all Hosah had 13 sons and relatives.

¹²These were the leaders of the groups of the gatekeepers. The gatekeepers had a special way

to serve in the Lord's temple,* just like their relatives did. ¹³Each family was given a gate to guard. Lots* were thrown to choose a gate for a family. Young and old were treated the same.

¹⁴Meshelemiah was chosen to guard the East Gate. Then lots* were thrown for Meshelemiah's son Zechariah. Zechariah was a wise counselor. Zechariah was chosen for the North Gate. ¹⁵Obed-Edom was chosen for the South Gate. And Obed-Edom's sons were chosen to guard the house where the valuable things were kept. ¹⁶Shuppim and Hosah were chosen for the West Gate and the Shalleketh Gate on the upper road.

Guards stood side by side. ¹⁷Six Levites stood guard every day at the East Gate. Four Levites stood guard every day at the North Gate. Four Levites stood guard at the South Gate. And two Levites guarded the house where the valuable things were kept. ¹⁸There were four guards at the western court.* And there were two guards on the road to the court.

¹⁹These were the groups of the gatekeepers. Those gatekeepers were from the families of Korah and Merari.

The Moneykeeper and Other Officials

²⁰Ahijah was from the family group of Levi. Ahijah was responsible for taking care of the valuable things in God's temple.* Ahijah also was responsible for the places where the holy things were kept.

²¹Ladan was from Gershon's family. Jehieli was one of the leaders of Ladan's family group. ²²Jehieli's sons were Zetham and Zetham's brother Joel. They were responsible for the valuable things in the Lord's temple.*

²³Other leaders were chosen, from the family groups of Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. ²⁴Shubael was the leader responsible for the valuable things in the Lord's temple.* Shubael was Gershom's son. Gershom was Moses' son. ²⁵These were Shubael's relatives:

Obed-Edom God blessed Obed-Edom when the Box of the Agreement stayed at his house. See 1 Chronicles 21.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

firstborn The first born child. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for worshiping God.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

court We do not know the exact meaning of this word.

His relatives from Eliezer were: Rehabiah, Eliezer's son. Jeshaiiah, Rehabiah's son. Joram, Jeshaiiah's son. Zicri, Joram's son. And Shelomith, Zicri's son. *Shelomith and his relatives were responsible for all the things David had collected for the temple.

The officers of the army also gave things for the temple.* "They gave some of the things taken in wars. They gave those things to be used in building the Lord's temple. "Shelomith and his relatives also took care of all the holy things given by Samuel the seer,* Saul son of Kish; Abner son of Ner; and Joab son of Zeruiah. Shelomith and his relatives took care of all the holy things that people gave to the Lord.

"Kenaniah was from the Izhar family. Kenaniah and his sons had work outside the temple. They worked as policemen and judges in different places in Israel. "Hashabiah was from the Hebron family. Hashabiah and his relatives were responsible for all the Lord's work and for the king's business in Israel west of the Jordan River. There were 1,700 powerful men in Hashabiah's group. "The family history of the Hebron family shows that Jeriah was their leader. When David had been king for 40 years, he ordered his people to search through the family histories for strong and skilled men. Some of those men were found among the Hebron family living in the town of Jazer in Gilead. "Jeriah had 2,700 relatives that were powerful men and leaders of families. King David gave those 2,700 relatives the responsibility of leading the family groups of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh in taking care of the Lord's work and the king's business.

Army Groups

27 This is the list of the Israelite people that served the king in the army. Each group was on duty one month each year. There were rulers of families, captains, generals, and

the policemen that served the king. Each army group had 24,000 men.

"Jashobeam was in charge of the first group for the first month. Jashobeam was Zabdiel's son. There were 24,000 men in Jashobeam's group. "Jashobeam was one of Perez's descendants.* Jashobeam was leader of all the army officers for the first month.

"Dodai was in charge of the army group for the second month. He was from Ahoah. There were 24,000 men in Dodai's group.

"The third commander was Benaiah. Benaiah was the commander for the third month. Benaiah was Jehoiada's son. Jehoiada was the leading priest. There were 24,000 men in Benaiah's group. "He was the same Benaiah that was a brave soldier from the Thirty Heroes. Benaiah led those men. Benaiah's son Ammizabad was in charge of Banaiah's group.

"The fourth commander was Asahel. Asahel was the commander for the fourth month. Asahel was Joab's brother. Later, Asahel's son Zebadiah took his place as commander. There were 24,000 men in Asahel's group.

"The fifth commander was Shamhuth. Shamhuth was the commander for the fifth month. Shamhuth was from Zerah's family. There were 24,000 men in Shamhuth's group.

"The sixth commander was Ira. Ira was the commander for the sixth month. Ira was Ikkesh's son. Ikkesh was from the town of Tekoa. There were 24,000 men in Ira's group.

"The seventh commander was Helez. Helez was the commander for the seventh month. He was from the Pelonite people, and a descendant* of Ephraim. There were 24,000 men in Helez' group.

"The eighth commander was Sibbecai. Sibbecai was the commander for the eighth month. Sibbecai was from Hushah. Sibbecai was from Zerah's family. There were 24,000 men in Sibbecai's group.

"The ninth commander was Abiezer. Abiezer was the commander for the ninth

temple The special building in Jerusalem for worshiping God.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

month. Abiezer was from the town of Anathoth. Abiezer was from the family group of Benjamin. There were 24,000 men in Abiezer's group.

¹⁰The tenth commander was Maharai. Maharai was the commander for the tenth month. Maharai was from Netophah. He was from Zerah's family. There were 24,000 men in Maharai's group.

¹¹The eleventh commander was Benaiah. Benaiah was the commander for the eleventh month. Benaiah was from Pirathon. Benaiah was from the Ephraim family group. There were 24,000 men in Benaiah's group.

¹²The twelfth commander was Heldai. Heldai was the commander for the twelfth month. Heldai was from Netophah. Heldai was from Othniel's family. There were 24,000 men in Heldai's group.

Leaders of the Family Groups

¹³The leaders of the family groups of Israel were:

- Reuben: Eliezer son of Zicri.
- Simeon: Shephatiah son of Maacah.
- ¹⁷ Levi: Hashabiah son of Kemuel.
- Aaron: Zadok.
- ¹⁸ Judah: Elihu. (Elihu was one of David's brothers.)
- Issachar: Omri son of Michael.
- ¹⁹ Zebulun: Ishmaiah son of Obadiah.
- Naphtali: Jeremoth son of Azriel.
- ²⁰ Ephraim: Hoshea son of Azaziah.
- West Manasseh: Joel son of Pedaiiah.
- ²¹ East Manasseh: Iddo son of Zechariah.
- Benjamin: Jaasiel son of Abner.
- ²² Dan: Azarel son of Jeroham.

Those were the leaders of the family groups of Israel.

David Counts the Israelites

²³David decided to count the men in Israel. There were very many people because God promised to make the people of Israel as many as the stars in the sky. So David only counted the men that were 20 years old and older. ²⁴Joab

son of Zeruiah began to count the people, but he did not finish.* God became angry with the people of Israel. That is why the number of the people was not put in the history book about King David's rule.

The King's Administrators

²⁵This is the list of men that were responsible for the king's property:

Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the king's storerooms.

Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storerooms in the small towns, villages, fields, and towers.

²⁶ Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the field workers.

²⁷ Shimei was in charge of the fields of grapes. Shimei was from the town of Ramah.

Zabdi was in charge of the storage and care of the wine that came from the fields of grapes. Zabdi from Shepham.

²⁸ Baal-Hanan was in charge of the olive trees and sycamore trees in the western hill country. Baal-Hanan was from Geder.

Joash was in charge of storing the olive oil.

²⁹ Shitrai was in charge of the cows in the area of Sharon. Shitrai was from the area of Sharon.

Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the cows in the valleys.

³⁰ Obil was in charge of the camels. Obil was an Ishmaelite.

Jehdeiah was in charge of the donkeys. Jehdeiah was a Meronothite.

³¹ Jaziz was in charge of the sheep. Jaziz was from the Hagrite people.

All these men were the leaders that took care of King David's property.

Joab ... finish God stopped him. See 1 Chronicles 21:1-30.

²Jonathan was a wise counselor and a scribe.* Jonathan was David's uncle. Jehiel son of Hacmoni took care of the king's sons. ³Ahithophel was the king's counselor. Hushai was the king's friend. Hushai was from the Arkite people. ⁴Jehoiada and Abiathar later took Ahithophel's place as the king's counselor. Jehoiada was Benaiah's son. Joab was the commander of the king's army.

David's Plans for the Temple

28 David gathered all the leaders of the people of Israel. He commanded all those leaders to come to Jerusalem. David called all the leaders of the family groups, the commanders of the army groups serving the king, the captains, the generals, the officials taking care of the property and animals that belonged to the king and his sons, the king's important officials, the powerful heroes, and all the brave soldiers.

²King David stood up and said, "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. In my heart I wanted to build a place to keep the Box of the Lord's Agreement.* I wanted to build a place that would be God's footstool.* And I made the plans for building that house for God. ³But God said to me, 'No David, you must not build a house for my name. You must not do that because you are a soldier, and you have killed many men.'

⁴"The Lord God of Israel chose the family group of Judah to lead the twelve family groups of Israel. And then from that family group, the Lord chose my father's family. And from that family, God chose me to be the king of Israel forever! God wanted to make me king of Israel!

⁵The Lord has given me many sons. And from all those sons, the Lord chose Solomon to be the new king of Israel. But really, Israel is the Lord's kingdom. ⁶The Lord said to me, 'David, your son Solomon will build my temple* and the area around it. Why? Because I have chosen Solomon to be my son, and I will be his father.* ⁷Solomon is obeying my laws and commands now. If he continues to obey my laws, then I will make Solomon's kingdom strong forever!'

⁸David said, "Now, in front of all Israel and God, I tell you these things: Be careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God! Then you can keep this good land. And you can pass it on to your descendants* forever.

⁹"And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father. Serve God with a pure heart. Be happy in your heart (*mind*) to serve God. Why? Because the Lord knows what is in every person's heart (*mind*). The Lord understands everything you think. If you go to the Lord for help, you will get an answer. But if you turn away from the Lord, he will leave you forever. ¹⁰Solomon, you must understand that the Lord has chosen you to build his holy place—the temple.* Be strong and finish the job."

¹¹Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for building the temple.* Those plans were also for the porch around the temple, and for its buildings, its storerooms, its upper rooms, its inside rooms, and for the place for the mercy seat.* ¹²David had made plans for all parts of the temple. David gave those plans to Solomon. David gave him all the plans for the yard around the Lord's temple, and for all the rooms around it. David gave him the plans for the temple storerooms and for the storerooms where they kept the holy things used in the temple. ¹³David told Solomon about the groups

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often became an expert at the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

Footstool Usually this was a small stool in front of a chair, but here it means the temple. It is like God is the king sitting in his chair and resting his feet on the building David wanted to build.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for worshiping God.

I have ... father This showed God was making Solomon the king. See Psalm 2:7.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

mercy seat Part of the Box of the Agreement. The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "the place where sins are atoned (covered, erased, or forgiven)."

of the priests and Levites. David told Solomon about all the work of serving in the Lord's temple and about all the things to be used in the temple service. ¹⁴David told Solomon how much gold and silver should be used to make all the things to be used in the temple. ¹⁵There were plans for gold lamps and lampstands, and there were plans for silver lamps and lampstands. David told Solomon how much gold or silver to use for each lampstand and its lamps. The different lampstands were to be used where needed. ¹⁶David told how much gold should be for each table used for holy bread. David told how much silver should be used for the silver tables. ¹⁷David told how much pure gold should be used to make the forks, sprinkling bowls, and pitchers. David told how much gold should be used to make each gold dish, and how much silver should be used to make each silver dish. ¹⁸David told how much pure gold should be used for the altar of incense.* David also gave Solomon the plans for God's, chariot—the mercy seat* with the Cherub angels* spreading their wings over the Box of the Lord's Agreement.* The Cherub angels were made of gold.

¹⁹David said, "All these plans were written with the Lord guiding me. The Lord helped me understand everything in the plans."

²⁰David also said to his son Solomon, "Be strong and brave and finish this work. Don't be afraid, because the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will help you until all the work is finished. He will not leave you. You will build the Lord's temple.* ²¹The groups of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on God's

temple. Every skilled worker is ready to help you with all the work. The officials and all the people will obey every command you give."

Gifts for Building the Temple

29 King David said to all the people of Israel that were gathered together, "God chose my son Solomon. Solomon is young and does not know all that he needs to do this work. But the work is very important. This house isn't for people, this house is for the Lord God. ¹I have done my best to make plans to build my God's temple.* I have given gold for the things made of gold. I have given silver for the things made of silver. I have given bronze for the things made of bronze. I have given iron for the things made of iron. I have given wood for the things made of wood. I have also given onyx* stones for the settings,* mosaic tiles,* all kinds of valuable stones in many different colors, and white marble stones. I have given many, many of these things for the building of the Lord's temple. ²I am making a special gift of gold and silver things for my God's temple. I am doing this because I really want the temple of my God to be built. I am giving all these things to build this holy temple. ³I have given 110 tons* of pure gold from Ophir. I have given 260 tons* of pure silver. The silver is for covering the walls of the buildings in the temple. ⁴I have given gold and silver for all the things made of gold and silver. I have given gold and silver so skilled men can make all different kinds of things for the temple. Now, how many of you people of Israel are ready to give yourselves to the Lord today?"

⁵The family leaders, the leaders of the family groups of Israel, the generals, the captains, and the officials responsible for the king's work, were all ready and gave their valuable things. ⁷These are the things they gave

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

mercy seat Part of the Box of the Agreement. The Hebrew word can mean "lid," "cover," or "the place where sins are atoned (covered, erased, or forgiven)."

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Box of the Agreement Also called "The Ark of the Covenant," the box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for worshipping God.

onyx A semi-precious stone with many layers of blue or gray.

settings The frames that stones are mounted in.

mosaic tiles Literally, "stones set in mortar."

110 tons Literally, "3,000 kikars."

260 tons Literally, "7,000 kikars."

for God's house*: 190 tons* of gold; 375 tons* of silver; 675 tons* of bronze; and 3,750 tons* of iron. *People that had valuable stones gave them to the Lord's temple.* Jehiel took care of the valuable stones. Jehiel was from the Gershon family. *The people were very happy because their leaders were happy to give so much. The leaders were happy to give freely from good hearts. King David was also very happy.

David's Beautiful Prayer

¹⁰Then David praised the Lord in front of all of the people who were gathered together. David said:

"Lord God of Israel, our Father, praise you forever and ever!

¹¹ Greatness, power, glory, victory, and honor are yours,—

Everything in heaven and on earth belong to you;

The kingdom belongs to you, O Lord!

You are the Ruler over everything.

¹² Riches and honor come from you.

You rule everything.

You have power and strength.

You have the power to make anyone great or strong!

¹³ Now, our God, we thank you,

And we praise your glorious name!

¹⁴ All these things did not come from me and my people—

All these things come from you,

And we have given you things that came from you.

¹⁵ We are like strangers and travelers.

All our ancestors* were also strangers and travelers.

Our time on earth is like a shadow.

There is no hope.

* O Lord our God,

we have gathered all these things to build your temple.

We will build this temple to honor your name,

but all these things have come from you.

Everything belongs to you.

¹⁷ I know, also, my God, that you test people's hearts.

And you are happy when people do good things.

I was happy to give all these things from an honest heart.

Now I have seen your people gathered here, happy to give these things to you.

¹⁸ O Lord, you are the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel.*

Please help your people to always want to serve you.

And let them always turn their hearts to you.

¹⁹ And help my son Solomon be true to you.

Help him always obey your commands, laws, and rules.

Help Solomon to do these things,

and help him build the palace* I have planned."

²⁰Then David said to all the group of people gathered together, "Now give praise to the Lord your God." So all the people gave praise to the Lord God, the God their ancestors* worshiped. They bowed to the ground to give honor to the Lord and to the king.

Solomon Becomes King

²¹The next day the people made sacrifices* to the Lord. They offered burnt offerings to the Lord. They offered 1,000 bulls, 1,000 rams,*

God's house Another name for the temple in Jerusalem, the special place for Jewish worship.

190 tons Literally, "5,000 kikars and 10,000 darics."

375 tons Literally, "10,000 kikars."

675 tons Literally, "18,000 kikars."

3,750 tons Literally, "100,000 kikars."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

ancestors Literally, "fathers." This means a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Genesis 35:19.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

ram(s) A male sheep.

1,000 lambs, and they also gave drink offerings. There were many, many sacrifices made for all the people of Israel. ²²That day the people ate and drank—and the Lord was there with them. They were very happy!

And they made David's son Solomon king the second time.* They anointed* Solomon to be king, and they anointed Zadok to be priest. They did this in the place where the Lord was.

²³Then Solomon sat on the Lord's throne as king. Solomon took his father's place. Solomon was very successful. All the people of Israel obeyed Solomon. ²⁴All the leaders, soldiers, and all of King David's sons accepted Solomon as king and obeyed him. ²⁵The Lord made Solomon very great. All the people of Israel knew that the Lord was making Solomon great. The Lord gave Solomon the honor that a king should have. No king in Israel before Solomon had such honor.

David's Death

²⁶David son of Jesse was king over all Israel for 40 years. David was king in the city of Hebron for seven years. Then David was king in the city of Jerusalem for 33 years. ²⁷David died when he was old. David had lived a good, long life. David had many riches and honors. And David's son Solomon became the new king after him.

²⁸The things that King David did, from beginning to end, are written in the writings of Samuel the seer,* and in the writings of Nathan the prophet, and in the writings of Gad the seer. ²⁹Those writings tell all about the things David did as king of Israel. They also tell about David's power and all that happened to him. And they tell about what happened to Israel and to all the kingdoms around them.

And they made ... time Solomon was chosen to be king the first time when his half-brother Adonijah tried to make himself king. See 1 Kings 1:5-39.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on a person's head to show he was chosen by God to be a king, priest, or prophet.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

2 Chronicles

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

1 Solomon became a very strong king because the Lord his God was with him. The Lord made Solomon very great.

²Solomon spoke to all the people of Israel. He spoke to the captains, generals, judges, to every leader in all Israel, and to the leaders of the families. ³Then Solomon and all the people gathered together with him went to the high place* at the town of Gibeon. God's Meeting Tent* was there. The Lord's servant Moses made that tent when he and the people of Israel were in the desert. ⁴David had carried God's Box of the Agreement* from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem. David had made a place to put it in Jerusalem. David had set up a tent for God's Box of the Agreement in Jerusalem. ⁵Bezalel had made a bronze altar. Bezalel was Uri's son. Uri was Hur's son. But the bronze altar was in Gibeon in front of the Holy Tent. So Solomon and the people went to Gibeon to ask the Lord for advice. ⁶Solomon went up to the bronze altar in front of the Lord at the Meeting Tent. Solomon offered 1,000 burnt offerings* on the altar.

high place(s) Places for worshiping God or false gods.

These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (Tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

⁷That night God came to Solomon. God said, "Solomon, ask me what you want me to give you."

⁸Solomon said to God, "You have been very kind to my father David. You have chosen me to be the new king in my father's place. ⁹Now, Lord God, make your promise to my father David come true. You have chosen me to be king of a very large nation. There are so many people they are like the dust of the earth. ¹⁰Now give me wisdom and knowledge. Then I can lead these people in the right way. No one can rule these people without your help!"

¹¹God said to Solomon, "Your attitude is good. You have not asked for wealth, or things rich people have, or to be honored. You have not asked for your enemies to be killed. You have not asked for a long life. But you did ask for wisdom and knowledge for yourself. You wanted wisdom and knowledge to lead my people. I chose you to be king over these people. ¹²So I will give wisdom and knowledge to you. I will also give you wealth, and things rich people have, and I will honor you. The kings that lived before you have never had as much wealth and honor. And the kings that will live after you will not have as much wealth and honor."

¹³Solomon left the high place* at the town of Gibeon. He left the Meeting Tent* and went back to Jerusalem. Solomon was king over Israel.

Solomon Builds His Army and Wealth

¹"Solomon gathered horses and chariots.* Solomon had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. Solomon put the horses and chariots in the chariot cities.* Solomon also put some horses and chariots in Jerusalem. That is where the king's home was. ¹⁵In Jerusalem, Solomon gathered much silver and gold. He got so much silver and gold that it was just like plain rocks. Solomon gathered much cedar wood. He got so much cedar wood that it was like the sycamore trees in the low country. ¹⁶Solomon brought in horses from Egypt and Kue.* The king's business men bought the horses in Kue. ¹⁷Solomon's business men bought a chariot from Egypt for 600 shekels* of silver, and a horse for 150 shekels of silver. The business men then sold the horses and chariots to all the kings of the Hittite people and to the kings of Aram.

Solomon Makes Plans to Build the Temple

2 Solomon planned to build a temple* to give honor to the Lord's name. Solomon also planned to build a king's house for himself. ²Solomon chose 70,000 men to carry things. He chose 80,000 men to cut out stones in the mountains. And he chose 3,600 men to supervise the workers.

³Then Solomon sent a message to Hiram. Hiram was the king of the city of Tyre. Solomon said, "Help me like you helped David my father. You sent wood to him from cedar trees so he could build a house for himself to live in. 'I will build a temple* to give honor to the name of the Lord my God. I will give this temple to the Lord so my people can worship him. We will worship the Lord when we do these things: When we burn incense* in front

of the Lord, and we put the holy bread* on the table regularly, and we burn sacrifices* every morning and every evening. The Lord will be worshiped on the Sabbath days, on the New Moon* days, and on the other feast days the Lord our God has commanded us to celebrate. This is a rule for the people of Israel to obey forever.

⁴"The temple* I build will be great, because our God is greater than all gods. ⁵But no person can really build a house for our God. Heaven—yes, even the highest of heavens, cannot hold God! I cannot build a temple for God. I can only build a place to burn incense* in front of God.

⁶"Now send me a man skillful in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron. That man must know how to work with purple, red, and blue materials. That man must know how to make carvings with the skilled men with me in Judah and Jerusalem. My father David chose these skilled men. ⁷Also send me wood from cedar trees, pine trees, and algum trees from the country of Lebanon. I know your servants are experienced at cutting down trees from Lebanon. My servants will help your servants. ⁸Get much wood for me. The temple* I am going to build will be great and wonderful. ⁹I have given 125,000 bushels* of wheat for food, 125,000 bushels* of barley, 115,000 gallons* of wine, and 115,000 gallons* of oil to your servants that cut down the trees for wood."

¹⁰Then Hiram answered Solomon. Hiram sent a message to Solomon. This is what that message said: "Solomon, the Lord loves his people. That is why he chose you to be their king." ¹¹Hiram also said, "Praise the Lord God of Israel! He made heaven and earth. He gave a

holy bread This was the special bread that was put in the Holy Tent. It is also called, "shewbread" or "the bread of the Presence." Normally, only the priests should eat this bread. See Lev. 24:5-9.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days in worship God.

125,000 bushels Literally, "20,000 cors." One cor is about 6 bushels.

115,000 gallons Literally, "20,000 baths."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

chariot cities Cities where special places were planned to keep the horses and chariots.

Kue Or Cilicia, a country in what is now southern Turkey.

shekels A measure of weight.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

wise son to King David. Solomon, you have wisdom and understanding. You are building a temple* for the Lord. You are also building a king's house for yourself. ¹¹I will send a skilled man to you. He has understanding of many different kinds of art. His name is Hiram-Abi. ¹²His mother was from the family group of Dan. And his father was from the city of Tyre. Hiram-Abi has skill in working with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood. Hiram-Abi also has skill in working with purple, blue, and red materials, and expensive linen.* And Hiram-Abi also is skilled in carvings. He is skilled in following any plan you show him. He will help your skilled men. And he will help David's skilled men. I will obey David, your father. ¹³You talked about sending wheat, barley, oil, and wine to me. Send them to my servants. ¹⁴And we will cut wood from the country of Lebanon. We will cut as much wood as you need. We will use flat boats to carry the wood on the sea to the town of Joppa. Then you can carry the wood to Jerusalem."

¹⁵Then Solomon counted all the strangers living in the country of Israel. This was after the time when David counted the people. David was Solomon's father. They found 153,600 strangers in the country. ¹⁶Solomon chose 70,000 strangers to carry things. Solomon chose 80,000 strangers to be cutters of stone in the mountains. And Solomon chose 3,600 strangers to be the supervisors to keep the people working.

Solomon Builds the Temple

3 Solomon began to build the Lord's temple* at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah is the place where the Lord came to David, Solomon's father. Solomon built the temple on the place that David had made ready. This place was at the threshing floor* that had belonged to Ornan. Ornan was a

man from the Jebusite people. ²Solomon began building in the second month of the fourth year he ruled Israel.

³This is how Solomon was told to measure God's temple.* The foundation was 90 feet* long and 30 feet* wide. Solomon used the old cubit measure when he measured the temple. ⁴The porch in front of the temple was 30 feet* long and 30 feet high.* Solomon covered the inside of the porch with pure gold. ⁵Solomon put panels made of cypress wood on the walls of the larger room. Then he put pure gold over the cypress panels. And he put pictures of palm trees and chains on the pure gold. ⁶Solomon put valuable stones in the temple for beauty. The gold Solomon used was gold from Parvaim.* ⁷Solomon covered the inside of the temple with the gold. Solomon put the gold on the ceiling beams, doorposts, walls, and doors. Solomon carved cherub angels on the walls.

⁸Then Solomon made the Most Holy Place.* The Most Holy Place was 30 feet* long and 30 feet* wide. It was as wide as the temple* was. Solomon put pure gold on the walls of the Most Holy Place. The gold weighed about 23 tons.* ⁹The gold nails weighed 1 1/4 pounds.* Solomon covered the upper rooms with gold. ¹⁰Solomon made two cherub angels* to put in the Most Holy Place. The workers covered the cherub angels with gold. ¹¹Each wing of the cherub angels was 7 1/2 feet* long. The total length of the wings was 30 feet.* One wing of the first cherub angel touched the wall on one side of the room. The other wing touched one wing of

90 feet Literally, "60 cubits."

30 feet Literally, "20 cubits."

30 feet high Or, "20 cubits." Some of the Hebrew writings say "120 cubits high," or 180 feet. But other writings show that the first writing probably did say "20 cubits," or 30 feet.

Parvaim This was a place where there was much gold. It was probably in the country of Ophir.

Most Holy Place The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshipped.

23 tons Literally, "600 talents."

1 1/4 pounds Literally, "50 shekels."

cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

7 1/2 feet Literally, "5 cubits."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

linen A type of cloth.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

the second cherub angel. ¹²And the other wing of the second cherub angel touched the other wall on the other side of the room. ¹³The cherub angels' wings covered a total of 30 feet.* The cherub angels stood looking inside toward the Holy Place.*

¹⁴Solomon made the curtain* by using blue, purple, and red materials and expensive linen.* Solomon made cherub angels on the curtain.

¹⁵Solomon put two columns in front of the temple.* The columns were 52½ feet* tall. The top part of the two columns was 7½ feet* long.

¹⁶Solomon made chains in a necklace. He put the chains on the tops of the columns. Solomon made 100 pomegranates* and put them on the chains. ¹⁷Then Solomon put the columns up in front of the temple. One column stood on the right side. The other column stood on the left side. Solomon named the column on the right side "Jakin."* And Solomon named the column on the left side "Boaz."*

Furniture for the Temple

4 Solomon used bronze to make an altar.* That bronze altar was 30 feet* long, 30 feet wide, and 18 feet* tall. ²Then Solomon used melted bronze to make a large tank.* The large tank was round and it measured 18 feet across from edge to edge. And it measured 7½

30 feet Literally, "20 cubits."

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

curtain This curtain was a large piece of cloth that hung between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place so that no one could see the Lord's Box of the Agreement and cherub angels that were in there.

linen A type of cloth.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship. 52½ feet Literally, "35 cubits."

7½ feet Literally, 5 cubits.

pomegranates A fruit found in Israel and the area around. It looks like an apple. These were not real pomegranates, but were shaped like pomegranates.

Jakin In Hebrew, Jakin seems to mean "He establishes."

Boaz In Hebrew, Boaz seems to mean "In him is strength."

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

18 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

large tank Literally, "Sea."

feet* tall and 45 feet* all around it. ³There were carvings of bulls all the way around and under the edge of the large bronze tank* for 18 feet. The bulls were put in two rows on the tank when the tank was shaped. ⁴The large bronze tank was on top of twelve large statues of bulls. Three bulls looked toward the north. Three bulls looked toward the west. Three bulls looked toward the south. Three bulls looked toward the east. The large bronze tank was on top of these bulls. All the bulls stood with their rear ends to each other and to the center. ⁵The large bronze tank was 3 inches thick.* The edge of the large tank was like the edge of a cup. The edge looked like a lily blossom. It could hold about 17,500 gallons.*

⁶Solomon made ten basins. He put five basins on the right side of the large bronze tank. And Solomon put five basins on the left side of the large bronze tank. These ten basins were to be used to wash the things offered for the burnt offerings.* But the large bronze tank was to be used by the priests for washing before they offered sacrifices.*

⁷Solomon made ten lampstands of gold. He followed the plans made for these lampstands. He put the lampstands in the temple.* There were five lampstands on the right side and five lampstands on the left side. ⁸Solomon made ten tables and put them in the temple.* Five tables were on the right side and five tables were put on the left side in the temple. And Solomon used gold to make 100 basins. ⁹Solomon also made the Priests' yard,* the Great yard, and the doors for the yards. He used bronze to cover the doors that opened to the yard. ¹⁰Then he put the large bronze tank* on the right side of the temple on the southeast side.

¹¹Huram made the pots, shovels, and basins. Then Hiram finished his work for King

45 feet Literally, "30 cubits."

large bronze tank Literally, "Sea."

3 inches thick Or, "as thick as a hand-breadth."

17,500 gallons Or 3,000 baths. One bath is 6 gallons.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

yard A special area outside the temple.

Solomon on God's temple.* ¹²Huram had made the two columns and the large bowls on the top parts of the two columns. Huram also made the two net decorations to cover the two large bowls on the top parts of the two columns. ¹³Huram made 400 pomegranates* for the two net decorations. There were two rows of pomegranates for each net. The nets covered the large bowls on the top parts on the two columns. ¹⁴Huram also made the stands and the bowls on the stands. ¹⁵Huram made the one large bronze tank* and twelve bulls under the tank. ¹⁶Huram made the pots, shovels, forks and all the things for King Solomon for the Lord's temple. These things were made of polished bronze. ¹⁷King Solomon first poured these things in clay molds. The molds were made in the Jordan Valley between the towns of Succoth and Zeredah. ¹⁸Solomon made so many of these things that no person tried to weigh the bronze used.

¹⁹Solomon also made the things for God's temple.* Solomon made the golden altar.* He made the tables where the bread of the Presence was put. ²⁰Solomon made the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold. The lamps were to burn in the way planned for them in front of the Holy Place* inside. ²¹Solomon used pure gold to make the flowers, lamps, and tongs.* ²²Solomon used pure gold to make the trimmers, bowls, pans and the censers.* Solomon used pure gold to make the doors for the temple, the inside doors for the Most Holy Place* and the doors for the main hall.

5 Then all the work Solomon had done for the Lord's temple* was finished. Solomon

brought in all the things that his father David had given for the temple. Solomon brought all the things in that were made of silver and gold and all the furniture. Solomon put all those things in the treasury rooms of God's temple.

The Holy Box Carried Into the Temple

¹Solomon gathered the elders of Israel, all the leaders of the family groups, and family leaders in Israel. He gathered them all in Jerusalem. Solomon did this so they could bring the Box of the Lord's Agreement* up from David's city. David's city is Zion. ²All men of Israel met together with King Solomon at the feast. This feast was held in the seventh month.

³When all the elders of Israel arrived, the Levites picked up the Box of the Agreement.* ⁴Then the priests and the Levites carried the Box of the Agreement to Jerusalem. The priests and Levites also brought the Meeting Tent* and all the holy things that were in it to Jerusalem. ⁵King Solomon and all the people of Israel met in front of the Box of the Agreement. King Solomon and all the people of Israel sacrificed* sheep and bulls. There were so many sheep and bulls no person could count them. ⁶Then the priests brought the Box of the Lord's Agreement to the place that was made ready for it. That place was the Most Holy Place* inside the temple.* The Box of the Agreement was put under the wings of the cherub angels.* ⁷The cherub angels spread their wings over the place where the Box of the Agreement was. The cherub angels stood over the Box of the Agreement and the poles used to carry the Box. ⁸The poles were long enough that their ends could be seen from the front of the Most Holy

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
pomegranates They were a fruit found in Israel and the area around. It looks like an apple. These were not real pomegranates but were shaped like pomegranates.

large bronze tank Literally, "Sea."

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

tongs Something looking like scissors, used to hold hot coals.

censers Bowls used to carry fire.

Most Holy Place The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

Meeting Tent The Holy Tent (Tabernacle) where the people of Israel went to meet with God.

sacrifice(d) To kill a special animal and burn it on an altar as a gift to God.

cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Place. But no person could see the poles from the outside of the temple. The poles are still there even today. "There was nothing in the Box of the Agreement except the two tablets.* Moses had put those two tablets in the Box of the Agreement at Mount Horeb. Horeb was the place where the Lord made an Agreement with the people of Israel. That happened after the people of Israel came out of Egypt.

"Then all the priests who went into the Holy Place* came out. They had made themselves holy. It was not important at that time which group of priests they were from. They all made themselves holy after coming out of the Holy Place. "And all the Levite singers stood at the east side of the altar.* All of Asaph's, Heman's, and Jeduthun's singing groups were there. And their sons and relatives were there also. Those Levite singers were dressed in white linen.* They had cymbals,* lyres,* and harps. There were 120 priests there with those Levite singers. Those 120 priests blew trumpets. "Those who blew the trumpets and those who sang were like one person. They made one sound when they praised and thanked the Lord. They made a loud noise with the trumpets, cymbals,* and instruments of music. This is what they sang:

"The Lord is good,
The Lord's kindness continues forever!"

Then the Lord's temple* was filled with a cloud. "The priests could not continue to serve because of the cloud. This was because the Lord's glory filled God's temple.

6 Then Solomon said, "The Lord said he would live in the dark cloud. "I have built a house for you to live in, O Lord. It is a high house, a place for you to live in forever!"

two tablets They were the two tablets on which God wrote the Ten Commandments.

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

linen A type of cloth.

cymbals A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Solomon's Speech

¹King Solomon turned around and blessed all the people of Israel gathered in front of him. "Solomon said, "Give praise to the Lord God of Israel! The Lord has done what he promised to do when he talked to David my father. This is what the Lord God said: "Since the time I brought my people out from the country of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from any family group of Israel for a place to build a house for my name. I have not chosen a man to lead my people, the people of Israel. "But now I have chosen Jerusalem as a place for my name. And I have chosen David to lead my people Israel."

²"My father David wanted to build a temple* for the name of the Lord God of Israel. "But the Lord said to my father, 'David, when you wanted to build a temple for my name, you did well. "But, you cannot build the temple. But your own son will build the temple for my name.' "Now, the Lord has done what he said he would do. I am the new king in my father's place. David was my father. Now I am Israel's king. That is what the Lord promised. And I have built the temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. "I have put the Box of the Agreement* in the temple. The Box of the Agreement is where the Lord's Agreement is kept. The Lord made this Agreement with the people of Israel."

Solomon's Prayer

³Solomon stood in front of the Lord's altar.* He was standing in front all the people of Israel who were gathered together. Then Solomon spread his hands and arms out. ⁴Solomon had made a bronze platform* 7½ feet long, 7½ feet wide and 7½ feet high* and

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

platform Something like a table on where a person stood so all the people could see the person speaking.

7½ feet long ... high Literally, "5 cubits long, 5 cubits wide, and 5 cubits high."

placed it in the middle of the outside yard.* Then he stood on the platform and kneeled in front of all the people of Israel who were gathered together. Solomon spread his hands out toward the sky. ¹⁴Solomon said:

"O Lord God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth. You keep your agreement of love and kindness. You keep your agreement with your servants if they live right with all their hearts and obey you. ¹⁵You kept your promise to your servant David. David was my father. You made a promise with your mouth. And today you have made that promise come true with your hands. ¹⁶Now, O Lord God of Israel, keep your promise to your servant David. This is what you promised: You said, 'David, you will not fail to have a man from your family sit on Israel's throne in front of me. This will happen only if your sons are careful in what they do. They must obey my law the same as you have obeyed my law.' ¹⁷Now, O Lord God of Israel, let your promise come true. You gave this promise to your servant David.

¹⁸"But we know that you, O God, will not really live on the earth with people. Heaven and the highest of heavens cannot hold you! And we know that this temple* I built cannot hold you! ¹⁹But pay attention to my prayer and to my beggings for mercy. O Lord my God, listen to me calling out to you! Listen to the prayer that I am praying to you. I am your servant. ²⁰I pray that your eyes will be open to look at this temple day and night. You said you would put your name in this place. May you hear my prayers when I pray while I look at this temple. ²¹Hear my prayers, and the prayers your people Israel pray. Hear our prayers while we pray looking at this temple. Hear from where you live in heaven. And when you hear our prayers, forgive us.

²²"A person might be accused of doing something wrong against another person. When that happens, the accused person will have to use your name to promise (that he is innocent). When he comes to make the promise in front of

your altar* in the temple, ²³then hear from heaven. Act, and judge your servants. Punish the bad person and make him suffer the same things he made other people suffer. Prove that the person that has done right is innocent.

²⁴"An enemy might defeat your people Israel because your people have sinned against you. And then if the people of Israel come back to you and confess your name and pray and beg to you in this temple,* ²⁵then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel. Bring them back into the land you gave to them and to their ancestors.*

²⁶"The sky might close up so that there is no rain. This will happen if the people of Israel sin against you. And if the people of Israel are sorry and pray as they look at this temple,* and confess your name, and stop doing their sin because you are punishing them, ²⁷then hear from heaven. Hear and forgive their sins. The people of Israel are your servants. Then teach them the right way that they should live. And send rain on your land. That is the land you gave to your people.

²⁸"There might be a famine* in the land, or terrible sicknesses, or disease in the crops, or mildew, or locusts, or grasshoppers. Or if enemies attack the people of Israel in their cities, or if there is any kind of sickness in Israel, ²⁹and then a prayer or begging is made by any of your people of Israel—each person knowing his own trouble and pain—and if that person spreads his hands and arms out while looking at this temple,* ³⁰then hear from heaven. Heaven is where you live. Hear and forgive. Give to each person what he should get, because you know what is in each person's heart. Only you know what is in a person's heart. ³¹Then the people will fear and obey you as long as they live in the land you gave our ancestors.*

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

famine A time when there is not enough rain for crops to grow. People and animals die without enough food or water.

yard A special area outside the temple.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

³²"There might be a stranger who is not one of your people of Israel, but who comes here from a country far away. And that stranger comes because of your great name and because of your strong hand and your arm reaching out. When this person comes and prays while looking at this temple,* ³³then hear from heaven. Heaven is where you live. And do what the stranger asks you to do. Then all the peoples of the earth will know your name and respect you, the same as your people Israel respects you. And all the people of the earth will know that this temple I built is called by your name.

³⁴"When you send your people to some place to fight against their enemies, and they pray to you as they look toward this city you chose and toward the temple* I built for your name, ³⁵then hear their prayer from heaven and hear their beggings and help them.

³⁶"People will sin against you—there is not a person that does not sin—and you will become angry with them. You will let an enemy defeat them, and be captured and forced to go to a land far away or near. ³⁷But then they will change their minds and beg you while they are in the land where they are prisoners. They will say, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong and we have acted wickedly.' ³⁸And then they will come back to you with all their heart and all their soul in the land where they are prisoners. And they will pray as they look toward their land, the land you gave their ancestors,* and toward the city that you chose. And they will pray as they look toward the temple* I built for your name. ³⁹When this happens, hear from heaven. Heaven is your home. Accept their prayer and their beggings and help them, and forgive your people who have sinned against you. ⁴⁰Now, my God, I ask you, open your eyes and your ears. Listen and pay attention to the prayers we are praying in this place.

⁴¹ "Now, get up, O Lord God,

and come to your resting place,
you and the Box of the Agreement*
that shows your strength.

Let your priests be dressed with salvation,
O Lord God, and let your holy people be
joyful and happy.

⁴² O Lord God, don't refuse your anointed*
one.

Remember the faithful works of your
servant David!"

The Temple Is Given to the Lord

7 When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from the sky and burned up the burnt offering* and the sacrifices.* The Lord's glory filled the temple.* ²The priests could not enter the Lord's temple because the Lord's glory filled it. ³All the people of Israel saw the fire come down from heaven. The people of Israel also saw the Lord's glory on the temple. They bowed their faces down low to the ground on the pavement. They worshiped and thanked the Lord. And they were saying,

"The Lord is good,
And his kindness continues forever."

⁴Then King Solomon and all the people of Israel offered sacrifices* in front of the Lord. ⁵King Solomon offered 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. The king and all the people made the temple* of God holy. It was to be used only for worshiping God. ⁶The priests stood ready to do their work. The Levites also stood with the instruments of the Lord's music. These instruments were made by King David to give thanks to the Lord. The priests and Levites were saying, "The Lord's love continues forever!" The priests blew their trumpets as

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on things or people to show that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

they stood across from the Levites. And all the people of Israel were standing.

⁷Solomon made the middle part of the yard holy. That yard is in front of the Lord's temple.* That is the place where Solomon offered burnt offerings* and the fat of the fellowship offerings. Solomon used the middle of the yard because the bronze altar* he made could not hold all the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and fat. There were many of those offerings.

⁸Solomon and all the people of Israel celebrated the feast for seven days. There was a very large group of people with Solomon. Those people came from the entrance of the town of Hamath and all the way to the Brook of Egypt. ⁹On the eighth day they had a holy meeting because they had celebrated for seven days. They made the altar* holy and it was to be used only for worshiping the Lord. And they celebrated the feast for seven days. ¹⁰On the 23rd day of the seventh month Solomon sent the people back to their homes. The people were very happy and their hearts were full of joy, because the Lord was so good to David, to Solomon, and to his people Israel.

The Lord Comes to Solomon

¹¹Solomon finished the Lord's temple* and the king's house. Solomon had success in finishing all the things he planned in the Lord's temple and in his own house. ¹²Then the Lord came to Solomon at night. The Lord said to him, "Solomon, I have heard your prayer, and I have chosen this place for myself to be a house for sacrifices.* ¹³When I close the sky so there is no rain, or I command the locusts to destroy the land, or I send sicknesses to my people, ¹⁴and if my people who are called by my name become humble and pray, and look for me, and turn away from their evil ways, then I will hear

them from heaven. And I will forgive their sin and I will heal their land. ¹⁵Now, my eyes are open, and my ears will pay attention to the prayers prayed in this place. ¹⁶I have chosen this temple, and I have made it holy so that my name will be here forever. Yes, my eyes and heart will always be here in this temple.

¹⁷"Now you, Solomon, if you live in front of me the same way your father David lived, and if you obey all I have commanded, and if you obey my laws and rules, ¹⁸then I will make you a strong king and your kingdom will be great. That is the agreement I made with David your father. I told him, 'David, you will always have a man in your family that will be a king in Israel.'

¹⁹"But if you do not obey my laws and commands that I gave you, and if you worship other gods and serve them, ²⁰then I will take the people of Israel out from my land that I gave them. And I will leave this temple* that I have made holy for my name. I will make this temple something that all the nations will speak evil about. ²¹Every person who passes by this temple that was so highly honored will be surprised. They will say, 'Why has the Lord done this terrible thing to the land and to this temple?' ²²Then people will answer, 'Because the people of Israel refused to obey the Lord, the God their ancestors* obeyed. He is the God that led them out of the country of Egypt. But the people of Israel accepted other gods. They worshiped and served idol gods. That is the reason the Lord made all these terrible things happen to the people of Israel.'

The Cities Solomon Built

8 The time it took Solomon to build the Lord's temple* and his own house was 20 years. ²Then Solomon built again the towns that Hiram gave him. And Solomon allowed some of the people of Israel to live in those towns. ³After this Solomon went to Hamath of Zobah and captured it. ⁴Solomon also built the town of Tadmor in the desert. He built all the

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

towns in Hamath to store things in. ⁹Solomon built again the towns of Upper Beth-Horon and Lower Beth-Horon. He made those towns into strong forts. Those towns had strong walls, gates, and bars in the gates. ¹⁰Solomon also built again the town of Baalath and all the other towns where he stored things. He built all the cities where the chariots* were kept and all the cities where the horse riders lived. Solomon built all he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and in all the country where he was king.

¹¹There were many strangers left in the country where the people of Israel were living. Those people were the Hittite people, the Amorite people, the Perizzite people, the Hivite people, and the Jebusite people. Solomon forced all those strangers to be slave workers. Those people were not from the people of Israel. Those people were the descendants* of the people that were left in the land and not yet destroyed by the people of Israel. This still continues today. ¹²Solomon did not force any of the people of Israel to be slave workers. The people of Israel were Solomon's fighting men. They were the commanders of Solomon's army officers. They were commanders of Solomon's chariots* and commanders of Solomon's chariot drivers. ¹³And some of the men of Israel were leaders of Solomon's important officials. There were 250 of those leaders to supervise the people.

¹⁴Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the house he built for her. Solomon said, "My wife must not live in King David's house because the places where the Box of the Agreement* has been are holy places."

¹⁵Then Solomon offered burnt offerings* to

the Lord on the Lord's altar.* Solomon built that altar in front of the temple* porch. ¹⁶Solomon offered sacrifices* every day the way Moses commanded. Sacrifices were to be offered on Sabbath days,* on the New Moon* celebrations, and on the three yearly holidays. The three yearly holidays were the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters. ¹⁷Solomon followed his father David's instructions. Solomon chose the groups of priests for their service. Solomon also chose the Levites for their duties. The Levites were to lead the praise and help the priests from day to day to do the things that needed to be done in the temple service. And Solomon chose the gatekeepers by their groups to serve at each gate. This is the way David, the man of God, instructed. ¹⁸The people of Israel did not change or disobey any of Solomon's instructions to the priests and Levites. They did not change any of the instructions, even in the way they should keep the valuable things.

¹⁹All Solomon's work was done. It was well planned from the day the Lord's temple* was begun until the day it was finished. So the Lord's temple was finished.

²⁰Then Solomon went to the towns of Ezion-Geber and Elath. Those towns were near the Red Sea in the country of Edom. ²¹Hiram sent ships to Solomon. Hiram's own men sailed the ships. Hiram's men were skilled at sailing on the sea. Hiram's men went with Solomon's servants to Ophir* and brought back 17 tons of gold* to King Solomon.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Sabbath day(s) Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

Ophir A place where there was much gold. Today no person knows where Ophir really was.

17 ... gold Or about 450 talents. In today's money that would be more than \$13,000,000.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

9 The Queen of Sheba heard about Solomon's fame. She came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions. The Queen of Sheba had a very large group with her. She had camels that carried spices, much gold, and valuable stones. She came to Solomon and talked with him. She had many questions to ask Solomon. ²Solomon gave answers to all her questions. There was nothing too hard for Solomon to explain or answer. ³The Queen of Sheba saw Solomon's wisdom, and the house he built. ⁴She saw the food on Solomon's table, and his many important officials. She saw the way his servants worked and the clothes they wore. She saw Solomon's wine servers and the clothes they wore. She saw the burnt offerings* Solomon made in the temple* of the Lord. When the Queen of Sheba saw all these things she was amazed! ⁵Then she said to King Solomon, "The stories I heard in my country about your great works and your wisdom are true. ⁶I didn't believe those stories until I came here and saw with my own eyes. Oh, not even half of your great wisdom has been told me! You are greater than the stories I heard! ⁷Your wives* and officers are very fortunate! They can hear your wisdom while they are serving you! ⁸Praise be to the Lord your God! He is happy with you and has put you on his throne to be king for the Lord your God. Your God loves Israel, and supports Israel forever. This is why the Lord has made you king of Israel to do what is fair and what is right!"

⁹Then the Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons* of gold, a great many spices, and valuable stones. No person gave such fine spices to King Solomon as the Queen of Sheba did.

¹⁰Hiram's servants and Solomon's servants brought in gold from Ophir.* They also

brought in alghum wood and valuable stones. ¹¹King Solomon used the alghum wood to make steps for the Lord's temple,* and for the king's house. Solomon also used the alghum wood to make lyres* and harps for the singers. No person ever saw such beautiful things like those things made from the alghum wood in the country of Judah.

¹²King Solomon gave to the Queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for. He gave her more than she brought to give him. Then the Queen of Sheba and her servants left. They went back to their own country.

Solomon's Great Wealth

¹³The amount of gold that Solomon got in one year weighed 25 tons.* ¹⁴The traveling merchants* and traders brought more gold to Solomon. All the kings of Arabia and the rulers of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon. ¹⁵King Solomon made 200 large shields from hammered gold. About $7\frac{1}{2}$ pounds* of hammered gold was used to make each shield. ¹⁶Solomon also made 300 small shields of hammered gold. About $3\frac{3}{4}$ pounds* of gold was used to make each shield. King Solomon put the gold shields in the Forest Palace of Lebanon.

¹⁷King Solomon used ivory to make a large throne. He covered the throne with pure gold. ¹⁸The throne had six steps on it. And it had a footstool* that was made of gold. There were armrests on both sides of the throne's seat. A statue of a lion stood next to each armrest. ¹⁹There were statues of 12 lions that stood by the six steps. One lion on each side of each step. There was no throne like this made in any other kingdom. ²⁰All King Solomon's drinking cups were made of gold. All the household things in the House of the Forest of Lebanon

1yre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

25 tons Or, "666 talents."

traveling merchants A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

$7\frac{1}{2}$ pounds Or, "600 bekas."

$3\frac{3}{4}$ pounds Or, "300 bekas."

footstool A little stool that a king could use to rest his feet when sitting on his throne.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

wives Or, "men." See 1 Kings 10:8.

$4\frac{1}{2}$ tons Or, "120 talents."

Ophir A place where there was much gold. Today no person knows where Ophir really was.

were made of pure gold. Silver was not thought valuable in the time of Solomon. ²King Solomon had ships that went to Tarshish.* Hiram's men sailed Solomon's ships. Every three years the ships came back from Tarshish bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks to Solomon.

³King Solomon became greater in riches and wisdom than any other king on earth. ⁴All the kings of the earth came to visit Solomon to hear wise decisions. God gave that wisdom to Solomon. ⁵Every year those kings brought gifts to Solomon. They brought silver and gold things, clothes, armor, spices, horses, and mules.

⁶Solomon had 4,000 stalls to keep horses and chariots. He had 12,000 chariot drivers. Solomon kept them in the special cities for the chariots and in Jerusalem with him. ⁷Solomon was the king over all the kings from the Euphrates River all the way to the country of the Philistine people, and to the border of Egypt. ⁸King Solomon had so much silver in Jerusalem it was like plain rocks. And he had so much cedar wood it was like the sycamore trees in the low country. ⁹The people brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all the other countries.

Solomon's Death

¹The other things Solomon did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the writings of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Prophecy of Ahijah and in the visions of Iddo. Ahijah was from Shiloh, and Iddo was a seer.* Iddo wrote about Jeroboam. Jeroboam was Nebat's son. ²Solomon was king in Jerusalem over all Israel for 40 years. ³Then Solomon rested with his ancestors.* The people buried him in the City of David his father. Solomon's son Rehoboam became the new king in Solomon's place.

Rehoboam Acts Foolishly

10 Rehoboam went to the town of Shechem because all the people of Israel went there to make him king. ²Jeroboam was in Egypt because he ran away from King Solomon. Jeroboam was Nebat's son. Jeroboam heard that Rehoboam was going to be the new king. So Jeroboam came back from Egypt. ³The people of Israel called Jeroboam to come with them. Then Jeroboam and all the people of Israel went to Rehoboam. They said to him, "Rehoboam, your father made life hard for us. It was like carrying a heavy weight. Make that weight lighter, then we will serve you."

⁴Rehoboam said to them, "Come back to me after three days." So the people went away.

⁵Then King Rehoboam talked with the older men who had served his father Solomon in the past. Rehoboam said to them, "What do you advise me to say to those people?"

⁶The older men said to Rehoboam, "If you are kind to those people and please them and say good words to them, then they will serve you forever."

⁷But Rehoboam did not accept the advice the older men gave him. Rehoboam talked with the young men that had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁸Rehoboam said to them, "What advice do you give me? How should we answer those people? They asked me to make their work easier. And they want me to make the weight lighter that my father put on them."

⁹Then the young men that grew up with Rehoboam said to him, "This is what you should say to the people who talked with you. The people said to you, 'Your father made life hard for us. It was like carrying a heavy weight. But we want you to make that weight lighter.' But Rehoboam, this is what you should say to those people: Say to them, 'My little finger will be thicker than my father's waist! My father loaded you with a heavy burden. But I will make that burden heavier. My father punished you with whips. But I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips.'"

¹⁰Three days later, Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam. That is what King Rehoboam told them to do when he said,

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain. Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

"Come back to me in three days." ¹³Then King Rehoboam talked to them in a mean way. King Rehoboam did not accept the advice of the older men. ¹⁴King Rehoboam talked to the people the way the young men advised him. He said, "My father made your burden heavy, but I will make it heavier. My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with whips that have sharp metal tips." ¹⁵So King Rehoboam did not listen to the people. He did not listen to the people because this change of things came from God. God caused this to happen. This happened so that the Lord could make his word come true that he spoke through Ahijah to Jeroboam. Ahijah was from the Shilonite people, and Jeroboam was Nebat's son.

¹⁶The people of Israel saw that King Rehoboam did not listen to them. Then they said to the king, "Are we part of David's family? No! Do we get any of Jesse's land? No! So Israel, let's go to our own homes. Let David's son rule his own people!" Then all the people of Israel went to their homes. ¹⁷But there were some of the people of Israel who were living in the towns of Judah. And Rehoboam was king over those people.

¹⁸Adoniram was in charge of the people who were forced to work. Rehoboam sent him to the people of Israel. But the people of Israel threw rocks at Adoniram and killed him. Then Rehoboam ran and jumped into his chariot* and escaped. He ran away to Jerusalem. ¹⁹Since that time and up until now Israel has turned against David's family.*

11 When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he gathered 180,000 of the best soldiers. He gathered these soldiers from the family groups of Judah and Benjamin. He gathered them to fight against Israel so he could bring the kingdom back to Rehoboam. ²But the message from the Lord came to Shemaiah. Shemaiah was a man of God. The Lord said, ³"Shemaiah, talk to Rehoboam, Solomon's son, and the king of Judah. And talk

to all the people of Israel living in Judah and Benjamin. Tell them: 'This is what the Lord says: 'You must not fight against your brothers! Let every man go back home. I have caused this thing to happen.' So King Rehoboam and his army obeyed the Lord's message and turned back. They did not attack Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Makes Judah Strong

¹Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem. He built strong cities in Judah to defend against attacks. ²He repaired the cities of Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, ³Beth-Zur, Soco, Adullam, ⁴Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, ⁵Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, ⁶Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These cities in Judah and Benjamin were made strong. ⁷When Rehoboam made those cities strong, he put commanders in them. He also put supplies of food, oil, and wine in those cities. ⁸Also, Rehoboam put shields and spears in every city and made the cities very strong. Rehoboam kept the peoples and cities of Judah and Benjamin under his control.

⁹The priests and the Levites from all over Israel agreed with Rehoboam and joined him. ¹⁰The Levites left their grasslands and their own fields and came to Judah and Jerusalem. The Levites did this because Jeroboam and his sons refused to let them serve as priests to the Lord. ¹¹Jeroboam chose his own priests to serve in the high places,* where he set up the goat and calf idols he had made. ¹²When the Levites left Israel, those people in all the family groups of Israel who were faithful to the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers. ¹³Those people made the kingdom of Judah strong. And they supported Solomon's son Rehoboam for three years. They did this because during that time they lived the way David and Solomon had lived.

Rehoboam's Family

¹Rehoboam married Mahalath. Her father was Jerimoth. Her mother was Abihail.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

David's family This probably means the family group of Judah. David's family was in the family group of Judah.

high places Places of worship.

Jerimoth was David's son. Abihail was Eliab's daughter, and Eliab was Jesse's son. ¹⁹Mahalath gave Rehoboam these sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zerah. ²⁰Then Rehoboam married Maacah. Maacah was Absalom's granddaughter.* And Maacah gave Rehoboam these children: Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. ²¹Rehoboam loved Maacah more than he loved all his other wives and women servants.* Maacah was Absalom's granddaughter.* Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 woman servants. Rehoboam was the father of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

²²Rehoboam chose Abijah to be the leader among his own brothers. Rehoboam did this because he planned to make Abijah king. ²³Rehoboam acted wisely and spread all his sons through all the countries of Judah and Benjamin to every strong city. And Rehoboam gave plenty of supplies to his sons. He also looked for wives for his sons.

Shishak King of Egypt Attacks Jerusalem

12 Rehoboam became a strong king. He also made his kingdom strong. Then Rehoboam and the family group of Judah* refused to obey the law of the Lord. ²Shishak attacked the city of Jerusalem in the fifth year that Rehoboam was king. Shishak was the king of Egypt. This happened because Rehoboam and the people of Judah were not faithful to the Lord. ³Shishak had 12,000 chariots, 60,000 horse riders, and an army that no person could count. In Shishak's large army there were Libyan soldiers, Sukkite soldiers, and Ethiopian soldiers. ⁴Shishak defeated the strong cities of Judah. Then Shishak brought his army to Jerusalem.

⁵Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah. Those leaders of Judah had gathered together in Jerusalem because they all were afraid of Shishak. Shemaiah said to Rehoboam and the

leaders of Judah, "This is what the Lord says: 'Rehoboam, you and the people of Judah have left me and refused to obey my law. So now I will leave you to face Shishak without my help.'"

⁶Then the leaders of Judah and King Rehoboam were sorry and humbled themselves. They said, "The Lord is right."

⁷The Lord saw that the king and the leaders of Judah had humbled themselves. Then the message from the Lord came to Shemaiah. The Lord said to Shemaiah, "The king and the leaders humbled themselves. So I will not destroy them, but I will save them soon. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger on Jerusalem. ⁸But the people of Jerusalem will become Shishak's servants. This will happen so that they may learn that serving me is different from serving the kings of other nations."

⁹Shishak attacked Jerusalem and took the treasures that were in the Lord's temple.* Shishak was the king of Egypt. And he also took the treasures that were in the king's house. Shishak took everything and carried those treasures away. He also took the gold shields that Solomon had made. ¹⁰King Rehoboam made bronze shields to take the place of the gold shields. Rehoboam gave the bronze shields to the commanders who were responsible for guarding the entrance to the king's house. ¹¹When the king entered the Lord's temple, the guards would bring the bronze shields out. Later they would put the bronze shields back into the guard room.

¹²When Rehoboam humbled himself, the Lord turned his anger away from Rehoboam. So the Lord did not fully destroy Rehoboam. There was some good in Judah.

¹³King Rehoboam made himself a strong king in Jerusalem. He was 41 years old when he became king. Rehoboam was king in Jerusalem for 17 years. Jerusalem is the city that the Lord chose from all the family groups of Israel. The Lord chose to put his name there in Jerusalem. Rehoboam's mother was Naamah. Naamah was from the country of

granddaughter Literally, "daughter."

women servants Or, "concubines," slave women who were like wives to a man.

Judah Literally, Israel.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Ammon. "Rehoboam did evil things because he didn't decide in his heart to obey the Lord.

"The things Rehoboam did when he was king, from the beginning to the end of his rule, are written in the writings of Shemaiah and in the writings of Iddo. Shemaiah was a prophet, and Iddo was a seer.* Those men wrote family histories. And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the time both kings ruled. "Rehoboam rested with his ancestors.* Rehoboam was buried in David's city. Then Rehoboam's son Abijah became the new king.

Abijah King of Judah

13 When King Jeroboam was in his 18th year as king of Israel,* Abijah became the new king of Judah. "Abijah was king in Jerusalem for three years. Abijah's mother was Maacah. Maacah was Uriel's daughter. Uriel was from the town of Gibeath. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. "Abijah's army had 400,000 brave soldiers. Abijah led that army into battle. Jeroboam's army had 800,000 brave soldiers. Jeroboam got ready to have a war with Abijah.

"Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim in the hill country of Ephraim. Abijah said, "Jeroboam and all Israel, listen to me! 'You should know that the Lord God of Israel gave David and his sons the right to be king over Israel forever. God gave this right to David with an agreement of salt.* "But Jeroboam turned against the Lord! Jeroboam was Nebat's son. Nebat was one of Solomon's officials. Solomon was David's son. "Then worthless, bad men became friends with Jeroboam. Jeroboam and those bad men were against

Rehoboam, Solomon's son. Rehoboam was young and did not have experience. So Rehoboam could not stop Jeroboam and his bad friends.

"Now you, Jeroboam, and the people of Israel with you are making plans against the Lord's kingdom. The Lord's kingdom belongs to David's sons. There are many of you, and you have the golden calves that Jeroboam made for you to be your gods. 'You have thrown out the Lord's priests and the Levites. The priests are Aaron's sons. You have chosen your own priests. That is what the people of other countries do. Then any person who comes to make himself holy with a young bull or seven rams can become a priest of idols that are not gods.

¹⁰"But as for us, the Lord is our God. We people of Judah have not refused to obey God! We have not left him! The priests who serve the Lord are Aaron's sons. And the Levites help the priests serve the Lord. "They offer burnt offerings* and burn incense* of spices to the Lord every morning and every evening. They also put the bread in rows on the special table in the temple.* And they put up the lampstand of gold with its lamps to burn every evening. We obey the command of the Lord our God. But Jeroboam, you and the people of Israel with you don't obey the Lord. You have left him. "God himself is with us. He is our ruler, and his priests are with us. The priests blow the trumpet to call us to war against you. O men of Israel, don't fight against the Lord God of your ancestors,* because you won't succeed!"

"But Jeroboam sent a group of soldiers to sneak behind Abijah's army. Jeroboam's army was in front of Abijah's army. The hidden soldiers from Jeroboam's army were behind Abijah's army. "When the soldiers in Abijah's army from Judah looked around, they saw

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

King Jeroboam ... Israel This was about the year 923 B.C. King Jeroboam was the man who turned against King Rehoboam and began his own kingdom with ten of the family groups of Israel. See 1 Kings 12:20.

agreement of salt When people ate salt together, it meant that their agreement of friendship would never be broken. Abijah was saying here that God had made an agreement with David that would never be broken.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

eroboam's army attacking both in front and in back.* The men of Judah shouted out to the Lord and the priests blew the trumpets. ¹⁵Then the men in Abijah's army shouted. When the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam's army. All of Jeroboam's army from Israel were defeated by Abijah's army from Judah. ¹⁶The men of Israel ran away from the men of Judah. God let the army from Judah defeat the army from Israel. ¹⁷Abijah's army greatly defeated the army of Israel, and 500,000 of the best men of Israel were killed. ¹⁸So at that time the people of Israel were defeated, and the people of Judah won. The army from Judah won because they depended on the Lord the God of their ancestors.*

¹⁹Abijah's army chased Jeroboam's army. Abijah's army captured the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron from Jeroboam. They captured those towns and the small villages near those towns.

²⁰Jeroboam never became strong again while Abijah lived. The Lord killed Jeroboam. ²¹But Abijah became strong. He married 14 women and was the father of 22 sons and 16 daughters. ²²All the other things that Abijah did are written in the books of the prophet Iddo.

14 Abijah rested with his ancestors.* The people buried him in David's City. Then Abijah's son, Asa, was the new king in Abijah's place. There was peace in the country for ten years in Asa's time.

Asa King of Judah

¹Asa did good and right things before the Lord his God. ²Asa took away the strange altars that were used to worship idols. Asa took away the high places,* and smashed the holy stones.*

When the soldiers ... in back The Hebrew reads, "The battle was in front and in the back."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

holy stones The Canaanite people used these stones to worship their false gods.

And Asa broke down the Asherah poles.* ⁴Asa commanded the people of Judah to follow the Lord God. He is the God their ancestors* followed. And Asa commanded them to obey the Lord's laws and commandments. ⁵Asa also took away the high places and the incense* altars from all the towns in Judah. So the kingdom had peace when Asa was king. ⁶Asa built strong cities in Judah during the time when there was peace in Judah. Asa had no war in these years because the Lord gave him peace.

⁷Asa said to the people of Judah, "Let's build these towns and make walls around them. Let's make towers, gates, and bars in the gates. Let's do this while we still live in this country. This country is ours because we have followed the Lord our God. He has given us peace all around us." So they built and had success.

⁸Asa had an army of 300,000 men from the family group of Judah and 280,000 men from the family group of Benjamin. The men from Judah carried large shields and spears. The men from Benjamin carried small shields and shot arrows from bows. All those men were strong and brave soldiers.

⁹Then Zerah came out against Asa's army. Zerah was from Ethiopia. Zerah had 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots* in his army. Zerah's army went as far as the town of Mareshah. ¹⁰Asa went out to fight against Zerah. Asa's army got ready for battle in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

¹¹Asa called out to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, only you can help weak people against strong people! Help us, O Lord our God! We depend on you. We fight against this large army in your name. O Lord, you are our God! Don't let anyone win against you!"

¹²Then the Lord used Asa's army from Judah to defeat the Ethiopian army. And the Ethiopian army ran away. ¹³Asa's army chased

Asherah poles These poles were symbols of the female idol Asherah. The Canaanite people worshiped this false female god.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

the Ethiopian army all the way to the town of Gerar. So many Ethiopians were killed that they could not get together as an army to fight again. They were crushed by the Lord and his army. Asa and his army carried many valuable things away from the enemy. "Asa and his army defeated all the towns near Gerar. The people living in those towns were afraid of the Lord. Those towns had very many valuable things. Asa's army took those valuable things away from those towns. "Asa's army also attacked the camps where the shepherds lived. They took many sheep and camels. Then Asa's army went back to Jerusalem.

Asa's Changes

15 The Spirit of God came on Azariah. Azariah was Obed's son. "Azariah went to meet Asa. Azariah said, "Listen to me Asa, and all you people of Judah and Benjamin! The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you look for the Lord, you will find him. But if you leave him, he will leave you. 'For a long time Israel was without the true God. And they were without a teaching priest, and without the law. 'But when the people of Israel had trouble, they turned to the Lord God again. He is the God of Israel. They looked for the Lord and they found him. 'In those times of trouble, no person could travel safely. There was much trouble in all the nations. 'One nation would destroy another nation and one city would destroy another city. This was happening because God troubled them with all kinds of trouble. 'But Asa, you and the people of Judah and Benjamin, be strong. Don't be weak, don't give up because you will get a reward for your good work!"

"Asa felt encouraged when he heard these words and the message from Obed the prophet. Then he removed the hated idols from all the countries of Judah and Benjamin. And Asa removed those hated idols from the towns he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. And he repaired the Lord's altar* that was in

front of the porch of the Lord's temple.*

"Then Asa gathered all the people from Judah and Benjamin. He also gathered the people from the family groups of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had moved from the country of Israel to live in the country of Judah. A great many of those people came to Judah because they saw that the Lord, Asa's God, was with Asa.

"Asa and those people gathered together in Jerusalem on the third month in the 15th year of Asa's rule. "At that time they sacrificed* 700 bulls and 7,000 sheep and goats to the Lord. Asa's army had taken those animals and other valuable things from their enemies. "Then they made an agreement to serve the Lord God with all their heart and with all their soul. He is the God their ancestors* served. "Any person that refused to serve the Lord God was to be killed. It did not matter if that person was important or not important or if that person was a man or woman. "Then Asa and the people made an oath* to the Lord. They shouted out with a loud voice. They also blew on trumpets and rams' horns. "All the people of Judah were happy about the oath, because they had promised with all their heart. They followed God with all their hearts, and they looked for God and found him. So the Lord gave them peace in all the country.

"King Asa also removed Maacah, his mother, from being queen mother. Asa did this because Maacah had made a terrible Asherah pole.* Asa cut down that Asherah pole and smashed it into small pieces. Then he burned the pieces in the Kidron Valley. "The high places* were not removed from Judah, but Asa's heart was faithful to the Lord all of Asa's life.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
sacrifice(d) To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

oath A very strong promise.

Asherah Pole(s) These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshipped.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

"And Asa put the holy gifts that he and his father had given into the temple* of God. Those things were made of silver and gold. "There was no more war until the 35th year of Asa's rule.*

Asa's Last Years

16 In Asa's 36th year as king,* Baasha attacked the country of Judah. Baasha was the king of Israel. He went to the town of Ramah and made it into a fortress.* Baasha used the town of Ramah as a place to stop people from going in or coming out to King Asa of Judah.

"Asa took silver and gold out of the storehouses in the Lord's temple.* And he took silver and gold out of the king's house. Then Asa sent messengers to Ben-Hadad. Ben-Hadad was the king of Aram and he was living in the town of Damascus. Asa's message said: "Ben-Hadad let there be an agreement between you and me. Let's make it like the agreement your father and my father had. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now, break your agreement with Baasha, king of Israel, so he will leave me alone and stop bothering me."

"Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa. Ben-Hadad sent the commanders of his armies to attack the towns of Israel. Those commanders attacked the towns of Ijon, Dan, and Abel-Maim. They also attacked all the towns in the country of Naphtali where treasures were stored. "Baasha heard about the attacks on the towns of Israel. So he stopped building the town of Ramah into a fortress,* and he left his work. "Then King Asa called all the men of Judah together. They went to the town of Ramah and took away the rocks and wood that Baasha used to make the fortress. Asa and the men of Judah used the rocks and wood to make the towns of Geba and Mizpah stronger.

"At that time Hanani the seer* came to Asa, king of Judah. Hanani said to him, "Asa, you depended on the king of Aram to help you and not the Lord your God. You should have depended on the Lord. But, because you did not depend on the Lord for help, the king of Aram's army escaped from you. "The Ethiopians and the Libyans had a very large and powerful army. They had many chariots* and chariot drivers. But Asa, you depended on the Lord to help you defeat that large powerful army, and the Lord let you defeat them. "The eyes of the Lord go around looking in all the earth for people who are faithful to him so he can make those people strong. Asa, you did a foolish thing. So from now on you will have wars."

"Asa was angry with Hanani because of what he said. Asa was so mad that he put Hanani in prison. Asa was very mean and rough with some of the people at that same time.

"The things that Asa did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. "Asa's feet became diseased in the 39th year as king.* His disease was very bad, but he did not look for help from the Lord. Asa looked for help from the doctors. "Asa died in the 41st year as king.* And so Asa rested with his ancestors.* "The people buried Asa in his own tomb that he made for himself in David's City. The people laid him in a bed that was filled with spices and different kinds of mixed perfumes. The people made a large fire to honor Asa.*

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

17 Jehoshaphat was the new king of Judah in Asa's place. Jehoshaphat was

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.
chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

39th year as king About the year 875 B.C.

41st year as king About the year 873 B.C.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The people ... Asa This probably means the people burned spices in honor of Asa, but it could also mean they burned his body.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
35th year of Asa's rule About the year 880 B.C.

36th year as king About the year 879 B.C.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Asa's son. Jehoshaphat made Judah strong so they could fight against Israel. ²He put groups of soldiers in all the towns of Judah that were made into fortresses.* Jehoshaphat built fortresses* in Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa captured.

³The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in Jehoshaphat's young life he did the good things his ancestor* David did. Jehoshaphat did not follow the Baal idols. ⁴Jehoshaphat looked for the God his ancestors* followed. He followed God's commands. He did not live the same way the people of Israel lived. ⁵The Lord made Jehoshaphat a strong king over Judah. All the people of Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. So Jehoshaphat had much wealth and honor. ⁶Jehoshaphat's heart found pleasure in the ways of the Lord. He took away the high places,* and the Asherah poles* out of the country of Judah.

⁷Jehoshaphat sent his leaders to teach in the towns of Judah. That happened in the third year of Jehoshaphat's rule.* Those leaders were Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nathanel, and Micaiah. ⁸Jehoshaphat also sent Levites with these leaders. These Levites were Shemaiah, Nathaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, and Tobijah. Jehoshaphat also sent the priests Elishama and Jehoram. ⁹Those leaders and Levites and priests taught the people in Judah. They had the Book of the Lord's Law with them. They went through all the towns of Judah and taught the people.

¹⁰The nations near Judah were afraid of the Lord. That is why they did not start a war against Jehoshaphat. ¹¹Some of the Philistine

people brought gifts to Jehoshaphat. They also brought silver to Jehoshaphat because they knew he was a very powerful king. Some Arabian people brought flocks to Jehoshaphat. They brought 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats to him.

¹²Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful. He built fortresses* and storage towns in the country of Judah. ¹³He kept many supplies in the storage towns. And Jehoshaphat kept trained soldiers in Jerusalem. ¹⁴Those soldiers were listed in their family groups. This is the list of those soldiers in Jerusalem:

From the family group of Judah, these were: the generals: Adnah was the general of 300,000 soldiers. ¹⁵Jehohanan was the general of 280,000 soldiers. ¹⁶Amasiah was the general of 200,000 soldiers. Amasiah was Zicri's son. Amasiah was happy to give himself to serve the Lord.

¹⁷From the family group of Benjamin these were the generals: Eliada had 200,000 soldiers; who used bows, arrows, and shields. Eliada was a very brave soldier. ¹⁸Jehozabad had 180,000 men ready for war. ¹⁹All those soldiers served King Jehoshaphat. The king also had other men in the fortresses* in all the country of Judah.

Micalah Warns King Ahab

18 Jehoshaphat had much wealth and honor. He made an agreement with King Ahab through marriage.* ²A few years later, Jehoshaphat visited Ahab in the town of Samaria. Ahab sacrificed* many sheep and cows for Jehoshaphat and the people with him. Ahab encouraged Jehoshaphat to attack the town of Ramoth Gilead. ³Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to attack Ramoth Gilead?" Ahab was the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah. Jehoshaphat answered Ahab, "I am like you, and my people are like your people. We will

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

ancestor Literally, "father," meaning a person that people are descended from.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places of worship.

Asherah poles These poles were symbols of the female idol Asherah. The Canaanite people worshiped this false female god.

third year of Jehoshaphat's rule About the year 871 B.C.

Jehoshaphat ... marriage Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram married Athaliah, Ahab's daughter. See 2 Chron. 21:6.

sacrifice(d) To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

oin you in the battle.”⁴ Jehoshaphat also said to Ahab, “But first, let’s look for a message from the Lord.”

⁵So King Ahab gathered the prophets together, 400 men. Ahab said to them, “Should we go to war against the town of Ramoth Gilead, or not?” The prophets answered Ahab, ‘Go, because God will let you defeat Ramoth Gilead.’

⁶But Jehoshaphat said, “Is one of the Lord’s prophets here? We need to ask the Lord through one of his prophets.”

⁷Then King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man here. We can ask the Lord through him. But I hate this man, because he never has a good message from the Lord about me. He always has bad messages for me. That man’s name is Micaiah. He is Imlah’s son.” But Jehoshaphat said, “Ahab, you should not say that!”

⁸Then King Ahab called one of his officials and said, “Hurry, bring Micaiah the son of Imlah here!”

⁹Ahab the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah had their kings’ robes on. They were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor* near the front gate of the city of Samaria. Those 400 prophets were speaking their messages in front of the two kings. ¹⁰Zedekiah was the son of a man named Kenaanah. Zedekiah made some horns from iron. Zedekiah said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You will use these iron horns to stab the Aramean people until they are destroyed.’”

¹¹All the prophets said the same thing. They said, “Go to the town of Ramoth Gilead. You will have success and win. The Lord will let the king defeat the Aramean people.”

¹²The messenger that went to get Micaiah said to him, “Micaiah, listen, all the prophets say the same thing. They are saying the king will have success. So say the same things they are saying. You also say good things.”

¹³But Micaiah answered, “As sure as the Lord lives, I can only say what my God says.”

¹⁴Then Micaiah came to King Ahab. The king said to him, “Micaiah, should we go to the town of Ramoth Gilead to fight or not?” Micaiah answered, “Go and attack. God will let you defeat those people.”

¹⁵King Ahab said to Micaiah, “Many times I made you promise to tell me only the truth in the name of the Lord!”

¹⁶Then Micaiah said, “I saw all the people of Israel scattered on the mountains. They were like sheep without a shepherd. The Lord said, ‘They have no leader. Let each person go home safely.’”

¹⁷Ahab, King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I told you that Micaiah would not have a good message from the Lord about me! He only has bad messages about me!”

¹⁸Micaiah said, “Hear the message from the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne. All of heaven’s army was standing around him.* ¹⁹The Lord said, ‘Who will trick Ahab, king of Israel, to attack the town of Ramoth Gilead so he may be killed there?’ Different ones who stood around the Lord said different things. ²⁰Then a spirit came and stood before the Lord. That spirit said, ‘I will trick Ahab.’ The Lord asked that spirit, ‘How?’ ²¹That spirit answered, ‘I will go out and become a lying spirit in Ahab’s prophets’ mouths.’ And the Lord said, ‘You will succeed in tricking Ahab. So go out and do it.’

²²“Now look Ahab, the Lord has put a lying spirit in your prophets’ mouths. The Lord has said bad things will happen to you.”

²³Then Zedekiah went over to Micaiah and hit him in the face. Zedekiah’s father’s name was Kenaanah. Zedekiah said, “Micaiah, which way did the spirit from the Lord go when he went from me to speak to you?” Micaiah answered, “Zedekiah, you will find out on the day you go to hide in an inside room!”

²⁴Then King Ahab said, “Take Micaiah and send him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king’s son. ²⁵Say to Amon and Joash, ‘This is what the king says: Put Micaiah

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

All ... him The Hebrew reads, “All the group of heavens were standing on his right side and on his left side.”

in prison. Don't give him anything to eat except bread and water until I come back from the battle.'"

²Micaiah answered, "Ahab, if you come back from battle safely, then the Lord has not spoken through me. Hear and remember my words, all you people!"

Ahab Is Killed at Ramoth Gilead

²So Ahab king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah attacked the town of Ramoth Gilead. ³King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will change my appearance before I go into battle. But you wear your own robes." So Ahab, king of Israel changed his appearance, and the two kings went into battle.

⁴The king of Aram gave an order to his chariot* commanders. He told them, "Don't fight with any person, no matter how great or how humble. But fight only with Ahab, the king of Israel." ⁵When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "There is Ahab, the king of Israel!" They turned toward Jehoshaphat to attack him. But Jehoshaphat shouted out, and the Lord helped him. God made the chariot commanders turn away from Jehoshaphat. ⁶When they saw that Jehoshaphat was not the king of Israel, they stopped chasing him.

⁷But a soldier happened to shoot an arrow from his bow without aiming at anything. That arrow hit Ahab king of Israel. It hit Ahab in an open part of his armor. Ahab said to the man driving his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle. I am hurt!" ⁸The battle became worse that day. Ahab propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until the evening. Then Ahab died at sunset.

19 Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came back safely to his house in Jerusalem. ¹Jehu the seer* went out to meet Jehoshaphat. Jehu's father's name was Hanani. Jehu said to King Jehoshaphat, "Why did you help evil people? Why do you love those people that hate the Lord? That is the reason the Lord is

angry with you. ²But there are some good things in your life. You took the Asherah poles* out of this country, and you decided in your heart to follow God."

Jehoshaphat Chooses Judges

¹Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem. He went out again to be with the people from the town of Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim. Jehoshaphat brought those people back to the Lord God their ancestors* followed. ²Jehoshaphat chose judges in Judah. He chose judges to be in each of the fortresses* of Judah. ³Jehoshaphat said to those judges, "Be careful in what you are doing, because you are not judging for people, but for the Lord. The Lord will be with you when you make a decision. ⁴Now each one of you must fear the Lord. Be careful in what you do because the Lord our God is fair. The Lord doesn't treat some people more important than others. And he doesn't accept money to change his judgments."

⁵And in Jerusalem, Jehoshaphat chose some of the Levites, priests, and leaders of Israelite families to be judges. Those people were to use the law of the Lord to settle problems for the people living in Jerusalem. ⁶Jehoshaphat gave them commands. Jehoshaphat said, "You must serve faithfully with all your heart. You must fear the Lord. ⁷You will have cases about killing, about a law, command, rule, or some other law. All these cases will come to you from your brothers living in the cities. In all of these cases you must warn the people not to sin against the Lord. If you don't serve faithfully you will cause the Lord's anger to come against you and your brothers. Do this, then you won't be guilty. ⁸Amariah is the leading priest. He will be over you in all things about the Lord. And Zebadiah will be over you in all things about the king. Zebadiah's father's name is

Asherah poles These poles were symbols of the female idol Asherah. The Canaanite people worshiped this false female god.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

Ishmael. Zebadiah is a leader in the family group of Judah. Also, the Levites will serve as scribes* for you. Have courage in all you do. May the Lord be with those people who do what is right."

Jehoshaphat Faces War

20 Later the Moabite people, the Ammonite people, and some Meunite* people came to start a war with Jehoshaphat. ²Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "There is a large army coming against you from Edom. They are coming from the other side of the sea.* They are already in Hazazon-Tamar! (Hazazon-Tamar is also called En-Gedi.)" ³Jehoshaphat became afraid, and he decided to ask the Lord what to do. He announced a time of fasting* for everyone in Judah. "The people of Judah came together to ask for help from the Lord. They came from out of all the towns of Judah to ask for the Lord's help.

⁴Jehoshaphat was in the Lord's temple* in front of the new yard. He stood up in the meeting of the people from Judah and Jerusalem. ⁵He said,

"O Lord God of our ancestors,* you are the God in heaven! You rule over all the kingdoms in all the nations! You have power and strength! No person can stand against you! You are our God! You forced the people living in this land to leave. You did this in front of your people Israel. You gave this land to the descendants* of Abraham forever. Abraham was your friend. Abraham's descendants lived in this land, and built a temple* for your name. ⁷They said, "If trouble comes to us—the sword, punishment, sicknesses, or famine, we will

stand in front of this temple and in front of you. Your name is on this temple. We will shout to you when we are in trouble. Then you will hear and save us.

¹⁰"But now, here are men from Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir! You would not let the people of Israel enter their lands when the people of Israel came out of Egypt.* So the people of Israel turned away and didn't destroy those people. ¹¹But see the kind of reward those people give us for not destroying them. They have come to force us out of your land. You gave this land to us. ¹²Our God, punish those people! We have no power against this large army that is coming against us! We don't know what to do! That is why we look to you for help!"*

¹³All the men of Judah stood before the Lord with their babies, wives, and children. ¹⁴Then the Lord's Spirit came on Jahaziel. Jahaziel was Zechariah's son. Zechariah was Benaiah's son. Benaiah was Jeiel's son. And Jeiel was Mattaniah's son. Jahaziel was a Levite and a descendant* of Asaph. In the middle of the meeting, ¹⁵Jahaziel said, "Listen to me King Jehoshaphat, all you people living in Judah and Jerusalem! The Lord says this to you: 'Don't be afraid or worry about this large army, because the battle is not your battle. It is God's battle! ¹⁶Tomorrow, go down there and fight those people. They will come up through the Pass of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the valley on the other side of the Desert of Jeruel. ¹⁷You won't need to fight in this battle. Stand strong in your places. You will see the Lord save you. Judah and Jerusalem, don't be afraid! Don't worry! The Lord is with you, so go out against those people tomorrow.'"

¹⁸Jehoshaphat bowed down low. His face touched the ground. And all the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem fell down in front of the Lord. And they all

scribes Men that wrote down and copied books and letters.

They often became experts at knowing the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

Meunite Some ancient Greek translations have "Meunite." The Hebrew has "Ammonite."

sea The Dead Sea.

a time of fasting A time when no food was eaten.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

You would not let ... Egypt See Deut. 2:4-9, 19 for the full story.

That is why ... help The Hebrew says, "But our eyes are on you!"

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

worshipped the Lord. ¹⁹The Levites from the Kohathite family groups and the Korahite people stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel. Their voices were very loud as they gave praise to the Lord.

²⁰Jehoshaphat's army went out into the Desert of Tekoa early in the morning. As they were starting out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me people of Judah and you people from Jerusalem. Have faith in the Lord your God, and then you will stand strong. Have faith in the Lord's prophets. You will succeed!"

²¹Jehoshaphat listened to advice from the people. Then he chose men to be singers to the Lord. Those singers were chosen to give praise to the Lord because he is holy and wonderful. They marched in front of the army and praised the Lord. These singers said, "Give thanks to the Lord, because his love continues forever!"

²²As those men began to sing and to praise God, the Lord set an ambush* for the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir. Those were the people that came to attack Judah. Those people were beaten. ²³The Ammonite man and the Moabite men started to fight against the men from Mount Seir. The Ammonite men and the Moabite men killed and destroyed the men from Mount Seir. After they had killed the men from Seir, they killed each other.

²⁴The men from Judah arrived at the look-out point in the desert. They looked at the enemy's large army. But they only saw dead bodies lying on the ground. No person had survived. ²⁵Jehoshaphat and his army came to take valuable things from the bodies. They found many animals, riches, clothes, and valuable things. Jehoshaphat and his army took those things for themselves. The things were more than Jehoshaphat and his people could carry away. They spent three days taking away the valuable things from the dead bodies, because there was so much. ²⁶On the fourth day Jehoshaphat and his army met in the Valley of Beracah.* They gave praise to the Lord in that place. That is why the name of that place has been called "The Valley of Beracah" till now.

²⁷Then Jehoshaphat led all the men from Judah and Jerusalem back home to Jerusalem. The Lord made them very happy because their enemies were defeated. ²⁸They came to Jerusalem with lyres,* harps, and trumpets and went to the Lord's temple.*

²⁹All the kingdoms in all the countries feared the Lord because they heard that the Lord fought against Israel's enemies. ³⁰That is why Jehoshaphat's kingdom had peace. Jehoshaphat's God gave him peace all around him.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Rule

¹Jehoshaphat ruled over the country of Judah. Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he began to rule. He ruled 25 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah. Azubah was Shilhi's daughter. ²Jehoshaphat lived the right way like Asa his father lived. Jehoshaphat didn't turn from following Asa's way. Jehoshaphat did right in the Lord's sight. ³But the high places* were not taken away. And the people didn't turn their hearts to follow the God their ancestors* followed.

⁴The other things Jehoshaphat did—from the beginning to the end, are written in the writings of Jehu. Jehu's father's name was Hanani. These things are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

⁵Later on, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an agreement with Ahaziah, king of Israel. Ahaziah did evil. ⁶Jehoshaphat joined with Ahaziah to make ships to go to the town of Tarshish.* They made the ships in the town of Ezion-Geber. ⁷Then Eliezer spoke against Jehoshaphat. Eliezer's father's name was Dodavahu. Eliezer was from the town of Mareshah. He said, "Jehoshaphat, you joined

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain.

Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

ambush A surprise attack by hidden enemies.

Beracah The Hebrew word means "blessing or praise."

with Ahaziah, that is why the Lord will destroy your works." The ships were wrecked, so Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah were not able to send them to Tarshish.*

21 Then Jehoshaphat died and was buried with his ancestors.* He was buried in David's City. Jehoram was the new king in Jehoshaphat's place. Jehoram was Jehoshaphat's son. †Jehoram's brothers were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. Those men were Jehoshaphat's sons. Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah.* †Jehoshaphat gave his sons many gifts of silver, gold, and precious things. He also gave them strong fortresses* in Judah. But Jehoshaphat gave the kingdom to Jehoram because Jehoram was his oldest son.

Jehoram King of Judah

†Jehoram took over his father's kingdom and made himself strong. Then he used a sword to kill all his brothers. He also killed some of the leaders of Israel. †Jehoram was 32 years old when he began to rule. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. †He lived the same way the kings of Israel lived. He lived the same way Ahab's family lived. This was because Jehoram married Ahab's daughter. And Jehoram did evil in the Lord's sight. †But the Lord would not destroy David's family because of the agreement the Lord made with David. The Lord had promised to keep a lamp burning for David and his children forever.*

†In Jehoram's time, Edom broke away from under Judah's authority. The people of Edom chose their own king. †So Jehoram went to Edom with all his commanders and chariots.* The Edomite army surrounded Jehoram and his

chariot* commanders. But Jehoram fought his way out at night. †Since that time and until now the country of Edom has been rebellious against Judah. The people from the town of Libnah also turned against Jehoram. This happened because Jehoram left the Lord God. He is the God Jehoram's ancestors* followed. †Jehoram also built high places* on the hills in Judah. Jehoram caused the people of Jerusalem to stop doing what God wanted. He led the people of Judah away from the Lord.

†Jehoram got a message from Elijah the prophet. This is what the message said: "This is what the Lord God says. He is the God your father David followed. The Lord says, †Jehoram, you have not lived the way your father Jehoshaphat lived. You have not lived the way Asa king of Judah lived. †But you have lived the way the kings of Israel lived. You have caused the people of Judah and Jerusalem to stop doing what God wants. That is what Ahab and his family did. They were unfaithful to God. You have killed your brothers. Your brothers were better than you. †So now, the Lord will soon punish your people with much punishment. The Lord will punish your children, wives, and all your property. †You will have a terrible sickness in your bowels. It will become worse every day. Then your bowels will come out because of your terrible sickness." †

†The Lord caused the Philistine people and the Arab people living near the Ethiopian people to be angry at Jehoram. †Those people attacked the country of Judah. They took away all the wealth that belonged to the king's house and took away Jehoram's sons and wives. Only Jehoram's youngest son was left. Jehoram's youngest son was named Jehoahaz.*

†After those things happened, the Lord made Jehoram sick in his bowels with a sickness that could not be cured. †Then Jehoram's bowels fell out two years later because of his sickness. He died in very bad pain. The people did not make a large fire to

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain. Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Judah Literally, "Israel."

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

The ... forever Here the writer means that one of David's descendants would always rule.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Jehoahaz Spelled "Ahaziah" in 2 Chronicles 22:1-12.

honor Jehoram like they did for his father. ²⁰Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king. He ruled eight years in Jerusalem. No person was sad when Jehoram died. The people buried Jehoram in David's city, but not in the graves where the kings are buried.

Ahaziah King of Judah

22 The people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah* to be the new king in Jehoram's place. Ahaziah was Jehoram's youngest son. The people that came with the Arab people to attack Jehoram's camp killed all of Jehoram's older sons. So Ahaziah began to rule in Judah. ¹Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule.* Ahaziah ruled one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah. Athaliah's father's name was Omri. ³Ahaziah also lived the way Ahab's family lived. He lived that way because his mother encouraged him to do wrong things. ⁴Ahaziah did evil things in the Lord's sight. That is what Ahab's family did. Ahab's family gave advice to Ahaziah after Ahaziah's father died. They gave Ahaziah bad advice. That bad advice led to his death. ⁵Ahaziah followed the advice Ahab's family gave him. Ahaziah went with King Joram to fight against King Hazael from Aram at the town of Ramoth Gilead. Joram's father's name was Ahab, the king of Israel. But the Arameans wounded Joram in the battle. ⁶Joram went back to the town of Jezreel to get well. He was wounded at Ramoth when he fought against Hazael, king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah* went to the town of Jezreel to visit Joram. Ahaziah's father's name was Jehoram, the king of Judah. Joram's father's name was Ahab. Joram was in the town of Jezreel because he was wounded.

⁷God caused Ahaziah's* death when he went to visit Joram. Ahaziah arrived and went out with Joram to meet Jehu. Jehu's father's name was Nimshi. The Lord chose Jehu to

destroy Ahab's family. ⁸Jehu was punishing Ahab's family. Jehu found the leaders of Judah and Ahaziah's relatives that served Ahaziah. Jehu killed those leaders of Judah and Ahaziah's relatives. ⁹Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah. Jehu's men caught him when he tried to hide in the town of Samaria. They brought Ahaziah to Jehu. They killed Ahaziah and buried him. They said, "Ahaziah is the descendant* of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat followed the Lord with all his heart." Ahaziah's family had no power to hold the kingdom of Judah together.

¹⁰Athaliah was Ahaziah's* mother. When she saw that her son was dead, she killed all the king's children in Judah. ¹¹But Jehosheba took Ahaziah's son Joash and hid him. Jehosheba put Joash and his nurse in the inside bedroom. Jehosheba was King Jehoram's daughter. She was also Jehoiada's wife. Jehoiada was a priest. And Jehosheba was Ahaziah's sister. Athaliah did not kill Joash, because Jehosheba hid him. ¹²Joash was hidden with the priests in God's temple* for six years. During that time, Athaliah ruled over the land as queen.

23 After six years, Jehoiada showed his strength. He made an agreement with the captains. Those captains were: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. ²They went around in Judah and gathered the Levites from all the towns of Judah. They also gathered the leaders of the families of Israel. Then they went to Jerusalem. ³All the people meeting together made an agreement with the king in God's temple.*

Jehoiada said to those people, "The king's son will rule. That is what the Lord promised about David's descendants.* ⁴Now, this is what you must do: One-third of you priests and Levites who go on duty on the Sabbath will guard the doors. ⁵And one-third of you will be at the king's house. And one-third of you will be at the Foundation Gate. But all the other

Ahaziah Spelled "Jehoshaz" in 2 Chron 21:17.

Ahaziah was ... rule Some old copies say "42 years old." 2 Kings 8:26 says Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to rule.

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future families.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

people will stay in the yards of the Lord's temple.* "Don't let any person come into the Lord's temple. Only the priest and Levites who serve are permitted to come into the Lord's temple because they are holy. But all the other men must do the job the Lord has given them. "The Levites must stay near the king. Every man must have his sword with him. If any person tries to enter the temple, kill that person. You must stay with the king everywhere he goes."

"The Levites and all the people of Judah obeyed all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Jehoiada the priest did not excuse any person from the groups of the priests. So each captain and all his men came in on the Sabbath with those who went out on the Sabbath. "Jehoiada the priest gave the spears and the large and small shields that belonged to King David to the officers. Those weapons were kept in God's temple.* "Then Jehoiada told the men where to stand. Every man had his weapon in his hand. The men stood all the way from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple. They stood near the altar* and the temple, and near the king. "They brought the king's son out and put the crown on him. They gave him a copy of the Law.* Then they made Joash king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed* Joash. They said, "Let the king live a long time!"

"Athaliah heard the noise of the people running to the temple* and praising the king. She came into the Lord's temple to the people. "She looked and saw the king. The king was standing by the king's column at the front entrance. The officers and the men who blew trumpets were near the king. The people of the land were happy and blowing trumpets. The singers were playing on instruments of music. The singers led the people in singing praises.

Then Athaliah tore her clothes* and said, "Treason! Treason!"*

"Jehoiada the priest brought out the army captains. He said to them, "Take Athaliah outside among the army. Use your swords to kill any person that follows her." Then the priest warned the soldiers, "Don't kill Athaliah in the Lord's temple.*" "Then those men grabbed Athaliah when she came to the entrance of the Horse Gate at the king's house. Then they killed her there at that place.

"Then Jehoiada made an agreement with all the people, and the king. They all agreed that they all would be the Lord's people. "All the people went into the temple of the idol Baal and tore it down. They also broke the altars and idols that were in Baal's temple. They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars of Baal.

"Then Jehoiada chose the priests to be responsible for the Lord's temple.* Those priests were Levites, and David had given them the job of being responsible for the Lord's temple. Those priests were to offer the burnt offerings* to the Lord the way the Law of Moses commanded. They offered the sacrifices* with much joy and singing the way David commanded. "Jehoiada put guards at the gates of the Lord's temple so that a person who was not clean in anything could not enter the temple.

"Jehoiada took the army captains, the leaders, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land with him. Then Jehoiada took the king out of the Lord's temple,* and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house. In that place they put the king on the throne. "All the people of Judah were very happy and the city Jerusalem had peace because Athaliah was killed with a sword.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

They gave him ... Law The Hebrew reads, "They gave him testimony." Here the word means a copy of the Law that the king had to obey. See Deut. 17:18.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on things or people to show that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

tore her clothes A way to show she was very upset.

Treason Treason The word "treason" means turning against the government. Athaliah here was blaming the people for turning against her government.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Joash Builds Again the Temple

24 Joash was seven years old when he became king. He ruled 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah. Zibiah was from the town of Beersheba. ¹Joash did right in front of the Lord as long as Jehoiada the priest was living. ²Jehoiada chose two wives for Joash. Joash had sons and daughters.

³Then later on, Joash decided to build again the Lord's temple.* ⁴Joash called the priests and the Levites together. He said to them, "Go out to the towns of Judah and gather the money all the people of Israel pay every year. Use that money to build again your God's temple. Hurry and do this." But the Levites didn't hurry.

⁵So King Joash called Jehoiada the leading priest. The king said, "Jehoiada, why haven't you made the Levites bring in the tax money from Judah and Jerusalem? Moses the Lord's servant and the people of Israel used that tax money for the Holy Tent.*"

⁶In the past, Athaliah's sons broke into God's temple.* They used the holy things in the Lord's temple for their worship of the Baal gods. Athaliah was a very wicked woman.

⁷King Joash gave a command for a box to be made and put outside the gate at the Lord's temple.* ⁸Then the Levites made an announcement in Judah and Jerusalem. They told the people to bring in the tax money for the Lord. That tax money is what Moses the servant of God had required the people of Israel to give while they were in the desert. ⁹All the leaders and the people were happy. They brought their money and put it in the box. They continued giving until the box was full. ¹⁰Then the Levites would take the box to the king's officials. They saw that the box was full of money. The king's secretary and the leading priest's officer came and took the money out of the box. Then they took the box back to its place again. They did this often and gathered much money. ¹¹Then King Joash and Jehoiada

gave the money to the people that worked on the Lord's temple. And the people that worked on the Lord's temple hired skilled woodcarvers and carpenters to build again the Lord's temple. They also hired workers that knew how to work with iron and bronze to build again the Lord's temple.

¹²The men that supervised the work were very faithful. The work to build again the Lord's temple* was successful. They built God's temple the way it was before and they made it stronger. ¹³When the workers finished, they brought the money that was left to King Joash and Jehoiada. They used that money to make things for the Lord's temple. Those things were used for the service in the temple and for offering burnt offerings.* They also made bowls and other things from gold and silver. The priests offered burnt offerings in the Lord's temple every day while Jehoiada was alive.

¹⁴Jehoiada became old. He had a very long life, then he died. Jehoiada was 130 years old when he died. ¹⁵The people buried Jehoiada in David's City where the kings are buried. The people buried Jehoiada there because in his life he did much good in Israel for God and for God's temple.*

¹⁶After Jehoiada died, the leaders of Judah came and bowed to King Joash. The king listened to those leaders. ¹⁷The king and those leaders rejected the temple* of the Lord God. Their ancestors* followed the Lord God. They worshiped the Asherah poles* and other idols. God was angry with the people of Judah and Jerusalem because the king and those leaders were guilty. ¹⁸God sent prophets to the people to bring them back to the Lord. The prophets warned the people. But the people refused to listen.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Asherah poles These poles were symbols of the female idol Asherah. The Canaanite people worshipped this false female god.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Holy Tent Or, "tabernacle." Also called the "meeting tent."

The people would go to this tent to meet with God.

²God's Spirit came on Zechariah. Zechariah's father was Jehoiada the priest. Zechariah stood in front of the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you people refuse to obey the Lord's commands? You will not be successful. You have left the Lord. So the Lord has also left you!'"

³But the people made plans against Zechariah. The king commanded the people to kill Zechariah, so they threw rocks at him until he died. The people did this in the temple* yard. ⁴Joash the king didn't remember Jehoiada's kindness to him. Jehoiada was Zechariah's father. But Joash killed Zechariah, Jehoiada's son. Before Zechariah died, he said, "May the Lord see what you are doing and punish you!"

⁵At the end of the year, The Aramean army came against Joash. They attacked Judah and Jerusalem and killed all the leaders of the people. They sent all the valuable things to the king of Damascus. ⁶The Aramean army came with a small group of men, but the Lord let them defeat a very large army from Judah. The Lord did this because the people of Judah left the Lord God their ancestors* followed. So Joash was punished. ⁷When the Arameans left Joash, he was badly wounded. Joash's own servants made plans against him. They did this because Joash killed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. The servants killed Joash on his own bed. After Joash died, the people buried him in David's City. But they didn't bury him in the place where the kings are buried.

⁸These are the servants that made plans against Joash: Zabad and Jehozabad. Zabad's mother's name was Shimeath. Shimeath was from Ammon. And Jehozabad's mother's name was Shimrith. Shimrith was from Moab. ⁹The story about Joash's sons, the great prophecies against him, and how he built again God's temple* are written in the writings of the Book of the Kings. Amaziah became the new king after him. Amaziah was Joash's son.

Amaziah King of Judah

25 Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddin. Jehoaddin was from Jerusalem. ²Amaziah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. But he didn't do them with all his heart. ³Amaziah became a strong king. Then he killed the officials that killed his father the king. 'But Amaziah didn't kill those officials' children. Why? He obeyed the law written in the book of Moses. The Lord commanded, "Fathers must not die because of their children's sins. Children must not die because of their father's sins. Every person must die for his own sins."*

⁴Amaziah gathered the people of Judah together. He grouped them by families and he put generals and captains in charge of those groups. Those leaders were in charge of all the soldiers from Judah and Benjamin. All the men that were chosen to be soldiers were 20 years old and older. In all there were 300,000 skilled soldiers ready to fight with spears and shields. ⁵Amaziah also hired 100,000 soldiers from Israel. He paid 3¼ tons* of silver to hire those soldiers. ⁶But a man of God* came to Amaziah. The man of God said, "King, don't let the army of Israel go with you. The Lord is not with Israel. The Lord is not with the people of Ephraim.* ⁷Maybe you will make yourself strong and ready for war, but God can help you win or help you lose. ⁸Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what about the money I already paid to the Israelite army?" The man of God answered, "The Lord has plenty. He can give you much more than that!"

⁹So Amaziah sent the Israelite army back home to Ephraim.* Those men were very angry against the king and the people of Judah. They went back home very angry.

¹⁰Then Amaziah became very brave and led his army to the Salt Valley in the country of

Fathers ... sins This law is found in Deut. 24:16.

3¼ tons Literally, "100 talents."

man of God This is another name for a prophet.

Ephraim Ephraim was Joseph's youngest son. Ephraim's family group joined Israel. Ephraim was another name for Israel.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Edom. In that place, Amaziah's army killed 10,000 men from Seir.* ¹²The army of Judah also captured 10,000 men from Seir. They took those men from Seir to the top of a cliff. Those men were still alive. Then the army of Judah threw down those men from the top of the cliff and their bodies were broken on the rocks below.

¹³But at the same time, the Israelite army was attacking some towns in Judah. They attacked the towns from Beth-Horon all the way to Samaria. They killed 3,000 people and took many valuable things. The people of that army were angry because, Amaziah didn't let them join him in the war.

¹⁴Amaziah came home after he defeated the Edomite* people. He brought the idol gods the people of Seir* worshiped. Amaziah started to worship those idol gods. He bowed down in front of those gods, and he burned incense* to them. ¹⁵The Lord was very angry with Amaziah. The Lord sent a prophet to Amaziah. The prophet said, "Amaziah, why have you worshiped the gods those people worship? Those gods could not even save their own people from you!"

¹⁶When the prophet spoke, Amaziah said to the prophet, "We never made you an adviser to the king! Be quiet! If you don't be quiet, you will be killed." The prophet became quiet, but then said, "God really has decided to destroy you. Why? Because you did those bad things and didn't listen to my advice."

¹⁷Amaziah king of Judah, talked with his advisers. Then he sent a message to Jehoash. Amaziah said to Jehoash, "Let's meet face to face." Jehoash was Jehoahaz's son. Jehoahaz was Jehu's son. Jehu was the king of Israel.

¹⁸Then Jehoash sent his answer to Amaziah. Jehoash was the king of Israel and Amaziah was the king of Judah. Jehoash told this story: "A little thorn bush of Lebanon sent a message to a big cedar tree of Lebanon. The little thorn bush said, 'Let your daughter marry my son.'

But a wild animal came and walked over the thorn bush and destroyed it. 'You say to yourself, 'I have defeated Edom*!' You are proud and you brag. But you should stay at home. There is no need for you to get into trouble. If you fight me, you and Judah will be destroyed."

¹⁹But Amaziah refused to listen. This came from God. God planned to let Israel defeat Judah, because the people of Judah followed the gods the people of Edom* followed. ²⁰So Jehoash king of Israel met Amaziah king of Judah face to face at the town of Beth-Shemesh. Beth-Shemesh is in Judah. ²¹Israel defeated Judah. Every man of Judah ran away to his home. ²²Jehoash captured Amaziah at Beth-Shemesh and took him to Jerusalem. Amaziah's father's name was Joash. Joash's father's name was Jehoahaz. Jehoash tore down a 600-foot section* of the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. ²³Then Jehoash took all the gold and silver and all the things in God's temple.* Obed-Edom was responsible for taking care of those things in the temple. Jehoash also took the valuable things from the king's house, and some people as prisoners. Then he went back to Samaria.

²⁴Amaziah lived 15 years after Jehoash died. Amaziah's father was Joash, the king of Judah. ²⁵The other things Amaziah did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁶When Amaziah stopped obeying the Lord, the people in Jerusalem made plans against Amaziah. He ran away to the town of Lachish. But the people sent men to Lachish and they killed Amaziah there. ²⁷Then they carried Amaziah's body on horses and buried him with his ancestors* in the City of Judah.

Uzziah King of Judah

26 Then the people of Judah chose Uzziah to be the new king in place of

Seir Or, "Edom."

Edomite The people of Seir.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Edom A country east of Judah.

600-foot section Or, "400-cubit section."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Amaziah. Amaziah was Uzziah's father. Uzziah was 16 years old when this happened. ¹Uzziah built again the town of Elath and gave it back to Judah. Uzziah did this after Amaziah died and was buried with his ancestors.*

²Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king. He ruled 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah. Jecoliah was from Jerusalem. ³Uzziah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He obeyed God the same as his father Amaziah had done. ⁴Uzziah followed God in the time of Zechariah's life. Zechariah taught Uzziah how to respect and obey God. When Uzziah was obeying the Lord, God gave him success.

⁵Uzziah fought a war against the Philistine people. He tore down the walls around the towns of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Uzziah built towns near the town of Ashdod and in other places among the Philistine people. ⁶God helped Uzziah fight the Philistines, the Arabs living in the town of Gur-Baal, and the Meunites. ⁷The Ammonites paid tribute* to Uzziah. Uzziah's name became famous all the way to the border of Egypt. He was famous because he was very powerful.

⁸Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the place where the wall turned. Uzziah made those towers strong. ⁹Uzziah built towers in the desert. He also dug many wells. He had much cattle in the hill country and in the flat lands. Uzziah had farmers in the mountains and in the lands where growth was good. He also had men that took care of fields where grapes grew. He loved farming.

¹⁰Uzziah had an army of trained soldiers. Those soldiers were put in groups by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer. Hananiah was their leader. Jeiel and Maaseiah counted those soldiers and put them into groups. Hananiah was one of the king's officers. ¹²There were 2,600 leaders over the soldiers. ¹³Those family leaders were in charge of an

army of 307,500 men that fought with great power. Those soldiers helped the king against the enemy. ¹⁴Uzziah gave the army shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and stones for the slings.* ¹⁵In Jerusalem Uzziah made machines that were invented by clever men. Those machines were put on the towers and corner walls. These machines shot arrows and large rocks. Uzziah became famous. People knew his name in far away places. He had much help and became a powerful king.

¹⁶But when Uzziah became strong, his pride caused him to be destroyed. He was not faithful to the Lord his God. He went into the Lord's temple* to burn incense* on the altar* for burning incense. ¹⁷Azariah the priest and 80 brave priests that served the Lord followed Uzziah into the temple. ¹⁸They told Uzziah he was wrong. They said to him, "Uzziah, it is not your job to burn incense to the Lord. It is not good for you to do this. The priests and Aaron's descendants* are the ones that burn incense to the Lord. These priests were trained for holy service to burn incense. Go out of the Most Holy Place.* You have not been faithful. The Lord God will not honor you for this!"

¹⁹But Uzziah was angry. He had a bowl in his hand for burning incense.* While Uzziah was very angry at the priests, leprosy* came up on his forehead. This happened in front of the priests in the Lord's temple* by the altar* for burning incense. ²⁰Azariah the leading priest and all the priests looked at Uzziah. They could see the leprosy on his forehead. The priests quickly forced Uzziah out from the temple. Uzziah himself hurried out because the Lord

slings Something to throw rocks in, like David used against Goliath.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Most Holy Place The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshipped.

leprosy A very bad skin disease. The Hebrew word means any of several diseases that cause rashes or sores on the skin.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

tribute Money paid to a more powerful king by a weaker king to have peace.

had punished him. ²¹Uzziah the king was a leper.* He could not enter the Lord's temple. Uzziah's son Jotham controlled the king's house and became governor for the people.

²²The other things that Uzziah did, from beginning to the end, were written by the prophet Isaiah. Isaiah's father was Amoz. ²³Uzziah died and was buried near his ancestors.* Uzziah was buried in the field near the king's burial places. Why? Because the people said, "Uzziah has leprosy.*" And Jotham became the new king in Uzziah's place. Jotham was Uzziah's son.

Jotham King of Judah

27 Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah. Jerushah was Zadok's daughter. ²Jotham did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He obeyed God just like his father Uzziah had done. But Jotham did not enter the Lord's temple* to burn incense* like his father did. But the people continued doing wrong. ³Jotham built again the Upper Gate of the Lord's temple. He did much building on the wall at the place named Ophel. ⁴Jotham also built towns in the hill country of Judah. Jotham built fortresses* and towers in the forests. ⁵Jotham also fought against the king of the Ammonite people and his army and defeated them. So each year for three years the Ammonites gave Jotham $3\frac{3}{4}$ tons* of silver, 62,000 bushels* of wheat, and 62,000 bushels* of barley.

⁶Jotham became powerful because he faithfully obeyed the Lord his God. ⁷The other things Jotham did and all his wars are written in

the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸Jotham was 25 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. ⁹Then Jotham died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried him in David's City.* Ahaz became the king in Jotham's place. Ahaz was Jotham's son.

Ahaz King of Judah

28 Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king. He ruled 16 years in Jerusalem. Ahaz didn't live right like David his ancestor.* Ahaz didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. ²Ahaz followed the bad example of the kings of Israel. He used molds to make idols to worship the Baal gods. ³Ahaz burned incense* in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.* ⁴He sacrificed* his own sons by burning them in the fire. He did the same terrible sins that the peoples living in that land did. The Lord had forced those people out when the people of Israel entered that land. ⁵Ahaz offered sacrifices* and burned incense in the high places,* on the hills, and under every green tree.

⁶Ahaz sinned, so the Lord his God let the king of Aram defeat Ahaz. The king of Aram and his army defeated Ahaz and made many people of Judah prisoners. The king of Aram took those prisoners to the city of Damascus. The Lord also let Pekah the king of Israel defeat Ahaz. Pekah's father's name was Remaliah. Pekah and his army killed 120,000 brave soldiers from Judah in one day. Pekah defeated those men from Judah because they stopped obeying the Lord God their ancestors

leper A person who was sick with leprosy.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

leprosy A very bad skin disease. The Hebrew word means any of several diseases that cause rashes or sores on the skin.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

$3\frac{3}{4}$ tons Literally, "100 talents."

62,000 bushels Literally, "10,000 cors."

David's City Another name for Jerusalem.

ancestor Literally, "father," meaning a person that people are descended from.

Valley of Ben Hinnom The Valley of Hinnom was south of Jerusalem. Many babies and young children were sacrificed to false gods in this valley.

sacrifice(d) To kill a special animal and offer it on an altar as a gift to God.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

obeyed. ⁷Zicri was a brave soldier from Ephraim.* Zicri killed Maaseiah, King Ahaz's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the king's house, and Elkanah. Elkanah was second in command to the king.

⁸The Israelite army captured 200,000 of their own relatives living in Judah. They took women, children, and many valuable things from Judah. The Israelites brought those captives and those things to the city of Samaria. ⁹But one of the Lord's prophets was there. This prophet was named Oded. Oded met the Israelite army that came back to Samaria. Oded said to the Israelite army, "The Lord God your ancestors* obeyed let you defeat the people of Judah because he was angry at them. You killed and punished the people of Judah in a very mean way. Now God is angry at you. ¹⁰You plan to keep the people of Judah and Jerusalem as slaves. You also have sinned against the Lord your God. ¹¹Now listen to me. Send back your brothers and sisters that you captured. Do this because the Lord's terrible anger is against you."

¹²Then some of the leaders in Ephraim* saw the Israelite soldiers coming home from war. Those leaders met the Israelite soldiers and warned them. Those leaders were Azariah son of Johohanan, Berekiah son of Meshilemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai. ¹³Those leaders said to the Israelite soldiers, "Don't bring the prisoners from Judah here. If you do that, it will make us sin worse against the Lord. That will make our sin and guilt worse and the Lord will be very angry against Israel!" ¹⁴"So the soldiers gave the prisoners and valuable things to those leaders and to the people of Israel. ¹⁵The leaders named before (Azariah, Berekiah, Jehizkiah, and Amasa) stood up and helped the prisoners. These four men got the clothes that the Israelite army took and gave them to those people that were naked. Those leaders also gave shoes to

those people. They gave the prisoners from Judah something to eat and drink. They rubbed oil on those people.* Then those leaders from Ephraim put the weak prisoners on donkeys and took them back home to their families in Jericho. Jericho was named the city of palm trees. Then those four leaders went back home to Samaria.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷At that same time, the people from Edom came again and defeated the people of Judah. The Edomites captured people and took them away as prisoners. So King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria to help him. ¹⁸The Philistine people also attacked the towns in the hills and in south Judah. The Philistines captured the towns of Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederath, Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo. They also captured the villages near those towns. Then the Philistines lived in those towns. ¹⁹The Lord gave troubles to Judah because King Ahaz of Judah encouraged the people of Judah to sin. He was very unfaithful to the Lord. ²⁰Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and gave Ahaz trouble instead of helping him. ²¹Ahaz took some valuable things from the Lord's temple* and from the king's house and from the prince's house. Ahaz gave those things to the king of Assyria. But that didn't help Ahaz.

²²In Ahaz's troubles, he sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. ²³He offered sacrifices* to the gods the people of Damascus worshiped. The people of Damascus had defeated Ahaz. So he thought to himself, "The gods the people of Aram worship helped them. So if I offer sacrifices to those gods, maybe they will help me also." Ahaz worshiped those gods. In this way he sinned, and he made the people of Israel sin.

²⁴Ahaz gathered the things from God's temple* and broke them to pieces. Then he closed the doors of the Lord's temple. He made

Ephraim Ephraim was Joseph's youngest son. Ephraim's family group joined Israel. Ephraim was another name for Israel.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

rubbed oil on those people They did this as a medicine for the people.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

altars* and put them on every street corner in Jerusalem. ²⁵In every town in Judah Ahaz made high places* for burning incense* to worship other gods. Ahaz made the Lord God that his ancestors* obeyed very angry.

²⁶The other things that Ahaz did, from the beginning to the end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷Ahaz died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Ahaz in the city of Jerusalem. But they didn't bury Ahaz in the same burial place where the kings of Israel were buried. Hezekiah became the new king in Ahaz's place. Hezekiah was Ahaz's son.

Hezekiah King of Judah

29 Hezekiah became king when he was 25 years old. He ruled 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abijah. Abijah was Zechariah's daughter. ²Hezekiah did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He did what was right just like David his ancestor* had done.

³Hezekiah fixed the doors of the Lord's temple* and made them strong. Hezekiah opened the temple again. He did this in the first month of the first year after he became king. ⁴Hezekiah got the priests and Levites together in one assembly. He had a meeting with them in the open yard on the east side of the temple. Hezekiah said to them, "Listen to me, Levites! Make yourselves ready for holy service. Make the temple of the Lord God ready for holy service. He is the God your ancestors obeyed. Take away the things from the temple that do not belong in there. Those things make the temple not pure. ⁵Our ancestors left the Lord and turned their faces away from the Lord's

house.* ⁶They shut the doors of the porch of the temple and let the fire go out in the lamps. They stopped burning incense* and offerings burnt offerings* in the Holy Place* to the God of Israel. ⁷So, the Lord became very angry at the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The Lord punished them. Other peoples became afraid and were shocked when they saw what the Lord did to the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Those other people shook their heads with hate and shame for the people of Judah. You know these things are true. You can see with your own eyes. ⁸And that is why our ancestors were killed in battle. Our sons and daughters and wives were made prisoners. ⁹So now I, Hezekiah, have decided to make an agreement with the Lord God of Israel. Then he will not be angry at us any more. ¹⁰So don't be lazy or waste any more time. The Lord chose you to serve him. You should serve him and burn incense to him."

¹¹⁻¹⁴This is a list of the Levites that were there that started to work: From the Kohathite family there was Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah. From the Merarite family there was Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel. From the Gershonite family there was Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joab. From Elizaphan's descendants* there was Shimri and Jeiel. From Asaph's descendants there was Zechariah and Mattaniah. From Heman's descendants there was Jehiel and Shimei. From Jeduthun's descendants there was Shemaiah and Uzziel. ¹⁵Then these Levites gathered their brothers together and made themselves ready for holy service in the temple.* They obeyed the king's command that came from the Lord. They went into the Lord's temple to clean it. ¹⁶The priests went into the inside part of the Lord's temple to clean it.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

high places Places of worship.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

ancestor Literally, "father," meaning a person that people are descended from.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Lord's house Another name for the temple in Jerusalem.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

They took out all the unclean* things they found in the Lord's temple. They brought the unclean things to the yard of the Lord's temple. Then the Levites took the unclean things out to the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷On the first day of the first month, the Levites began to make themselves ready for holy service. On the eighth day of the month, the Levites came to the porch of the Lord's temple. For eight more days they cleaned the Lord's temple to make it ready for holy use. They finished on the 16th day of the first month.

¹⁸Then they went to King Hezekiah. They said to him, "King Hezekiah, we cleaned all the Lord's temple* and the altar* for burning offerings and all the things in the temple. We cleaned the table for the rows of bread with all the things used for that table. ¹⁹King Ahab was not faithful and he threw away some things when he was king. But we put all those things back and made them ready for holy use. They are now in front of the Lord's altar."

²⁰King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went up to the temple* of the Lord early the next morning. ²¹They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven young male goats. These animals were for a sin offering for the kingdom of Judah, for the Holy Place* to make it clean, and for the people of Judah. King Hezekiah commanded the priests that were descendants* of Aaron to offer those animals on the Lord's altar.* ²²So the priests killed the bulls and kept the blood. Then they sprinkled the bulls' blood on the altar. Then the priests killed the rams and sprinkled the rams' blood on the altar. Then the priests killed the lambs and sprinkled the lambs' blood on the altar. ²³Then the priests brought the male goats in front of the king and the people

assembled together. The goats were the sin offering. The priests put their hands on the goats and killed the goats. The priests made a sin offering with the goats' blood on the altar. They did this so God would forgive the sins of the people of Israel. The king said that the burnt offering* and the sin offering should be made for all the people of Israel.

²⁴King Hezekiah put the Levites in the Lord's temple* with cymbals,* harps, and lyres* the way David, Gad the king's seer,* and Nathan the prophet had commanded. This command came from the Lord through his prophets. ²⁵So the Levites stood ready with David's instruments of music, and the priests stood ready with their trumpets. ²⁶Then Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice* the burnt offering* on the altar.* When the burnt offering began, singing to the Lord began also. The trumpets were blown and the instruments of David king of Israel played. ²⁷All the assembly bowed down, the musicians sang, and the trumpet players blew their trumpets until the burnt offering was finished.

²⁸After the sacrifices* were finished, King Hezekiah and all the people with him bowed down and worshiped. ²⁹King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to give praise to the Lord. They sang songs that David and Asaph the seer* had written. They praised God and became happy. They all bowed and worshiped God. ³⁰Hezekiah said, "Now you people of Judah have given yourselves to the Lord. Come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the Lord's temple.*" Then the people brought sacrifices and thank offerings. Any person who wanted to, also brought burnt offerings. ³¹This is how many burnt offerings the assembly brought to the temple: 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs. All these animals were sacrificed as burnt offerings to the Lord.

unclean Or, "unacceptable." Not pure or not able to be used in worshiping God. See Lev. 11-15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

cymbals A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

"The holy offerings for the Lord were 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep and goats. *But there were not enough priests to skin and cut up all the animals for the burnt offerings. So their relatives, the Levites, helped them until the work was finished and until other priests could make themselves ready for holy service. The Levites were more serious about making themselves ready to serve the Lord. They were more serious than the priests. *There were many burnt offerings, and the fat of fellowship offerings, and drink offerings. So the service in the Lord's temple began again. *Hezekiah and the people were very happy about the things God prepared for his people. And they were happy he did it so quickly!

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

30 King Hezekiah sent messages to all the people of Israel and Judah. He wrote letters to the people of Ephraim and Manasseh* also. Hezekiah invited all those people to come to the Lord's temple* in Jerusalem so they all could celebrate the Passover* for the Lord God of Israel. *King Hezekiah agreed with all his officials and all the assembly in Jerusalem to have the Passover in the second month. *They could not celebrate the Passover Festival at the regular time. Why? Because not enough priests had made themselves ready for holy service. And another reason is the people had not gathered in Jerusalem. *The agreement satisfied King Hezekiah and all the assembly. *So they made an announcement everywhere in Israel, from the town of Beersheba all the way to the town of Dan. They told the people to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover for the Lord God of Israel. A large group of the people of Israel had not celebrated the Passover since a

long time ago the way the law of Moses said to celebrate it. *So the messengers took the king's letters all through Israel and Judah. This is what those letters said:

Children of Israel, turn back to the Lord God that Abraham, Isaac, and Israel (Jacob) obeyed. Then God will come back to you people that are still alive and have escaped from the kings of Assyria. *Don't be like your fathers or your brothers. The Lord was their God, but they turned against him. So the Lord made people hate them and speak evil about them. You can see with your own eyes that this is true. *Don't be stubborn like your ancestors* were. But obey the Lord with a willing heart. Come to the Most Holy Place.* The Lord has made the Most Holy Place to be holy forever. Serve the Lord your God. Then the Lord's fearful anger will turn away from you. *If you come back and obey the Lord, then your relatives and your children will find mercy from the people that captured them. And your relatives and your children will come back to this land. The Lord your God is kind and merciful. He will not turn away from you if you come back to him.

*The messengers went to every town in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. They went all the way to the country of Zebulun. But the people laughed at the messengers and made fun of them. *But, some men from the countries of Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. *And God made it happen that all the people of Judah agreed to obey King Hezekiah's and his officials through the Lord's word.

*Many people came together at Jerusalem

Ephraim and Manasseh Ephraim and Manasseh were Joseph's sons. Both their families later became one family group of Israel. When the kingdom was divided, Ephraim and Manasseh sometimes meant the whole kingdom of Israel, separate from the kingdom of Judah.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Most Holy Place The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshipped.

to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread* in the second month. It was a very large crowd. "Those people took away the altars in Jerusalem that were for false gods. They also took away all the incense altars that were for false gods. They threw those altars into the Kidron Valley. ¹⁵Then they killed the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the second month. The priests and the Levites felt ashamed. They made themselves ready for holy service. The priests and the Levites brought burnt offerings* into the Lord's temple.* ¹⁶"They took their regular places in the temple the way the law of Moses, the man of God,* said. The Levites gave the blood to the priests. Then the priests sprinkled the blood on the altar.* ¹⁷There were many people in the group that had not made themselves ready for holy service, so they were not permitted to kill the Passover lambs. That is why the Levites were responsible for killing the Passover lambs for every person who was not clean. The Levites made each lamb holy for the Lord.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹"Many people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun had not prepared themselves in the right way for the Passover* Festival. They did not celebrate the Passover the right way, like the law of Moses says. But Hezekiah prayed for those people. So Hezekiah said this prayer, "Lord God, you are good. These people truly wanted to worship you in the right way, but they did not make themselves clean like the law says. Please forgive those

people. You are the God that our ancestors* obeyed. Forgive, even if someone did not make himself clean like the rules of the Most Holy Place* say." ²⁰The Lord listened to King Hezekiah's prayer. The Lord forgave the people. ²¹The children of Israel at Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days. They were very happy. The Levites and the priests gave praise to the Lord every day with all their strength. ²²King Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites that understood very well how to do the service of the Lord. The people celebrated the Festival for seven days and offered fellowship offerings. They gave thanks and praise to the Lord God of their ancestors.*

²³All the people agreed to stay seven more days. They were joyful as they celebrated the Passover* for seven more days. ²⁴Hezekiah king of Judah gave 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep to the assembly to kill and eat. The leaders gave 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep to the assembly. Many priests prepared themselves for holy service. ²⁵All the assembly of Judah, the priests, the Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, and the travelers that came from Israel and moved to Judah—all those people were very happy. ²⁶So there was much joy in Jerusalem. There was not anything like this celebration since the time of Solomon son of David king of Israel. ²⁷The priests and the Levites stood up and asked the Lord to bless the people. God heard them. Their prayer came up to the Lord's holy home in heaven.

King Hezekiah Makes Improvements

31 The Passover* celebration was finished. The people of Israel that were in Jerusalem for the Passover went out to the towns of Judah. Then they smashed the stone idols that were in those towns. Those stone idols were used to worship false gods. Those

Festival of Unleavened Bread This is the Passover Festival. Unleavened bread did not have yeast in it to make it rise when it is baked. At the Passover, as the Jews were leaving Egypt, the women did not have time to wait for the bread to rise because they were in a hurry, so it is called the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Most Holy Place The inside room where the Box of the Lord's Agreement sat. It is also named the "Holy of Holies." It is the spiritual place where God lives and is worshipped.

people also cut down the Asherah Poles.* And they broke down the high places* and the altars* all through the countries of Judah and Benjamin. The people did the same things in the area of Ephraim and Manasseh. The people did these things until they destroyed all the things used for worshiping the false gods. Then all the Israelites went back to their towns. Each person went back to his own home.

¹King Hezekiah again chose the groups of priests and Levites to do their duties. Each man had a special work to do. Hezekiah again chose the priests and the Levites for making the burnt offerings* and the fellowship offerings. Those priests also worshiped and gave thanks and praise in the Lord's house.* ²Hezekiah used some of his own animals to give for the burnt offerings. These burnt offerings were given in the mornings and evenings, on the Sabbath days,* and during the New Moons,* and other festivals. This was done as it is written in the Lord's law. ³Hezekiah commanded the people living in Jerusalem to give the part that belonged to the priests and the Levites to them. Then the priests and Levites could give themselves fulltime to the Lord's law. ⁴Soon after the king's command went out all through the country, the people of Israel gave freely. They gave the first part of their harvest of grain, grapes, oil, honey, and all the things they grew in their fields. They freely brought one tenth of all their things, and this collection was very large also. ⁵The men of Israel and Judah living in the towns of Judah also brought one tenth of their cattle and sheep. They also brought one tenth of the things that were put in

a special place that was only for the Lord. All these things they brought to the Lord their God. They put all these things in piles. ⁷In the third month the people began to bring their collection of things and they finished bringing the collection in the seventh month. ⁸When Hezekiah and the leaders came, they saw the piles of things that were collected. They gave praise to the Lord and to the Lord's people, the people of Israel. ⁹Then Hezekiah asked the priests and the Levites about the piles. ¹⁰Azariah the leading priest from Zadok's family said to Hezekiah, "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the Lord's house, we have had plenty to eat. We have plenty left. The Lord has blessed his people. We have all this much left."

¹¹Then Hezekiah commanded the priests to make storerooms ready in the Lord's temple.* So this was done. ¹²Then the priests brought the offerings, tithes,* and other things that were to be given only to the Lord. All those things collected were put in the storerooms in the temple. Conaniah the Levite was in charge of all those things that were collected. Shimei was second in charge of those things. Shimei was Conaniah's brother. ¹³Conaniah and his brother Shimei were supervisors of these men: Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah. Hezekiah the king and Azariah the official in charge of God's temple chose those men. ¹⁴Kore was in charge of the offerings that the people freely gave to God. He was responsible for giving out the collections that were given to the Lord. And he was responsible for giving out the gifts that were made holy for the Lord. Kore was the gatekeeper at the East Gate. His father's name was Imnah the Levite. ¹⁵Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah helped Kore. Those men served faithfully in the towns where the priests were living. They gave the collection of things to their relatives in each group of priests. They gave the same things to the more important

Asherah Poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

Lord's house Another name for the temple in Jerusalem.

Sabbath day(s) Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

New Moon(s) This was the first day of the Hebrew month. There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

tithes An offering or gift that is one tenth of a person's property.

people and to the less important. ¹⁶These men also gave the collection of things to the males three years old and older that had their names in the Levite family histories. All these males were to enter the Lord's temple for daily service to do the things they were responsible to do. Each group of Levites had their own responsibility. ¹⁷The priests were given their part of the collection. This was done by families, in the way they were listed in the family histories. The Levites 20 years old and older were given their part of the collection. This was done by their responsibilities and by their groups. ¹⁸The Levites' babies, wives, sons and daughters also got part of the collection. This was done for all the Levites who were listed in the family histories. This was because the Levites were faithful to always keep themselves holy and ready for service. ¹⁹Some of Aaron's descendants,* the priests, had some farm fields near the towns where the Levites were living. And some of Aaron's descendants were also living in the towns. Men were chosen by name in each of those towns to give part of the collection to these descendants of Aaron. Males and all those named in the family histories of the Levites got part of the collection.

²⁰So King Hezekiah did those good things in all Judah. He did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. ²¹He had success in every work he began—the service of God's temple* and in obeying the law and commands, and in following his God. Hezekiah did all these things with all his heart.

The King of Aram Tries to Trouble Hezekiah

32 After all these things that Hezekiah had faithfully done happened, Sennacherib king of Assyria came to attack the country of Judah. Sennacherib and his army camped outside the fortresses.* He did this so he could make plans to defeat those towns.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Sennacherib wanted to win those towns for himself. ²Hezekiah knew that Sennacherib came to Jerusalem to attack it. ³Then Hezekiah talked to his officials and army officers. They all agreed to stop the waters of the water springs outside the city. Those officials and army officers helped Hezekiah. ⁴Many people came together and stopped all the springs and the stream that flowed through the middle of the country. They said, "The king of Assyria will not find much water when he comes here!" ⁵Hezekiah made Jerusalem stronger. This is how he did it: He built again all the parts of the wall that were broken down. He built towers on the wall. He also built another wall outside the first wall. He built again the strong places on the east side of the old part of Jerusalem. He made many weapons and shields. ⁶Hezekiah chose officers of war to be in charge of the people. He met with these officers at the open place near the city gate. Hezekiah talked to those officers and encouraged them. He said, "Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid or worry about the king of Assyria or the large army with him. There is a greater power with us than the king of Assyria has with him! ⁷The king of Assyria only has men. But we have the Lord our God with us! Our God will help us. He will fight our battles!" So Hezekiah king of Judah encouraged the people and made them feel stronger.

⁸Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his army were camped near the town of Lachish so they could defeat it. Then Sennacherib sent his servants to Hezekiah king of Judah and to all the people of Judah in Jerusalem. Sennacherib's servants had a message for Hezekiah and all the people in Jerusalem. ⁹They said, "Sennacherib king of Assyria says this: 'What do you trust in that makes you stay under attack in Jerusalem?' ¹⁰Hezekiah is fooling you. You are being tricked into staying in Jerusalem so you will die from hunger and thirst. Hezekiah says to you, 'The Lord our God will save us from the king of Assyria.' ¹¹Hezekiah himself took away the Lord's high

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

places* and altars.* He told you people of Judah and Jerusalem that you must worship and burn incense* on only one altar. "Of course, you know what my ancestors* and I have done to all the peoples in other countries. The gods of the other countries could not save their people. Those gods could not stop me from destroying their people. "My ancestors destroyed those countries. There is no god that can stop me from destroying his people. So you think your god can save you from me? "Do not let Hezekiah fool you or trick you. Don't believe him because no god of any nation or kingdom has ever been able to keep his people safe from me or my ancestors. So don't think your god can stop me from destroying you."

¹⁶The king of Assyria's servants said worse things against the Lord God and against Hezekiah, God's servant. ¹⁷The king of Assyria also wrote letters that insulted the Lord God of Israel. This is what the king of Assyria said in those letters: "The gods of the other nations could not stop me from destroying their people. In the same way Hezekiah's god won't be able to stop me from destroying his people." ¹⁸Then the king of Assyria's servants shouted loudly to the people of Jerusalem that were on the city wall. Those servants used the Hebrew language when they shouted to the people on the wall. Those servants of the king of Assyria did this to make the people of Jerusalem afraid. They said those things so they could capture the city of Jerusalem. ¹⁹Those servants said bad things against the gods the people of the world worshiped. Those gods are only things people made with their hands. In the same way, those servants said the same bad things against the God of Jerusalem.

²⁰Hezekiah the king and Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz prayed about this problem. They shouted to heaven. ²¹Then the Lord sent

an angel to the king of Assyria's camp. That angel killed all the soldiers and the leaders and the officers in the Assyrian army. So the king of Assyria went back home to his own country and his people were ashamed of him. He went into the temple of his god and some of his own sons killed him there with a sword. ²²So the Lord saved Hezekiah and the people in Jerusalem from Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from all other people. The Lord cared for Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem. ²³Many people brought gifts for the Lord to Jerusalem. They brought valuable things to Hezekiah king of Judah. From that time on, all the nations respected Hezekiah.

²⁴It was in those days that Hezekiah became very sick and near death. He prayed to the Lord. The Lord spoke to Hezekiah and gave him a sign.* ²⁵But Hezekiah's heart was proud, so he did not give God thanks for God's kindness. This is why God was angry at Hezekiah and at the people of Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶But Hezekiah and those people living in Jerusalem changed their hearts and lives. They became humble and stopped being proud. So the Lord's anger didn't come on them while Hezekiah was alive.

²⁷Hezekiah had very much riches and honor. He made places to keep silver, gold, valuable jewels, spices, shields, and all kinds of things. ²⁸Hezekiah had storage buildings for the grain, new wine, and oil that people sent to him. He had stalls for all the cattle and stalls for the sheep. ²⁹Hezekiah also built many towns, and he got many flocks of sheep and cattle. God gave Hezekiah very much wealth. ³⁰It was Hezekiah that stopped up the upper source of the waters of the Gihon spring in Jerusalem and made those waters flow straight down on the west side of David's city. And Hezekiah was successful in everything he did.

³¹One time the leaders of Babylon sent messengers to Hezekiah. Those messengers asked about a strange sign that had happened in

high place(s) Places for worshiping God or false gods.

These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The Lord spoke ... sign See Isaiah 38:1-8 for all the story about Hezekiah and how the Lord gave Hezekiah 15 more years to live.

the nations.* When they came God left Hezekiah alone to test him and to know everything that was in Hezekiah's heart.*

³³The others things that Hezekiah did when he ruled, and all the good things are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. Isaiah was Amoz's son. ³⁴Hezekiah died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Hezekiah on the hill where the graves of David's ancestors are. All the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem gave honor to Hezekiah when he died. Manasseh became the new king in Hezekiah's place. Manasseh was Hezekiah's son.

Manasseh King of Judah

33 Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for 55 years in Jerusalem. ²Manasseh did the things that the Lord said were wrong. He followed the terrible and sinful ways of the other nations. The Lord forced those nations out in front of the people of Israel. ³Manasseh built again the high places* that Hezekiah his father had broken down. Manasseh built altars for the Baal gods and made Asherah Poles.* He bowed down to the groups of stars and worshiped them. ⁴Manasseh built altars for false gods in the Lord's temple.* The Lord said about the temple, "My name will be in Jerusalem forever." ⁵Manasseh built altars for all the groups of stars in the two yards of the Lord's temple. ⁶Manasseh also burned his own

children for a sacrifice* in the Valley of Ben Hinnom.* Manasseh also used magic by doing soothsaying, divination, and sorcery.* He talked with mediums* and fortune-tellers. Manasseh did much evil in the Lord's sight. Manasseh's sins made the Lord angry. ⁷He also made a statue of an idol and put it in God's temple. God had said this to David and his son Solomon about the temple: "I will put my name in this house and in Jerusalem forever. I chose Jerusalem from all the family groups of Israel. ⁸I will not again take the Israelites off the land that I chose to give to their ancestors.* But they must obey all the things I commanded them. The people of Israel must obey all the laws, rules, and commands I gave Moses to give to them." ⁹Manasseh encouraged the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem to do wrong. They did worse evil than the nations that the Lord forced out before the Israelites.

¹⁰The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they refused to listen. ¹¹So the Lord brought commanders from the king of Assyria's army to attack Judah. Those commanders captured Manasseh and put hooks on him. They put brass chains on Manasseh's hands. They made Manasseh their prisoner and took him to the country of Babylon. ¹²Manasseh suffered. At that time he begged the Lord his God. Manasseh made himself humble before the God of his ancestors.* ¹³Manasseh prayed to God and begged God to help him. The Lord heard Manasseh's begging and felt sorry for him. The Lord let him return to Jerusalem and to his throne. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord was the true God.

a strange sign ... nations See Isaiah 38:1-8.

in Hezekiah's heart See 2 Kings 20:12-19.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Asherah Poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Valley of Ben Hinnom The Valley of Ben Hinnom was later called "Gehenna." It was south of Jerusalem. Many babies and young children were sacrificed to false gods in this valley.

soothsaying, divination, sorcery These words describe the different ways of magic and fortunetelling and trying to tell what will happen in the future.

mediums A person who lets a spirit take control of him and makes him tell things that will happen in the future. This person also tries to talk to people who have died.

¹⁴After that happened, Manasseh built an outer wall for David's City.* The outer wall was on the west side of the Gihon spring in the valley at the entrance of the Fish Gate. Manasseh put this wall around the hill of Ophel. He made the wall very tall. Then he put officers in all the fortresses* in Judah. ¹⁵Manasseh took away the strange idol gods. He took the idol out from the Lord's temple. He took away all the altars he had built on the temple hill, and in Jerusalem. Manasseh threw all those altars out of the city of Jerusalem. ¹⁶Then he set up the Lord's altar and offered fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it. Manasseh gave a command for all the people of Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁷The people continued to offer sacrifices* at the high places,* but their sacrifices were only to the Lord their God.

¹⁸The other things Manasseh did, and his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers* that spoke to him in the name of the Lord God of Israel, are all written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁹Manasseh's prayer and how God listened and felt sorry for him is written in the Book of the seers. Also all of Manasseh's sins and wrongs before he humbled himself, and the places where he built high places* and set up the Asherah Poles* are written in the Book of the seers. ²⁰So Manasseh died and was buried with his ancestors.* The people buried Manasseh in his own king's house. Amon became the new king in Manasseh's place. Amon was Manasseh's son.

Amon King of Judah

²¹Amon was 22 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king for two years in Jerusalem. ²²Amon did evil things before the Lord. He did not do the things the Lord wanted him to do just like Manasseh his father. Amon offered sacrifices* for all the carved idols and statues that Manasseh his father made. Amon worshiped those idols. ²³Amon did not humble himself in front of the Lord like Manasseh his father humbled himself. But Amon sinned more and more. ²⁴Amon's servants made plans against him. They killed Amon in his own house. ²⁵But the people of Judah killed all those servants that planned against King Amon. Then the people chose Josiah to be the new king. Josiah was Amon's son.

Josiah King of Judah

34 Josiah was eight years old when he became king. He was king for 31 years in Jerusalem. ²Josiah did what was right. He did the things the Lord wanted him to do. He did good things like David his ancestor.* Josiah did not turn from doing right things. ³When Josiah was in his eighth year as king, he began to follow the God that David his ancestor followed. Josiah was still young when he began to obey God. When Josiah was in his twelfth year as king he began to destroy the high places*, the Asherah Poles,* and idols that were carved and idols that were made from molds from Judah and Jerusalem. ⁴The people broke down the altars for the Baal gods. They did this in front of Josiah. Then Josiah cut down the incense* altars that stood high above the people. He broke the idols that were carved and the idols that were made from molds. He beat those idols into powder. Then Josiah sprinkled the powder on the graves of the people that had offered sacrifices* to the Baal gods. ⁵Josiah even burned the bones of the priests that had served the Baal gods on their

David's City Another name for Jerusalem.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

seer(s) This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Sam. 9:9-11.

Asherah Poles These poles were used to honor the female god Asherah that the Canaanite people worshiped.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

ancestor Literally, "father," meaning a person that people are descended from.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

own altars. This is how Josiah destroyed idols and idol worship from Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶Josiah did the same for the towns in the countries of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and all the way to Naphtali. He did the same for the ruins near all those towns.* ⁷Josiah broke down the altars and the Asherah Poles. He beat the idols into powder. He cut down all the incense altars used for Baal worship in all the country of Israel. Then Josiah went back to Jerusalem.

⁸When Josiah was in his 18th year as king of Judah he sent Shaphan, Maaseiah, and Joah to build again and fix the temple* of the Lord his God. Shaphan's father's name was Azaliah. Maaseiah was the city leader, and Joah's father's name was Jehoahaz. Joah was the man that wrote about the things that happened. (He was the recorder.) So Josiah commanded the temple to be fixed so he could make Judah and the temple clean. ⁹Those men came to Hilkiah the High Priest. They gave him the money that people gave for God's temple. The Levite doorkeepers had collected this money from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim, and from all the Israelites that were left. They also collected this money from all Judah, Benjamin, and all the people living in Jerusalem. ¹⁰Then the Levites paid the men that supervised the work on the Lord's temple. And the supervisors paid the workers that built again and fixed the Lord's temple. ¹¹They gave the money to carpenters and builders to buy large rocks that were already cut, and to buy wood. The wood was used to build again the buildings and to make beams for the buildings. In the past, the kings of Judah did not take care of the temple buildings. Those buildings had become old and ruined. ¹²⁻¹³The men worked faithfully. Their supervisors were Jahath and Obadiah. Jahath and Obadiah were Levites, and they were descendants* of Merari. Other supervisors were Zechariah and Meshullam. They were descendants of Kohath. The Levites that were

skilled in playing instruments of music also supervised the workers that carried things and all the other workers. Some Levites worked as secretaries, officials, and doorkeepers.

The Book of the Law Found

¹⁴The Levites brought out the money that was in the Lord's temple.* At that time Hilkiah the priest found the book of the Lord's law that was given through Moses. ¹⁵Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I found the Book of the Law in the Lord's house*!" Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. ¹⁶Shaphan brought the book to King Josiah. Shaphan reported to the king, "Your servants are doing everything you told them to do. ¹⁷They got the money that was in the Lord's temple and are paying the supervisors and the workers." ¹⁸Then Shaphan said to King Josiah, "Hilkiah the priest gave a book to me." Then Shaphan read from the book. He was in front of the king as he was reading. ¹⁹When King Josiah heard the words of the law being read, he tore his clothes.* ²⁰Then the king gave a command to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the servant. ²¹The king said, "Go, ask the Lord for me, and for the people that are left in Israel and in Judah. Ask about the words in the book that was found. The Lord is very angry with us because our ancestors* did not obey the Lord's word. They did not do all the things this book says to do!"

²²Hilkiah and the king's servants* went to Huldah the prophetess.* Huldah was Shallum's wife. Shallum was Tokhath's son, Tokhath was Hasrah's son. Hasrah took care of the king's clothes. Huldah lived in the newer part of Jerusalem. Hilkiah and the king's servants told

Lord's house Another name for the temple in Jerusalem.

tore ... clothes In Josiah's time, tearing clothes showed that a person was very upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the Lord's laws.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

king's servants "The king's servants" is missing in the Hebrew writing.

prophetess A woman prophet, someone who spoke messages from God to his people.

ruins near all those towns The meaning here is not clear.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Huldah what had happened. ²¹Huldah said to them, "This is what the Lord God of Israel says: Tell King Josiah: ²²This is what the Lord says, 'I will bring trouble to this place and to the people living here! I will bring all the terrible things that are written in the book that was read in front of the king of Judah. ²³I will do this because the people left me and burned incense* to other gods. Those people made me angry because of all the bad things they have done. So I will pour out my anger on this place. Like a hot burning fire, my anger will not be put out!'"

²⁴"But tell this to King Josiah of Judah. He sent you to ask the Lord: This is what the Lord God of Israel says about the words you heard a little while ago: ²⁵"Josiah, you repented and you humbled yourself, and tore your clothes.* You cried before me. So, because your heart was tender, ²⁶I will take you to be with your ancestors.** You will go to your grave in peace. You won't have to see any of the trouble that I will bring on this place and on the people living here."²⁷ Hilkiah and the king's servants brought back this message to King Josiah.

²⁸Then King Josiah called for all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to come and meet with him. ²⁹"The king went up to the Lord's temple.* All the people from Judah, the people living in Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, both important and not important, were with Josiah. Josiah read to them all the words in the Book of the Agreement.* That book was found in the Lord's temple. ³⁰Then the king stood up in his place. He made an agreement with the Lord. He agreed to follow the Lord,

and to obey the Lord's commands, laws, and rules. Josiah agreed to obey with all his heart and soul. He agreed to obey the words of the Agreement written in this book. ³¹Then Josiah made all the people in Jerusalem and Benjamin promise to accept the Agreement. The people of Jerusalem obeyed the Agreement of God, the God their ancestors* obeyed. ³²And Josiah threw out the idols from all the places that belonged to the people of Israel. God hates those idols. Josiah led every person in Israel in serving the Lord their God. While Josiah lived, the people did not stop obeying the Lord God that their ancestors obeyed.

Josiah Celebrates Passover

35 King Josiah celebrated the Passover* to the Lord in Jerusalem. The Passover lamb was killed on the 14th day of the first month. ²Josiah chose the priests to do their duties. He encouraged the priests while they were serving in the Lord's temple.* ³Josiah spoke to the Levites who taught the people of Israel and who were made holy for service to the Lord. He said to those Levites: "Put the Holy Box* in the temple that Solomon built. Solomon was David's son. David was king of Israel. Do not carry the Holy Box from place to place on your shoulders again. Now serve the Lord your God. Serve God's people, the people of Israel. ⁴Make yourselves ready for service in the temple by your family groups. Do the jobs that King David and his son King Solomon gave you to do. ⁵Stand in the Holy Place* with a group of Levites. Do this for each different family group of the people so you can help them. ⁶Kill the Passover lambs, make yourselves holy to the Lord. Make the lambs

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

tore ... clothes In Josiah's time, tearing clothes showed that a person was very upset. Josiah was upset because his people had not obeyed the Lord's laws.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

take you to be with your ancestors This means that Josiah would die.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

Holy Box The Box of the Agreement. The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

Holy Place The room in the Holy Tent and in the temple that was used by the priests to do their daily service to God.

ready for your brothers, the people of Israel. Do all the things the Lord commanded us to do. The Lord gave us all those commands through Moses."

⁷Josiah gave the people of Israel 30,000 sheep and goats to kill for the Passover* sacrifices. He also gave 3,000 cattle to the people. All these animals were from King Josiah's own animals. ⁸Josiah's officials also freely gave animals and things to the people, to the priests, and Levites to use for the Passover. Hilkiah the high priest, Zechariah, and Jehiel were the officials in charge of the temple. They gave the priests 2,600 lambs and goats and 300 bulls for Passover sacrifices. ⁹Also Conaniah with Shemaiah and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel and Jozabad gave 500 sheep and goats and 500 bulls for Passover sacrifices to the Levites. Those men were leaders of the Levites.

¹⁰When everything was ready for the Passover* service to begin, the priests and Levites went to their places. This is what the king commanded. ¹¹The Passover lambs were killed. Then the Levites skinned the animals and gave the blood to the priests. The priests sprinkled the blood on the altar.* ¹²Then they gave the animals to be used for burnt offerings* to the different family groups. This was done so the burnt offerings could be offered the way the Law of Moses taught. ¹³The Levites roasted the Passover sacrifices* over the fire in the way they were commanded. And they boiled the holy offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. Then they quickly gave the meat to the people. ¹⁴After this was finished, the Levites got meat for themselves and for the priests that were descendants* of Aaron. Those priests were kept

very busy, working until it got dark. They worked hard burning the burnt offerings and the fat of the sacrifices. ¹⁵The Levite singers from Asaph's family got in the places that King David had chosen for them to stand. They were: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The gatekeepers at each gate did not have to leave their places because their brother Levites made everything ready for them for the Passover.

¹⁶So everything was done that day for the worship of the Lord as King Josiah commanded. The Passover* was celebrated and the burnt offerings* were offered on the Lord's altar.* ¹⁷The people of Israel that were there celebrated the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread* for seven days. ¹⁸Since the time the prophet Samuel was living, the Passover had not been celebrated like this! None of the kings of Israel had ever celebrated a Passover like this. King Josiah, the priests, the Levites, and the people of Judah and Israel that were there with all the people in Jerusalem celebrated the Passover in a very special way. ¹⁹This Passover was celebrated in the 18th year when Josiah was king.

The Death of Josiah

²⁰After Josiah had done all those good things for the temple,* King Neco led an army to fight against the town of Carchemish on the Euphrates River. Neco was the king of Egypt. King Josiah went out to fight against Neco. ²¹But Neco sent messengers to Josiah. They said, "King Josiah, this war is not your problem. I didn't come to fight against you. I came to fight my enemies. God told me to hurry. God is on my side, so don't bother me. If you fight against me, God will destroy you!" ²²But Josiah didn't go away. He decided to fight Neco, so he changed his appearance and

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

burnt offering(s) Gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and completely burned on the altar.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Festival of Unleavened Bread This is the Passover Festival. Unleavened bread did not have yeast in it to make it rise when it is baked. At the Passover, as the Jews were leaving Egypt, the women did not have time to wait for the bread to rise because they were in a hurry, so it is called the Festival of Unleavened Bread.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

went to fight the battle. Josiah refused to listen to what Neco said about God's command. Josiah went to fight on the plain of Megiddo. ²Then King Josiah was shot by arrows while he was in the battle. He told his servants, "Take me away, I am wounded badly!" ³So the servants took Josiah out of his chariot* and put him in another chariot he had brought with him to the battle. Then they took Josiah to Jerusalem. King Josiah died in Jerusalem. Josiah was buried in the graves where his ancestors* were buried. All the people of Judah and Jerusalem were very sad because Josiah was dead. ⁴Jeremiah wrote some very sad songs to sing for Josiah.* Even to this day all the men and women singers remember and honor Josiah with those sad songs. It became something the people of Israel always do, to sing a sad song for Josiah. Those songs are written in the writings of sad songs. ⁵⁻⁷All the other things that Josiah did while he was king, from beginning to the end of his rule, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. That book tells about his love for the Lord and how he obeyed the Lord's law.

Jehoahaz King of Judah

36 The people of Judah chose Jehoahaz to be the new king in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was Josiah's son. ²Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months. ³Then King Neco from Egypt made Jehoahaz a prisoner. Neco made the people of Judah pay $3\frac{3}{4}$ tons* of silver and 75 pounds* of gold for a fine. ⁴Neco chose Jehoahaz's brother to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Jehoahaz's brother's name was Eliakim. Then Neco gave Eliakim a new name. He named him Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz to Egypt.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

sad songs to sing for Josiah Another word is Laments of Jeremiah. See Jer. 22:10.

$3\frac{3}{4}$ tons Literally, "100 talents."

75 pounds Literally, "1 talent."

Jehoiakim King of Judah

¹Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became the new king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. Jehoiakim didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. He sinned against the Lord his God.

²King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon attacked Judah. He made Jehoiakim a prisoner and put bronze chains on him. Then Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiakim to Babylon. ³Nebuchadnezzar took some of the things from the Lord's temple.* He carried those things to Babylon and put them in his own house, the king's house. ⁴The other things that Jehoiakim did, the terrible sins he did and everything he was guilty of doing, are written in the history book about the kings of Israel and Judah. Jehoiachin became the new king in Jehoiakim's place. Jehoiachin was Jehoiakim's son.

Jehoiachin King of Judah

¹Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for three months and ten days. He didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. Jehoiachin sinned against the Lord. ²In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent some servants to get Jehoiachin. They brought Jehoiachin and some valuable treasures from the Lord's temple* to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar chose Zedekiah to be the new king of Judah and Jerusalem. Zedekiah was Jehoiachin's relative.

Zedekiah King of Judah

¹Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. He was king in Jerusalem for eleven years. ²Zedekiah didn't do the things the Lord wanted him to do. Zedekiah sinned against the Lord. He did not make himself humble and obey the things Jeremiah the prophet said. Jeremiah spoke the message from the Lord.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Jerusalem Is Destroyed

¹³Zedekiah turned against King Nebuchadnezzar. In the past Nebuchadnezzar forced Zedekiah to make a promise to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah used God's name and promised to be faithful to Nebuchadnezzar. But Zedekiah was very stubborn and refused to change his life and come back and obey the Lord God of Israel. ¹⁴Also, all the leaders of the priests and the leaders of the people of Judah sinned worse and became more unfaithful to the Lord. They followed the evil example of the other nations. Those leaders ruined the Lord's temple.* The Lord had made the temple holy in Jerusalem. ¹⁵The Lord, the God of their ancestors,* sent prophets again and again to warn his people. The Lord did this because he felt sorry for them and for his temple. The Lord didn't want to destroy them or his temple. ¹⁶But God's people made fun of God's prophets. They refused to listen to God's prophets. They hated God's messages. Finally God could not hold his anger any longer. God became angry at his people and there was nothing that could be done to stop it. ¹⁷So God brought the King of Babylon to attack the people of Judah and Jerusalem.* The king of Babylon killed the young men even when they were in the temple. He didn't have mercy on the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The king of Babylon killed young and old people. He killed men and women. He killed sick and healthy people. God permitted

Nebuchadnezzar to punish the people of Judah and Jerusalem. ¹⁸Nebuchadnezzar carried all the things in God's temple away to Babylon. He took all the valuable things from the temple, from the king, and from the king's officials. ¹⁹Nebuchadnezzar and his army burned the temple. They broke down Jerusalem's wall and burned all the houses that belonged to the king and his officials. They took or destroyed every valuable thing in Jerusalem. ²⁰Nebuchadnezzar took the people that were still alive back to Babylon and forced them to be slaves. Those people stayed in Babylon as slaves until the Persian kingdom defeated the kingdom of Babylon. ²¹And so the things the Lord told the people of Israel through the prophet Jeremiah really happened. The Lord had said through Jeremiah: "This place will be an empty wasteland for 70 years.* This will happen to make up for the Sabbath rests* that the people didn't do."

²²This is what happened in the first year that Cyrus, King of Persia was ruling*: The Lord made the things he promised through Jeremiah the prophet really happen. The Lord moved Cyrus' heart to write a command and send it out to every place in his kingdom: ²³"This is what Cyrus, King of Persia says: 'The Lord, the God of heaven, made me king over the whole earth. He gave me the responsibility of building a temple* for him in Jerusalem. Now, all of you who are God's people are free to go to Jerusalem. May the Lord your God be with you.'"

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

brought the King of Babylon ... Jerusalem
 This happened in the year 586 B.C., when Jerusalem was finally destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon.

This place ... for 70 years See Jer. 25:11; 29:10.

Sabbath rests The Law said that every seventh year the land was not to be farmed, see Leviticus 25:1-7.

first year that Cyrus ... was ruling This was the year 539 B.C.

Ezra

Cyrus Helps the Prisoners Return

1 During the first year* that Cyrus was king of Persia, the Lord encouraged Cyrus to make an announcement. Cyrus put that announcement in writing and had it read every place in his kingdom. This happened so that the Lord's message that was spoken through Jeremiah* would truly happen. This is the announcement:

²"From Cyrus king of Persia:

The Lord, the God of heaven, gave all the kingdoms of the earth to me. And the Lord chose me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in the country of Judah. ³The Lord is the God of Israel, the God that is in Jerusalem. If any of God's people are living among you, then I pray God will bless them. You must let them go to Jerusalem in the country of Judah. You must let them go build the Lord's temple. ⁴And so in any place where there might be survivors* of Israel, the men in that place must support those survivors. Give those people silver, gold, cows, and other things. Give them gifts for God's temple in Jerusalem."

⁵So the family leaders from the family groups of Judah and Benjamin prepared to go

up to Jerusalem. They were going to Jerusalem to build the Lord's temple. Also, every person that God had encouraged got ready to go to Jerusalem. ⁶All their neighbors gave them many gifts. They gave them silver, gold, cows, and other expensive things. Their neighbors freely gave them all those things. ⁷Also, King Cyrus brought out the things that belonged in the Lord's temple. Nebuchadnezzar had taken those things away from Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar had put those things in his temple where he kept his false gods. ⁸Cyrus king of Persia told the man that keeps his money to bring those things out. That man's name was Mithredath. So Mithredath brought those things out to Sheshbazzar,* the leader of Judah.

⁹Those things from the Lord's temple that Mithredath brought out: 30 gold dishes, 1,000 silver dishes, 29 knives and pans, ¹⁰30 gold bowls, 410 silver bowls like the gold bowls, 1,000 other dishes.

¹¹All together, there were 5,400 things made from gold and silver. Sheshbazzar* brought all these things with him when the prisoners left Babylon and went back to Jerusalem.

The List of the Prisoners That Returned

2 Now these are the names of the people living in Babylon that were set free. In the past, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took those people as prisoners to Babylon. These

first year That is, 538 B.C.

Lord's message ... Jeremiah See Jer. 25:12-14.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

Sheshbazzar This is probably the man named Zerubbabel, a name that means "Stranger in Babylon," or "He left Babylon." Sheshbazzar is probably his Aramaic name.

people came back to Jerusalem and Judah. Each person went back to his own town. ²These are the people that returned with Zerubbabel: ³Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah. This is the list of names and numbers of men from Israel that came back: ⁴The descendants of Parosh: 2,172; ⁵the descendants of Shephatiah: 372; ⁶the descendants of Arah: 775; ⁷the descendants of Pahath-Moab (through the family line of Jeshua and Joab): 2,812; ⁸the descendants of Elam: 1,254; ⁹the descendants of Zattu: 945; ¹⁰the descendants of Zaccai: 760; ¹¹the descendants of Bani: 642; ¹²the descendants of Bebai: 623; ¹³the descendants of Azgad: 1,222; ¹⁴the descendants of Adonikam: 666; ¹⁵the descendants of Bigvai: 2,056; ¹⁶the descendants of Adin: 454; ¹⁷the descendants of Ater (through the family of Hezekiah): 98; ¹⁸the descendants of Bezai: 323; ¹⁹the descendants of Jorah: 112; ²⁰the descendants of Hashum: 223; ²¹the descendants of Gibbar: 95; ²²the men from the town of Bethlehem: 123; ²³from the town of Netophah: 56; ²⁴from the town of Anathoth: 128; ²⁵from the town of Azmaveth: 42; ²⁶from the towns of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth 743; ²⁷from the towns of Ramah and Geba: 621; ²⁸from the town of Micmash: 122; ²⁹from the towns of Bethel and Ai: 223; ³⁰from the town of Nebo: 52; ³¹from the town of Magbish: 156; ³²from the other town named Elam: 1,254; ³³from the town of Harim: 320; ³⁴from the towns of Lod, Hadid, and Ono: 725; ³⁵from the town of Jericho: 345; ³⁶from the town of Senaah: 3,630.

³⁷This is the list of the names and number of the priests: The descendants of Jedaiah (through the family of Jeshua): 973; ³⁸the descendants of Immer: 1,052; ³⁹the descendants of Pashhur: 1,247; ⁴⁰the descendants of Harim: 1,017.

⁴¹This is the number from the family group of Levi, called Levites: The descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel (through the family line of Hodaviah): 74; ⁴²This is the number of singers:

The descendants of Asaph: 128; ⁴³This is the number of gatekeepers of the temple: The descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai: 139.

⁴⁴These are the names of the temple servants: The descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaath, ⁴⁵Keros, Siaha, Padon, ⁴⁶Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub, ⁴⁷Hagab, Shalmi, Hanan, ⁴⁸Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah, ⁴⁹Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam, ⁵⁰Uzza, Paseah, Besai, ⁵¹Asnah, Meunim, Nephussim, ⁵²Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur, ⁵³Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha, ⁵⁴Barkos, Sisera, Temah, ⁵⁵Neziah, and Hatipha.

⁵⁶These are names of the descendants of Solomon's servants: The descendants of Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda, ⁵⁷Jaala, Darkon, Giddel, ⁵⁸Shephatiah, Hatil, Pokereth-Hazzebaim, and Ami. ⁵⁹The temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants: 392.

⁶⁰Some people came to Jerusalem from these towns: Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer. But those people could not prove that their families were from the family of Israel. Here are their names and their number: ⁶¹The descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah, and Nekoda: 652

⁶²And these are the names of the families of priests: The descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz, and Barzillai (a man that had married a daughter of Barzillai from Gilead, and was called by the family name of Barzillai).

⁶³These people searched for their family histories but could not find them. They could not prove that their ancestors were priests. So they themselves could not be priests. Those people could not be priests because they were called unclean. ⁶⁴The governor ordered these people not to eat any of the holy food that priests eat. First there had to be a priest to decide what to do by using Urim and Thummim.*

unclean See Lev. 11, 12, 14, 15 for the Old Testament laws of uncleanness.

Urim and Thummim Things like stones that the High Priest wore on his breastplate. They were used to get God's judgment and decisions and His will for the people. See Ex. 28:30.

⁴⁴All together, there were 42,360 people in the group that came back. This is not counting their 7,337 men and women servants. And they also had 200 men and women singers with them. ⁴⁵They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

⁴⁶That group arrived at the Lord's temple in Jerusalem. Then the family leaders gave their gifts for building the Lord's temple. They would build the new temple in the same place as the temple that was destroyed. ⁴⁷Those people gave as much as they were able. These are the things those people gave for building the temple: 1,100 pounds* of gold, 3 tons* of silver, and 100 coats that priests wear.

⁴⁸So the priests, Levites, and some of the other people moved to Jerusalem and the area around it. This group included the temple, singers, gatekeepers, and the temple servants. The other people of Israel settled in their own hometowns.

Rebuilding the Altar

3 So, by the seventh month,* the people of Israel had moved back to their own hometowns. At that time, all the people met together in Jerusalem. They were all united as one people. ¹Then Jeshua son of Jozadak and the priests with him, along with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, and the people with him, built the altar of the God of Israel. Those people built the altar of the God of Israel so they could offer sacrifices on it. They built it just like it says in the Law of Moses. Moses was God's special servant.

²Those people were afraid of the other people living near them. But that didn't stop them. They built the altar on its old foundation and offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord. They offered those sacrifices in the morning and in the evening. ³Then they celebrated the

Festival of Shelters* just like the Law of Moses, said. They offered the right number of burnt offerings for each day of the festival. ⁴After that, they began offering the continual burnt offerings each day—the offerings for the New Moon, and for all the other festivals and holidays that were commanded by the Lord. The people also began giving any other gifts they wanted to give to the Lord. ⁵So, on the first day of the seventh month,* these people of Israel again began offering sacrifices to the Lord. This was done even though the temple had not been built again.

Rebuilding the Temple

⁶Then those people that had come back from captivity gave money to the stonecutters* and carpenters. And those people gave food, wine, and olive oil. They used these things to pay the people of Tyre and Sidon to bring cedar logs from Lebanon. Those people wanted to bring the logs in ships to the sea coast town of Joppa like Solomon did when he built the first temple. Cyrus king of Persia gave permission for them to do these things.

⁷So, in the second month of the second year after their arrival* at the temple in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak began the work. Their brothers, the priests, Levites, and every person that came back to Jerusalem from captivity, began working with them. They chose Levites that were 20 years old and older to be the leaders in the building of the Lord's temple. ⁸These were the men that supervised the work of building the Lord's temple: Jeshua and his sons, Kadmiel and his sons (the descendants of Judah), the sons of Henadad and their brothers, the Levites. ⁹The builders finished laying the foundation for the Lord's temple. When the foundation was finished, the priests put on their priests'

1,100 pounds Literally, "61,000 drachmas."

3 tons Literally, "5,000 minas."

seventh month This was about September or October, 538 B.C.

Festival of Shelters A festival in the seventh month to give thanks for the harvest. It continued for seven days. See Ex. 23:16; Lev. 23:34-36, 43.

stonecutters Men that cut stones and build things with them.

second month ... arrival That is, April or May, 536 B.C.

clothing. Then they got their trumpets. And the sons of Asaph got their cymbals. They all took their places to praise the Lord. This was done the way David, king of Israel, ordered in the past. "They sang this song, praising and thanking the Lord for everything he had done:

"He is good;
his love for Israel continues forever!"*

And then all the people shouted out very loudly. Why? Because the foundation for the temple was finished. "But many of the older priests, Levites, and family leaders cried. Why? Because those people had seen the first temple—and they remembered how beautiful it was. They cried out loud when they saw the new temple. They cried while many of the other people were happy and shouting. "The sound could be heard far away. All those people made so much noise that no person could tell the difference between the shouts of joy and the crying.

Enemies Against the Building Again

4 ¹⁻³Many people living in the area were against the people of Judah and Benjamin. Those enemies heard that the people that had come from captivity were building a temple for the Lord God of Israel. So those enemies came to Zerubbabel and to the family leaders and said, "Let us help you build. We are the same as you, we ask your God for help. We have offered sacrifices to your God since the time Esarhaddon king of Assyria brought us here."

⁴But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other family leaders of Israel answered, "No, you people can't help us build a temple for our God. Only we can build the temple for the Lord. He is the God of Israel. This is what King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us to do."

⁵This made those people angry. So those people started bothering the Jews. They tried to discourage them and stop them from building the temple. "Those enemies hired government

officials to work against the people of Judah. Those officials constantly did things to stop the Jews' plans to build the temple. This continued the whole time that Cyrus was the king of Persia until Darius became the king of Persia.

⁶Those enemies even wrote letters to the king of Persia trying to stop the Jews. They wrote a letter the year that Xerxes* became the king of Persia.

⁷And later, at the time Artaxerxes* became the new king of Persia, some of those men wrote another letter complaining about the Jews. The men that wrote the letter were: Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the other people in their group. They wrote the letter to King Artaxerxes in Aramaic* using the Aramaic way of writing.

⁸⁻¹⁰Then Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote a letter against the people of Jerusalem. They wrote the letter to Artaxerxes* the king. This is what they wrote:

"From Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary, and the people with them. Those people are: the judges and important officials over the men from Tripolis, Persia, Erech, and Babylon; also the Elamite people from Susa, "and the other people that the great and powerful Ashurbanipal moved to the city of Samaria and other places in the country west of the Euphrates River.

¹¹(This is a copy of the letter those men sent to Artaxerxes*.)

King Artaxerxes, we are your servants living in the area west of the Euphrates River. We send you this letter.

¹²King Artaxerxes, we wish to inform you that the Jews you sent away from you have come here. Those Jews are now trying to build that city again.

Xerxes King of Persia about 485-465 B.C.

Artaxerxes King of Persia about 465-424 B.C. He was the son of Xerxes.

Aramaic The official language of the Babylonian empire.

Verse 8 Here the original language changes from Hebrew to Aramaic.

He is good ... forever This probably means they sang the whole song that we know as Psalm 136.

Jerusalem is a bad city. The people in that city have always rebelled against other kings. Now those Jews are fixing the foundations and building the walls.*

¹³Also, King Artaxerxes, you should know that if Jerusalem and its walls are built again, the people of Jerusalem will stop paying their taxes. They will stop sending money to honor you. They also will stop paying duty taxes. And the king will lose all that money.

¹⁴We have a responsibility to the king. We don't want to see those things happen. So we are sending this letter to inform the king.

¹⁵King Artaxerxes, we suggest that you search the writings of the kings that ruled before you. You will see in those writings that Jerusalem always rebelled against other kings. It has caused much trouble for other kings and nations. Many rebellions have started in this city since ancient times! That is why Jerusalem was destroyed!

¹⁶King Artaxerxes, we wish to inform you that if this city and its walls are built again, you will lose control of the area west of the Euphrates River.

¹⁷Then King Artaxerxes* sent this answer:

To Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary and all the people with them living in Samaria and other places west of the Euphrates River.

Greetings.

¹⁸The letter you sent us has been translated and read to me. ¹⁹I gave an order for the writings of the kings before me to be searched. The writings were read, and we found out that Jerusalem

has a long history of rebellion against kings. Jerusalem has been a place where rebellion and revolt has happened often.

²⁰Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over it and over the whole area west of the Euphrates River. Taxes and money to honor kings, and duty taxes have been paid to those kings.

²¹Now, you must give an order for those men to stop work. That order must be given to keep Jerusalem from being built again until I say so. ²²Be careful not to overlook this business. We should not let the building of Jerusalem continue. If that work continues, I will not get any more money from Jerusalem.

²³So a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes sent was read to Rehum, Shimshai the secretary, and the people with them. Then those people went very quickly to the Jews in Jerusalem. They forced the Jews to stop building.

²⁴So the work stopped on God's temple in Jerusalem. The work did not continue until the second year that Darius was king of Persia.*

Tattenai's Letter to King Darius

5 At that time, the prophets Haggai* and Zechariah son of Iddo* began to prophesy* in the name of God. They encouraged the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem. ²So Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak again started working on the temple in Jerusalem. All of God's prophets were with them and were supporting the work. ³At that time Tattenai was the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River. Tattenai, Shethar-Bozenai, and the men with them went to Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the others that were building. Tattenai and the people with him asked Zerubbabel and the people with him, "Who gave you permission to build this temple

building the walls This was a way of protecting a city, but these men wanted the king to think that the Jews were preparing to rebel against the king.

Artaxerxes King of Persia about 465-424 B.C. He was the son of Xerxes.

second year ... Persia That is, 520 B.C.

Haggai See Haggai 1:1.

Zechariah son of Iddo See Zechariah 1:1.

prophesy To speak for God.

again and fix it like new?" "They also asked Zerubbabel, "What are the names of the men that are working on this building?"

⁵But God was watching over the Jewish leaders. The builders didn't have to stop working until a report could be sent to King Darius. They continued working until King Cyrus sent his answer back.

"This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-Bozenai, and the important people with them sent a letter to King Darius.

⁷This is a copy of that letter:

To King Darius: A Friendly Hello.

¹King Darius, you should know that we went to the province of Judah. We went to the temple of the great God. The people in Judah are building that temple with large stones. They are putting big wooden timbers in the walls. The work is being done with much care and the people of Judah are working very hard. They are building very fast, it will soon be done.

⁹We asked their leaders some questions about the work they are doing. We asked them, "Who gave you permission to build this temple again and fix it like new?" "We also asked for their names. We wanted to write down the names of their leaders so you would know who they are.

¹¹This is the answer they gave us: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth. We are building again the temple that a great king of Israel built and finished many years ago. "But our ancestors made the God of heaven angry. So God gave our ancestors to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed this temple, and he forced the people to go to Babylon as prisoners. "But, in the first year that Cyrus was king of Babylon, King Cyrus gave a special order for God's temple to be built again. "And Cyrus brought out from his false god's

temple in Babylon the gold and silver things that were taken from God's temple in the past. Nebuchadnezzar took those things from the temple in Jerusalem and brought them to his false god's temple in Babylon. Then King Cyrus gave those gold and silver things to Sheshbazzar (*Zerubbabel*). Cyrus chose Sheshbazzar to be governor.

¹⁵"Then Cyrus said to Sheshbazzar (*Zerubbabel*), "Take these gold and silver things and put them back in the temple in Jerusalem. Build again God's temple in the same place it was in the past." "So Sheshbazzar (*Zerubbabel*) came and built the foundations of God's temple in Jerusalem. From that day until now the work has continued. But it is not yet finished."

¹⁷Now, if the king wants, please search the writings of the kings that ruled Babylon in the past. Search to see if it is true that King Cyrus gave an order to build again God's temple in Jerusalem. And then, sir, please send us a letter to let us know what you have decided to do about this.

The Order of Darius

6 So King Darius gave an order to search the writings of the kings before him. Those writings were kept in Babylon in the same place the money was kept. ¹A scroll* was found in the fortress* of Ecbatana. Ecbatana is in the province of Media. This is what was written on that scroll.*

Official Note:

³Cyrus' first year as king.

Cyrus gave an order about the temple of God in Jerusalem. The order said:

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (*paper*) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Let the temple of God be built again. It will be a place to offer sacrifices. Let its foundations be built. The temple must be 90 feet* high and 90 feet* wide. ⁴The wall around it, must have three rows of large stones and one row of big wood timbers. The cost of building the temple must be paid for from the king's treasury. ⁵Also, the gold and silver things from God's temple must be put back in their places. Nebuchadnezzar took those things from the temple in Jerusalem and brought them to Babylon. They must be put back in God's temple.

⁶Now then, I, Darius, order you Tattenai, governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, and Shethar-Bozenai, and all the officials living in that province, to stay away from Jerusalem. ⁷Don't bother the workers. Don't try to stop the work on this temple of God. Let the Jewish governor and the Jewish leaders build it again. Let them build God's temple again in the same place it was in the past.

⁸Now I give this order. You must do these things for the Jewish leaders building God's temple: The cost of the building must be fully paid from the king's treasury. That money will come from the taxes collected from the provinces in the area west of the Euphrates River. Do these things quickly, so the work will not stop. ⁹Give those people anything they need. If they need young bulls, rams, or male lambs for sacrifices to the God of Heaven, give those things to them. If the priests of Jerusalem ask for wheat, salt, wine, and oil, then give those things to them every day without fail. ¹⁰Give those things to the Jewish priests so that they may offer sacrifices that please the God of Heaven.

Give those things so that the priests may pray for me and my sons.

¹¹Also, I give this order: If any person changes this order, a wood beam must be pulled from that person's house. Then the wooden beam will be pushed through that person's body. And his house will be destroyed until it is only a pile of rocks.

¹²God put his name there in Jerusalem. And I hope that God will defeat any king or other person that tries to change this order. If any person tries to destroy this temple in Jerusalem, I hope God will destroy that person.

I, Darius, have ordered it. This order must be obeyed quickly and completely!

Completion and Dedication of the Temple

¹³So, Tattenai the governor of the area west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-Bozenai, and the men with them obeyed King Darius' order. Those men obeyed the order quickly and completely. ¹⁴So the Jewish elders (*leaders*) continued to build. And they were successful as Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo encouraged them. Those people finished building the temple. This was done to obey the command of the God of Israel. It was also done to obey the orders that Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes, the kings of Persia, gave. ¹⁵The temple was finished on the third day of the month Adar.* That was in the sixth year of the rule of King Darius.*

¹⁶Then the people of Israel celebrated the dedication* of God's temple with much happiness. The priests, the Levites, and all the other people that came back from captivity joined in the celebration.

third day of ... Adar This was in March. Some ancient writers have "23rd of Adar."

sixth year ... King Darius That is, 515 B.C.

dedication To give something for a special use, or to honor it for a special reason.

¹⁷This is the way they dedicated* God's temple. They offered 100 bulls, 200 rams, and 400 male lambs. And they offered twelve male goats for all Israel for a sin offering. That is one goat for each of the twelve family groups of Israel. ¹⁸Then they chose the priests in their groups and the Levites in their groups to serve in God's temple in Jerusalem. They did these things just like it says in the Book of Moses.

The Passover

¹⁹* On the 14th day of the first month,* those Jews that came back from captivity celebrated the Passover.* ²⁰The priests and Levites made themselves pure. They all made themselves clean and ready to celebrate the Passover. The Levites killed the Passover lamb for all the Jews that came back from captivity. They did that for their brothers the priests, and for themselves. ²¹So all the people of Israel that came back from captivity ate the Passover meal. Other people washed themselves and made themselves pure from the unclean* things of the people living in that country. Those pure people also shared in the Passover meal. Those people did this so they could go to the Lord, the God of Israel, for help. ²²They celebrated the Festival of Unleavened Bread* with much joy for seven days. The Lord made them very happy because he had changed the attitude of the king of Assyria.* So the king of Assyria had helped them do the work on God's temple.

dedicate(d) To give something for a special use, or to honor it for a special reason.

Verse 19 Here, the original language changes from Aramaic back to Hebrew.

14th ... month That is, April or May, 515 B.C.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

unclean See Lev. 11, 12, 14, 15 for the Old Testament laws of uncleanness.

Festival of Unleavened Bread Same as Passover Festival, the most important holy day for Jews. On this day they ate a special meal with bread that was made without yeast.

Assyria This probably means Darius, the king of Persia.

Ezra Comes to Jerusalem

7 After these things,* during the rule of Artaxerxes* king of Persia, Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon. Ezra was the son of Seraiah. Seraiah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Hilkiah. ²Hilkiah was the son of Shallum. Shallum was the son of Zadok. Zadok was the son of Ahitub. ³Ahitub was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Azariah. Azariah was the son of Meraioth. ⁴Meraioth was the son of Zerahiah. Zerahiah was the son of Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bukki. ⁵Bukki was the son of Abishua. Abishua was the son of Phinehas. Phinehas was the son of Eleazar. Eleazar was the son of Aaron the high priest.

⁶Ezra came to Jerusalem from Babylon. Ezra was a teacher.* He knew the Law of Moses very well. The Law of Moses was given by the Lord, the God of Israel. King Artaxerxes gave Ezra everything he asked for because the Lord was with Ezra. ⁷Many people of Israel came with Ezra. Those were priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple servants. Those people of Israel arrived in Jerusalem during the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. ⁸Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year that Artaxerxes was king.* ⁹Ezra and the group with him, left Babylon on the first day of the first month. He arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month. The Lord God was with Ezra. ¹⁰Ezra gave all his time and attention to studying and obeying the Law of the Lord. Ezra wanted to teach the rules and commandments of the Lord to the people of Israel. And he also wanted to help the people follow those laws in Israel.

After these things There is a time period of 58 years between Ezra 6 and Ezra 7. The book of Esther fits in the time between these two chapters.

Artaxerxes King of Persia about 465-424 B.C. He was the son of Xerxes.

teacher Literally, "scribe." This was a person that made copies of books. These men studied those books and became teachers.

fifth month ... king This was about July, 458 B.C.

King Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra

¹¹Ezra was a priest and teacher. He knew much about the commands and laws the Lord gave Israel. This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes* gave to Ezra the teacher:

¹²* From King Artaxerxes,

To Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law of the God of Heaven:

Greetings! ¹³I give this order: Any person, priest, or Levite from Israel living in my kingdom that wants to go with Ezra to Jerusalem, may go.

¹⁴Ezra, I and my seven advisers send you. You must go to Judah and Jerusalem. See how your people are doing in obeying the Law of your God. You have that Law with you.

¹⁵I and my advisers are giving gold and silver to the God of Israel. God lives in Jerusalem. You must take this gold and silver with you. ¹⁶You must also go through all the provinces of Babylonia. Collect the gifts from your people, from the priests, and from the Levites. Those gifts are for their God's temple in Jerusalem.

¹⁷Use this money to buy bulls, rams, and male lambs. Buy the grain offerings and drink offerings that go with those sacrifices. Then sacrifice them on the altar in the temple of your God in Jerusalem. ¹⁸Then you and the other Jews may spend the silver and gold left over any way you want to. Use it in a way that is pleasing to your God. ¹⁹Take all those things to the God of Jerusalem. Those things are for the worship in the temple of your God. ²⁰And you may get any other things that you need for the temple of your God. Use the money in

the king's treasury to buy anything you need.

²¹Now I, King Artaxerxes, give this order: I order all the men that keep the king's money in the area west of the Euphrates River to give Ezra anything he wants. Ezra is a priest and a teacher of the Law of the God of Heaven. Do this quickly and completely. ²²Give this much to Ezra: $3\frac{3}{4}$ tons* of silver, 600 bushels* of wheat, 600 gallons* of wine, 600 gallons* of olive oil, and as much salt as Ezra wants. ²³Anything that the God of Heaven has ordered for Ezra to get, you must give to Ezra quickly and completely. Do those things for the temple of the God of Heaven. We don't want God to be angry against my kingdom or against my sons.

²⁴Ezra, you know that it is against the law to make the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants, and other workers in God's temple pay taxes. Those people don't have to pay taxes, money to honor the king, or any duty taxes. ²⁵Ezra, I give you the authority to use the wisdom you have from your God and choose civil and religious judges. These men will be judges for all the people living in the area west of the Euphrates River. They will judge all the people that know the laws of your God. And if someone doesn't know those laws, those judges must teach him about those laws. ²⁶Any person that doesn't obey the law of your God, or the law of the king, must be punished. Depending on the crime, they must be punished with death, or sent away to another country, or their property taken away, or put into prison.

Artaxerxes King of Persia about 465-424 B.C. He was the son of Xerxes.

Verse 12 The text changes from Hebrew to Aramaic here.

$3\frac{3}{4}$ tons Literally, "100 talents."

600 bushels Literally, "100 cors."

600 gallons Literally, "100 baths."

Ezra Praises God

- ²⁷ * Blessed is the Lord, the God of our ancestors. God put the idea into the king's heart to honor the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.
- ²⁸ The Lord showed his true love to me in front of the king, his advisers and the king's important officials.
The Lord God was with me,
so I was brave.
I gathered together the leaders of Israel
to go with me to Jerusalem.

List of Family Leaders Returning With Ezra

8 These are the names of the family leaders and the other people that came with me (*Ezra*) to Jerusalem from Babylon. We came to Jerusalem during the rule of King Artaxerxes. Here is the list of names: ¹From the descendants of Phinehas, was Gershom; from the descendants of Ithamar, was Daniel; from the descendants of David, was Hattush; ²from the descendants of Shecaniah, were the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and 150 other men; ³from the descendants of Pahath-Moab, were Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah, and 200 other men; ⁴from the descendants of Zattu, were Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and 300 other men; ⁵from the descendants of Adin, were Ebed son of Jonathan, and 50 other men; ⁶from the descendants of Elam, were Jeshaiiah son of Athaliah, and 70 other men; ⁷from the descendants of Shephatiah, were Zebadiah son of Michael, and 80 other men; ⁸from the descendants of Joab, were Obadiah son of Jehiel, and 218 other men; ⁹from the descendants of Bani, were Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and 160 other men; ¹⁰from the descendants of Bebai, were Zechariah son of Bebai, and 28 other men; ¹¹from the descendants of Azgad, were Johanan son of Hakkatan, and 110 other men; ¹²from the last of the descendants of Adonikam were Eliphelet, Jeuel, Shemaiah, and 60 other men; ¹³from the descendants of Bigvai, were Uthai, Zaccur, and 70 other men.

Verse 27 The text changes from Aramaic to Hebrew here.

The Return to Jerusalem

¹⁴I, (*Ezra*) called all those people to meet together at the river that flows toward Ahava. We camped at that place for three days. I learned there were priests in that group, but there were no Levites. ¹⁵So I called these leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And I called Joiarib and Elnathan. (These men were teachers.) ¹⁷I sent those men to Iddo. Iddo is the leader at the town of Casiphia. I told those men what to say to Iddo and his relatives. His relatives are the temple workers in Casiphia. I sent those men to Iddo so that Iddo might send us workers to serve in God's temple. ¹⁸Because God was with us, Iddo's relatives sent these men to us: Sherebiah, a wise man from the descendants of Mahli. Mahli was one of Levi's sons. Levi was one of Israel's sons. And they sent us Sherebiah's sons and brothers. In all there were 18 men from that family. ¹⁹And they also sent to us Hashabiah, and Jeshaiiah from the descendants of Merari, along with their brothers and nephews. In all there were 20 men from that family. ²⁰They also sent 220 of the temple workers. Their ancestors were the people David and the important officials had chosen to help the Levites. The names of all those men were written on the list.

²¹There near the Ahava River, I (*Ezra*) announced that we all should fast.* We should fast to make ourselves humble before our God. We wanted to ask God for a safe trip for ourselves, our children, and for all the things we owned. ²²I was embarrassed to ask King Artaxerxes for soldiers and horsemen to protect us as we traveled. There were enemies on the road. The reason I was embarrassed to ask for protection was because of what we had told the king. We had said to King Artaxerxes, "Our God is with every person that trusts him. But God is very angry with every person that turns away from him." ²³So we fasted and prayed to our God about our trip. He answered our prayers.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

²⁰Then I chose twelve of the priests that were leaders. I chose Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brothers. ²¹I weighed the silver, gold, and the other things that were given for God's temple. I gave those things to the twelve priests I had chosen. King Artaxerxes, his advisers, his important officials, and all the people of Israel in Babylon gave those things for God's temple. ²²I weighed all these things. There were 25 tons* of silver. There were also 3³/₄ tons* of silver dishes and things. There were 3³/₄ tons* of gold. ²³And I gave them 20 gold bowls. The bowls weighed about 19 pounds.* And I gave them two beautiful dishes made from polished bronze that were as valuable as gold. ²⁴Then I said to those twelve priests: "You and these things are holy to the Lord. People gave this silver and gold to the Lord, the God of your ancestors. ²⁵So guard these things carefully. You are responsible for them until you give them to the temple leaders in Jerusalem. You will give them to the leading Levites and the family leaders of Israel. They will weigh those things and put them in the rooms of the Lord's temple in Jerusalem."

²⁶So the priests and Levites accepted the silver, gold, and special things that Ezra had weighed and given to them. They were told to take those things to God's temple in Jerusalem.

²⁷On the twelfth day of the first month* we left the Ahava River and started toward Jerusalem. God was with us, and he protected us from enemies and robbers along the way. ²⁸Then we arrived in Jerusalem. We rested there for three days. ²⁹On the fourth day, we went to the temple and weighed the silver, gold, and special things. We gave those things to Meremoth son of Uriah the priest. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with Meremoth. And the Levites, Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui, were with them also. ³⁰We counted and weighed everything. Then we wrote down the total weight at that time.

³¹Then the Jewish people that came back from captivity offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel. They offered twelve bulls for all Israel, 96 rams, 77 male lambs, and twelve male goats for a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering to the Lord.

³²Then those people gave the letter from King Artaxerxes to the royal satraps (*leaders*) and to the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River. Then those leaders gave their support to the people of Israel and to the temple.

Ezra's Prayer About Marriage to Foreign People

9 After we finished all these things, the leaders of the people of Israel came to me. They said, "Ezra, the people of Israel have not kept themselves separate from the other people living around us. And the priests and the Levites have not kept themselves separate. The people of Israel are being influenced by the very bad things done by the Canaanite people, the Hittite people, the Perizzite people, the Jebusite people, the Ammonite people, the Moabite people, the people from Egypt, and the Amorite people. ²The people of Israel have married the people living around us. The people of Israel are supposed to be special. But now they are mixed with the other people living around them. The leaders and important officials of the people of Israel have set a bad example in this thing." ³When I heard about this, I tore my robe and my coat to show I was upset. I pulled hair from my head and beard. I sat down, shocked and upset. ⁴Then every person that respected God's Law shook with fear. They were afraid because the people of Israel that came back from captivity were not faithful to God. I was shocked and upset. I sat there until the evening sacrifice. And those people gathered around me.

⁵Then, when it was time for the evening sacrifice, I got up. I had made myself look shameful while I was sitting there. My robe and coat were torn, and I fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the Lord my God. ⁶Then I prayed this prayer:

25 tons Literally, "650 talents."

3³/₄ tons Literally, "100 talents."

19 pounds Literally, "1,000 darics."

first month This was about March, 458 B.C.

O my God, I am too ashamed and embarrassed to look at you, my God. I am ashamed because our sins are higher than our heads. Our guilt has reached all the way up to the heavens. Since the days our ancestors lived, until now, we have had much guilt. Because we have sinned, we and our kings and our priests were punished. We have been punished by the sword and captivity under foreign kings. Those kings took away our wealth and made us ashamed. It is the same even today.

But now, finally, you have been kind to us. You have let a few of us escape captivity and come to live in this holy place. Lord, you gave us new life and relief from our slavery. Yes, we were slaves, but you would not let us be slaves forever. You were kind to us. You made the kings of Persia be kind to us. Your temple was ruined. But you gave us new life so we can build your temple again and fix it like new. God, you helped us build a wall to protect Judah and Jerusalem.

Now, God, what can we say to you? We have stopped obeying you again! God, you used your servants, the prophets, and gave those commands to us. You said: "The land you are going to live in and own is a ruined land. It has been ruined by the very bad things the people living there have done. Those people have done very bad things in every place in this land. They have made this land dirty with their sins." So, people of Israel, don't let your children marry their children. Don't join those people! Don't want the things they have! Obey my commands so you will be strong and enjoy the good things of the land. And then you can keep this land and give it to your children."

The bad things that happened to us are our own fault. We have done evil things, and we have much guilt. But you, our God, have punished us much less than we should have been. We have done many terrible sins, and we should have been punished worse. And you have even let some of our people escape captivity. So we know that we must not break your commands. We must not marry those people. Those people do very bad things. God, if we continue to marry those bad people, we know you will destroy us! Then there would be no person from the people of Israel left alive.

Lord, God of Israel, you are good! And you still have let some of us live. Yes, we are guilty! And because of our guilt, not one of us should be allowed to stand in front of you.

The People Confess Their Sin

10 Ezra was praying and confessing. He was crying and bowing down in front of God's temple. While Ezra was doing that, a large group of the people of Israel—men, women, and children—gathered around him. Those people were also crying very hard. Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, spoke to Ezra. Shecaniah said, "We have not been faithful to our God. We have married the people living around us. But, even though we have done this, there is still hope for Israel. Now let us make an agreement before our God to send away all those women and their children. We will do that to obey Ezra's advice and the advice of the people that respect the laws of our God. We will obey God's law. Get up Ezra, this is your responsibility, but we will support you. So be brave and do it."

So Ezra got up. He made the leading priests, the Levites, and all the people of Israel promise to do what he said. Then Ezra went away from the front of God's house. Ezra went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While Ezra was there, he didn't eat food, and

he didn't drink water. He did that because he was still very sad. He was very sad about the people of Israel that came back to Jerusalem. Then he sent a message to every place in Judah and Jerusalem. The message told all the Jewish people that had come back from captivity to meet together in Jerusalem. Any person that didn't come to Jerusalem in three days would have to give up all his property. The important officials and the elders (*leaders*) made that decision. And that person could no longer be a member of the group of people where he was living.

"So, in three days all the men from the families of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem. And on the 20th day of the ninth month,* all the people met together in the temple yard. They were very upset because of the reason for the meeting and because of the heavy rain. Then Ezra the priest stood and said to those people, "You people have not been faithful to God. You have married foreign women. You have made Israel more guilty by doing that. Now, you people must confess to the Lord that you have sinned. The Lord is the God of your ancestors. You must obey the Lord's command. Separate yourselves from the people living around you and from your foreign wives."

"Then the whole group that met together answered Ezra. They said with a loud voice: "Ezra, you are right! We must do the things you say. But, there are many people here. And it is the rainy time of year, so we can't stay outside. This problem can't be solved in a day or two because we have sinned in a very bad way. Let our leaders decide for the whole group meeting here. Then let every person in our towns that married a foreign woman come here to Jerusalem at a planned time. Let them come here with the elders (*leaders*) and judges of their towns. Then God will stop being angry at us."

"Only a few men were against this plan. They were Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah. Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite also were against that plan.

"So the people of Israel that came back to Jerusalem agreed to accept that plan. Ezra the priest chose men that were family leaders. He chose one man from each family group. Each man was chosen by name. On the first day of the tenth month* those men that were chosen sat down to study each of the cases. And by the first day of the first month,* they finished discussing all the men that had married foreign women.

The List of Men that Married Foreign Women

"Among the descendants of the priests, these are the names of those that married foreign women:

From the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and Jeshua's brothers, these men: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. All those promised to divorce their wives. And then each one of them offered a ram from the flock for a guilt offering. They did that because of their guilt.

"From the descendants of Immer, these men: Hanani and Zebadiah.

"From the descendants of Harim, these men: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uziah.

"From the descendants of Pashhur, these men: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

"Among the Levites, these are the men that married foreign women: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (he is also called Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

"Among the singers, this is the man that had married a foreign woman: Eliashib.

Among the gatekeepers, these are the men that had married foreign women: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

"Among the people of Israel, these men married foreign women:

From the descendants of Parosh, these men: Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah, and Benaiah.

²⁸From the descendants of Elam, these men: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Elijah.

²⁹From the descendants of Zattu, these men: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza.

³⁰From the descendants of Bebai, these men: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai.

³¹From the descendants of Bani, these men: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, and Jeremoth.

³²From the descendants of Pahath-Moab, these men: Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh.

³³From the descendants of Harim, these men: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, ³⁴Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah.

³⁵From the descendants of Hashum, these men: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet,

Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei.

³⁶From the descendants of Bani, these men: Maadai, Amram, Uel, ³⁷Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, ³⁸Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, ³⁹Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasu.

⁴⁰From the descendants of Binnui, these men: Shimei, ⁴¹Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, ⁴²Macnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, ⁴³Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, ⁴⁴Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph.

⁴⁵From the descendants of Nebo, these men: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

⁴⁶All these men had married foreign women. And some of them had children with these wives.

Nehemiah

Nehemiah's Prayer

1 These are the words of Nehemiah. Nehemiah was the son of Hacaliah: I, Nehemiah, was in the capital city of Susa in the month of Kislev. This was in the 20th year* that Artaxerxes was king. ¹While I was in Susa, one of my brothers named Hanani and some other men came from Judah. I asked them about the Jews living there. These were the Jews that had escaped captivity and still lived in Judah. And I also asked them about the city of Jerusalem.

²Hanani and the men with him said, "Nehemiah, those Jews that escaped captivity and are in the land of Judah are in much trouble. Those people are having many problems and are full of shame. Why? Because the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

³When I heard those things about the people of Jerusalem and about the wall, I was very upset. I sat down and cried. I was very sad. I fasted* and prayed to the God of Heaven for several days. ⁴Then I prayed this prayer:

Lord, God of Heaven, you are the great and powerful God. You are the God who keeps his agreement of love with people that love you and obey your commands.

⁵"Please open your eyes and ears and listen to the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night. I am praying for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we people of Israel have done against you. I am confessing that I have sinned against you and that the other people in my father's family have sinned against you. ⁶We people of Israel have been very bad to you. We have not obeyed the commands, teachings, and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁷"Please remember the teaching you gave your servant Moses. You said to him, "If you people of Israel are not faithful, I will force you to be scattered among the other nations. ⁸But if you people of Israel come back to me and obey my commands, then this is what I will do: Even if your people that have been forced to leave their homes and go to the ends of the earth, I will gather them from there. And I will bring them back to the place I have chosen to put my name."

⁹"The people of Israel are your servants and your people. You used your great power and rescued those people.

¹⁰So Lord, please listen to my prayer. I am your servant. And please listen to the prayers of your servants that want to show respect for your name. Lord, you

20th year This was about December, 444 B.C.

fast(ed) To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

know I am the king's wine servant.* So please help me today. Help me as I ask the king for help. Give me success and help me to be pleasing to the king.

King Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

2 In the month of Nisan in the 20th year of King Artaxerxes,* some wine was brought to the king. I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had never been sad when I was with the king, but now I was sad. ³So the king asked me, "Are you sick? Why do you look sad? I think your heart is full of sadness."

Then I was very much afraid. ⁴But even though I was afraid, I said to the king, "May the king live forever! I am sad because the city where my ancestors* are buried lies in ruins. And the gates of that city have been destroyed by fire."

⁵Then the king said to me, "What do you want me to do?"

Before I answered, I prayed to the God of Heaven. ⁶Then I answered the king, "If it would please the king, and if I have been good to you, please send me to Jerusalem, the city in Judah where my ancestors* are buried. I want to go there and build that city again."

⁷The queen was sitting next to the king. The king and queen asked me, "How long will your trip take? When will you get back here?"

The king was happy to send me, so I gave him a certain time. ⁸I also said to the king, "If it would please the king to do something else for me, let me ask. Please give me some letters to show the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River. I need these letters so those governors will give me permission to pass safely through their lands on my way to Judah. ⁹I also need lumber for the heavy wooden beams for the gates, the walls, the walls around

the temple,* and my house. So I need a letter from you to Asaph. Asaph is in charge of your forests."

The king gave me the letters and everything I asked for. The king did that because God was kind to me.

¹⁰So I went to the governors of the area west of the Euphrates River. I gave those governors the letters from the king. The king had also sent army officers and soldiers on horses with me. ¹¹Sanballat and Tobiah were two men that heard about what I was doing. They were very upset and angry that someone had come to help the people of Israel. Sanballat was from Horon and Tobiah is an Ammonite official.

Nehemiah Inspects the Walls of Jerusalem

¹²I went to Jerusalem and stayed there three days. Then at night I started out with a few men. I had not said anything to anyone about what God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no horses with me except the horse I was riding. ¹³While it was dark I went out through the Valley Gate. I rode toward the Dragon Well and the Gate of the Ash Piles. I was inspecting the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down. And the gates in the wall that had been burned with fire. ¹⁴Then I rode on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool. But as I got close, I could see there was not enough room for my horse to get through. ¹⁵So I went up the valley in the dark, inspecting the wall. Finally, I turned back and went back in through the Valley Gate. ¹⁶The officials and important people of Israel didn't know where I had gone. They didn't know what I was doing. I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the king's family, the officials, or any of the other people that would be doing the work.

¹⁷Then I said to all those people, "You can see the trouble we have here: Jerusalem is a pile of ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let's build the wall of Jerusalem again. Then we won't be ashamed any more."

wine servant A very important job. This official was always close to the king and tasted the king's wine to make sure no one was trying to poison the king.

Nisan ... Artaxerxes This was March-April, 443 B.C.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

"I also told those people that God had been kind to me. I told them the things the king had said to me. Then those people answered, "Let's start to work, now!" So we began this good work. "But Sanballat from Horon, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard that we were building again. They made fun of us in a very ugly way. They said, "What are you doing? Are you turning against the king?"

"But this is what I said to those men: "The God of Heaven will help us succeed. We are God's servants and we will build this city again. And you can't help us in this work. None of your family lived here in Jerusalem. You don't own any of this land. You have no right to be in this place!"

Builders of the Wall

3 The name of the high priest was Eliashib. Eliashib and his brothers the priests went to work and built the Sheep Gate. They prayed and made that gate holy to the Lord. They set its doors in place in the wall. Those priests worked on the wall of Jerusalem as far as the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel. They prayed and made their work holy to the Lord.

"The men from Jericho built the wall next to the priests. And Zaccur son of a man named Imri built the wall next to the men of Jericho.

"The sons of a man named Hassenzah built the Fish Gate. They set the beams in place. They put doors on the building. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors.

"Meremoth son of Uriah fixed the next section of the wall. (Uriah was the son of Hakkoz.)

Meshullam son of Berekiah fixed the next section of the wall. (Berekiah was the son of Meshezabel.)

Zadok son of Baana fixed the next section of the wall.

"The men from Tekoa fixed the next section of the wall. But the leaders from Tekoa refused to work for Nehemiah, their governor.

"Joiada and Meshullam fixed the Old Gate. Joiada is the son of Paseah and Meshullam is the son of Besodeiah. They set the beams in

place. They put the doors on the hinges. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors.

"The men from Gibeon and Mizpah fixed the next section of the wall. A man named Melatiah from Gibeon and a man named Jadoi from Meronoth did the work. Gibeon and Meronoth are places that are controlled by the governors of the area west of the Euphrate River.

"Uzziel son of Harhaiah fixed the next section of the wall. Uzziel was a goldsmith. Hananiah was one of the perfume makers. Those men built and fixed Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.

"Rephaiah son of Hur fixed the next section of the wall. Rephaiah was the governor of half of Jerusalem.

"Jedaiah son of Harumaph fixed the next section of the wall. Jedaiah fixed the wall next to his own house. Hattush son of Hashabneiah fixed the next section. "Malkijah son of Harin and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab fixed the next section. Those men also fixed Over Tower.

"Shallum son of Hallohesh fixed the next section of the wall. His daughters helped him. Shallum was the governor of the other half of Jerusalem.

"The Valley Gate was fixed by a man named Hanun and the people that live in the town of Zanoah. Those people built the Valley Gate. They put the doors on their hinges. Then they put the locks and bolts on the doors. They also fixed 500 yards* of the wall. They worked on the wall all the way to the Gate of Ash Piles.

"Malkijah son of Recab fixed the Gate of Ash Piles. Malkijah was the governor of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He fixed that gate. He put the doors on the hinges. Then he put the locks and bolts on the doors.

"Shallun son of Col-Hozeh fixed the Fountain Gate. Shallun was the governor of the district of Mizpah. He fixed that gate and put a roof over it. He put the doors on the hinges. Then he put the locks and bolts on the doors.

goldsmith A person that makes things from gold.
500 yards Literally, "1,000 cubits."

Shallun also fixed the wall of the Pool of Siloam that is next to the King's Garden. He fixed the wall all the way to the steps that go down from the City of David.*

¹⁶Nehemiah son of Azbuk fixed the next section. This Nehemiah was the governor of half the district of Beth Zur. He made repairs up to a place that is across from the tombs of David. And he worked as far as the man-made pool and the House of Heroes.

¹⁷The men from the family group of Levi fixed the next section. Those men from Levi worked under Rehum son of Bani. Hashabiah fixed the next section. Hashabiah was governor of half the district of Keilah. He made repairs for his own district.

¹⁸Their brothers fixed the next section. They worked under Binnui son of Henadad. Binnui was the governor of the other half of the district of Keilah.

¹⁹Ezer son of Jeshua fixed the next section. Ezer was governor of Mizpah. He fixed the section of wall from the room for weapons to the corner of the wall. ²⁰Baruch son of Zabbai fixed the next section. Baruch worked very hard and fixed the section of wall from the corner to the entrance to Eliashib's house. Eliashib was the high priest. ²¹Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, fixed the next section of wall from the entrance to Eliashib's house to the end of that house. ²²The next section of walls was fixed by the priests that lived in that area.*

²³Benjamin and Hasshub fixed the wall in front of their own house. And Azariah son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, fixed the wall next to his house.

²⁴Binnui son of Henadad fixed the section of wall from Azariah's house to the bend in the wall and then to the corner.

²⁵Palai son of Uzai worked across from the bend in the wall near the tower. This is the tower at the king's upper house. That is near the courtyard of the king's guard. Pedaiah son of Parosh worked next to Palai.

²⁶The temple servants lived on Ophel Hill. They fixed the next section all the way to the east side of the Water Gate and the tower near it.

²⁷The men from Tekoa fixed the rest of that section from the big tower all the way to the Ophel wall.

²⁸The priests fixed the section over the Horse Gate. Each priest fixed the wall in front of his own house. ²⁹Zadok son of Immer fixed the section in front of his house. Shemaiah son of Shecaniah fixed the next section. Shemaiah was the guard of the East Gate.

³⁰Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun son of Zalaph fixed the rest of that section of wall. (Hanun was Zalaph's sixth son.)

Meshullam son of Berekiah fixed the section in front of his house. ³¹Malkijah fixed the next section of wall all the way to the houses of the temple servants and the businessmen. That is across from the Inspection Gate. Malkijah fixed the section all the way to the room over the corner of the wall. Malkijah was a goldsmith.* ³²The goldsmiths and the businessmen fixed the section of wall between the room over the corner to the Sheep Gate.

Sanballat and Tobiah

4 Sanballat heard that we were building the wall of Jerusalem. He became very angry and upset. He started making fun of the Jews. ²Sanballat talked with his friends and the army at Samaria. He said, "What are these weak Jews doing? Do they think we will leave them alone? Do they think they will offer sacrifices?"* Maybe they think they can finish building in only one day. They can't bring stones back to life from these piles of trash and dirt. These are just piles of ashes and dirt!"

³Tobiah the Ammonite was with Sanballat. Tobiah said, "What do these Jews think they are building? If even a small fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.
that area Or possibly, "the Jordan Valley."

goldsmith A person that makes things from gold.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

¹Nehemiah prayed to God. He said, "Our God, listen to our prayer. Those men hate us. Sanballat and Tobiah are insulting us. Make those bad things happen to them. Make them ashamed, like people taken away as prisoners. ²Don't take away their guilt or forgive the sins they have done in your sight. They have insulted and discouraged the builders."

³We built the wall of Jerusalem. We built the wall all the way around the city. But it was only half as tall as it should be. We did this much because the people worked with all their heart.

⁴But Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the men from Ashdod were very angry. They heard that the people continued working on the walls of Jerusalem. They heard the people were fixing the holes in the wall. ⁵So all those men got together and made plans against Jerusalem. They planned to stir up trouble against Jerusalem. They planned to come and fight against the city. ⁶But we prayed to our God. And we put guards on the walls to watch day and night so we could be ready to meet those men.

⁷And so at that time, the people of Judah said, "The workers are becoming tired. There is too much dirt and trash in the way. We can't continue to build the wall. ⁸And our enemies are saying, 'Before the Jews know it or see us, we will be right there among them. We will kill them and that will stop the work.'"

⁹Then the Jews living among our enemies came and said this to us ten times, 'Our enemies are all around us. They are everywhere we turn.'"

¹⁰So I put some of the people behind the lowest places along the wall. And I put them by the holes in the wall. I put families together, with their swords, spears, and bows. ¹¹I looked the whole situation over. Then I stood up and spoke to the important families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, "Don't be afraid of our enemies. Remember our Master. The Lord is great and powerful! You must fight for your brothers, your sons, and your daughters! You must fight for your wives and your homes!"

¹²Then our enemies heard that we knew about their plans. They knew that God ruins their plans. So we all went back to work on the wall. Each person went back to his own place and did his part. ¹³From that day on, half of my men worked on the wall. The other half of my men were on guard, ready with spears, shields, bows, and armor. The army officers stood behind all the people of Judah that were building the wall. ¹⁴The builders and their helpers had their tools in one hand and a weapon in the other hand. ¹⁵Each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. The man that blew the trumpet to warn the people stayed next to me. ¹⁶Then I spoke to the leading families, the officials, and the rest of the people. I said, "This is a very big job and we are spread out along the wall. We are far from one another. ¹⁷So, if you hear the trumpet, run to that place. We will all meet together there, and God will fight for us!"

¹⁸So we continued to work on the wall of Jerusalem, and half the men held spears. We worked from the first light of the morning till the stars came out at night.

¹⁹At that time I also said this to the people: "Every builder and his helper must stay inside Jerusalem at night. Then they can be guards at night and workers during the day." ²⁰So none of us took off our clothes—not me, not my brothers, not my men, and not the guards. Each of us had our weapon ready at all times, even when we went to get water.

Nehemiah Helps the Poor People

5 Many of the poor people began to complain against their Jewish brothers. ²Some of them were saying, "We have many children. We must get some grain if we are going to eat and stay alive!"

³Other people were saying, "This is a time of famine.* We are having to mortgage* our fields, vineyards, and homes to get grain.

famine A time when there is not enough rain for crops to grow. People and animals die without enough food or water.

mortgage A way to borrow money. People use things, land, or houses as a promise to pay their loan. If they fail to pay the loan, then the lender can take their property.

⁴And still other people were saying, "We have to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. But we can't afford to pay, so we are having to borrow money to pay the tax. ⁵Look at those rich people! We are as good as they are. Our sons are as good as their sons. But we will have to sell our sons and daughters as slaves. Some of us have already had to sell our daughters as slaves! There is nothing we can do! We already lost our fields and vineyards! Other people own them now!"

⁶When I heard their complaints, I became very angry. ⁷I calmed myself down and then I went to the rich families and the officials. I told them, "You are forcing your own people to pay interest on the money you loan them! You must stop doing that! Then I called for all the people to meet together. ⁸And I said to those people, "Our Jewish brothers were sold as slaves to people in other countries. We did our best to buy them back and make them free. And now, you are selling them like slaves again!"

Those rich people and officials kept quiet. They could not find anything to say. ⁹So I continued speaking. I said, "What you people are doing is not right! You know that you should fear and respect God. You should not do the shameful things other people do! ¹⁰My men, my brothers, and I are also lending money and grain to the people. But let's stop forcing them to pay interest on those loans! ¹¹You must give their fields, vineyards, olive fields, and houses back to them, right now! And you must give back the interest you charged them! You charged them one per cent for the money, grain, new wine, and oil that you loaned them. ¹²You must give that back to them!"

¹³Then the rich people and the officials said, "We will give it back. And we won't demand anything more from them. Nehemiah, we will do as you say."

Then I called the priests. I made the rich people and the officials promise to God that they would do what they said. ¹⁴Then I shook out the folds of my clothes. I said, "God will do the same thing to every person that doesn't keep his promise. God will shake them out of their houses and they will lose everything they

worked for! That person will lose everything!"

I finished saying these things and all those people agreed. They all said, "Amen!" And they praised the Lord. And so the people did as they had promised.

¹⁵And also, during the whole time that I was appointed to be governor in the land of Judah, neither I nor my brothers ate the food that was allowed for the governor. I never forced the people to pay those taxes to buy my food. I was governor from the 20th year until the 32nd year that Artaxerxes was king. ¹⁶I was governor of Judah for twelve years. ¹⁷But the governors that ruled before me made life hard for the people. Those governors forced every person to pay 1 pound* of silver. They also made those people give them food and wine. The leaders under those governors also ruled over the people and made life even harder. But I respected and feared God, so I didn't do things like that. ¹⁸I worked hard at building the wall of Jerusalem. All my men gathered there to work on the wall. We didn't take any land from anyone!

¹⁹Also, I regularly fed 150 Jews that were always welcome at my table. And I fed the people that came to us from the nations around us. ²⁰Every day I fixed this much food for the people that ate at my table: one cow, six good sheep, and different kinds of birds. And every ten days all kinds of wine were brought to my table. Yet, I never demanded the food that was allowed for the governor. I never forced the people to pay those taxes to pay for my food. I knew that the work the people were doing was very hard. ²¹God, remember all the good I have done for these people.

More Problems

6 Then Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and our other enemies heard that I had built the wall. We fixed all the holes in the wall. But we had not yet put the doors in the gates. ²So Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come Nehemiah, let's meet

20th ... king This was from 444-432 B.C.
1 pound Literally, "40 shekels."

together. We can meet in the town of Kephirim on the plain of Ono." But they were planning to hurt me.

"So I sent messengers to them with this answer: "I am doing important work, so I can't come down. I don't want the work to stop just so I can come down and meet with you."

"Sanballat and Geshem sent the same message to me four times. And I sent back the same answer to them each time. Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his helper to me with the same message. And he had a letter in his hand that was not sealed. "This is what that letter said: "There is a rumor going around. People are talking about it everywhere. And, by the way, Geshem says it is true. People are saying that you and the Jews are planning to turn against the king. That is why you are building the wall of Jerusalem. People are also saying that you will be the new king of the Jews.

"And the rumor is that you have chosen prophets to announce this about you in Jerusalem: "There is a king in Judah!"

Now I warn you, Nehemiah, King Artaxerxes will hear about this. So come, let's meet and talk about this together."

"So I sent this answer back to Sanballat: "Nothing that you are saying is happening. You are just making all that up in your own head."

"Our enemies were only trying to make us afraid. They are thinking to themselves, "The Jews will be afraid, and will become too weak to keep on working. Then the wall won't be finished."

But I prayed, "God, make me strong."

"One day I went to the house of a man named Shemaiah son of Delaiah. Delaiah was the son of Mehetabel. Shemaiah had to stay in his house. Shemaiah said,

"Nehemiah, let's meet in God's temple.*

Let's go inside the temple and close the doors.

Let's do that because men are coming to kill you.

Tonight they are coming to kill you."

"But I said to Shemaiah, "Should a man like me run away? You know that a man like me should not run into the temple to save his life. I won't go!"

"I knew that God had not sent Shemaiah. I knew that he had preached against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had paid him to do that. "Shemaiah had been hired to bother me and make me afraid. They wanted me to sin by being afraid and running to the temple to hide. Then my enemies would have a reason to embarrass me and give me a bad name.

"God, please remember Tobiah and Sanballat. Remember the bad things they have done. Also remember the woman prophet Noadiah and the other prophets that have been trying to make me afraid.

The Wall Is Finished

"So the wall of Jerusalem was finished on the 25th day of the month of Elul.* It had taken 52 days to finish building the wall. "Then all our enemies heard that we had completed the wall. And all the nations around us saw that it was finished. So they lost their courage. Why? Because they understood that this work had been done with the help of our God.

"Also, in those days after the wall had been completed, the rich people of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah. And Tobiah was answering their letters. "They sent those letters because many people in Judah had promised to be loyal to him. The reason for this is because Tobiah was son-in-law to Shecaniah son of Arah. And Tobiah's son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam. Meshullam is the son of Berekiah. "And in the past, those people had made a special promise to Tobiah. So those people kept telling me how good Tobiah was. And they kept telling Tobiah about the things I was doing. Tobiah kept sending me letters to make me afraid.

7 So, we finished building the wall. Then we put the doors in the gates. Then we chose the men that would guard the gates. And we chose the men to sing in the temple* and help

the priests. ²Next, I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem. I chose another man named Hananiah to be the commander of the fort. I picked Hanani because he was a very honest man and he feared God more than most men do. ³Then I said to Hanani and Hananiah, "Each day you must wait until the sun has been up for several hours before you open the gates of Jerusalem. And you must shut and lock the gates before the sun goes down. Also choose people that live in Jerusalem as guards. Put some of those people at special places to guard the city. And put the other people near their own houses."

The List of Captives That Returned

⁴Now the city was large and there was plenty of room. But there were few people in it and the houses had not yet been built again. ⁵So my God put it in my heart to have all the people meet together. I called together all the important people, the officials, and the common people. I did this so I could make a list of all the families. I found the family lists of the people that had been the first to return from captivity. This is what I found written there: ⁶"These are the people of the province that came back from captivity. (Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken these people as prisoners. These people returned to Jerusalem and Judah. Each person went to his own town. ⁷These people returned with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah):

The list of the men of Israel:

- ⁸ The descendants of Parosh: 2,172;
- ⁹ the descendants of Shephatiah: 372;
- ¹⁰ the descendants of Arah: 652;
- ¹¹ the descendants of Pahath-Moab
(through the family line of Jeshua and Joab): 2,818;
- ¹² the descendants of Elam: 1,254;
- ¹³ the descendants of Zattu: 845;
- ¹⁴ the descendants of Zaccai: 760;
- ¹⁵ the descendants of Binnui: 648;

- ¹⁶ the descendants of Bebai: 628;
- ¹⁷ the descendants of Azgad: 2,322;
- ¹⁸ the descendants of Adonikam: 667;
- ¹⁹ the descendants of Bigvai: 2,067;
- ²⁰ the descendants of Adin: 655;
- ²¹ the descendants of Ater
(through the family of Hezekiah): 98;
- ²² the descendants of Hashum: 328;
- ²³ the descendants of Bezai: 324;
- ²⁴ the descendants of Hariph: 112;
- ²⁵ the descendants of Gibeon: 95;
- ²⁶ the men from the cities of Bethlehem and Netophah: 188;
- ²⁷ the men from the city of Anathoth: 128;
- ²⁸ the men from the city of Beth Azmaveth: 42;
- ²⁹ the men from the cities of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah, and Beeroth: 743;
- ³⁰ the men from the cities of Ramah and Geba: 621;
- ³¹ the men from the city of Micmash: 122;
- ³² the men from the cities of Bethel and Ai: 123;
- ³³ the men from the other city of Nebo: 52;
- ³⁴ the men from the other city of Elam: 1,254;
- ³⁵ the men from the city of Harim: 320;
- ³⁶ the men from the city of Jericho: 345;
- ³⁷ the men from the cities of Lod, Hadid, and Ono: 721;
- ³⁸ the men from the city of Senaah: 3,930.

³⁹The list of the priests:

The descendants of Jedaiah
(through the family of Jeshua): 973;
⁴⁰ the descendants of Immer: 1,052;
⁴¹ the descendants of Pashhur: 1,247;
⁴² the descendants of Harim: 1,017;

⁴³The list of the men from the family group of Levi:

The descendants of Jeshua
(through Kadmiel through the family line of Hodaviah): 74;

⁴⁴The list of the singers:

The descendants of Asaph: 148;

***The list of the gatekeepers:**

The descendants of Shallum, Ater,
Talmon, Akkub, Hatita, and Shobai:
138;

***The list of the temple servants:**

The descendants of Ziha, Hasupha,
Tabbaoth,
the descendants of Keros, Sia, Padon,
the descendants of Lebana, Hagaba,
Shalmal,
the descendants of Hanan, Giddel, Gaher,
the descendants of Reaiah, Rezin,
Nekoda,
the descendants of Gazzam, Uzza,
Paseah,
the descendants of Besai, Meunim,
Nephussim,
the descendants of Bakbuk, Hakupha,
Harhur,
the descendants of Bazluth, Mehida,
Harsha,
the descendants of Barkos, Sisera,
Temah,
the descendants of Nezhiah and Hatipha.

***The descendants of the servants of Solomon:**

The descendants of Sotai, Sophereth,
Perida,
the descendants of Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
the descendants of Shephatiah, Hattil,
Pokereth-Hazzebaim and Amon.
The temple servants and the descendants
of the servants of Solomon: 392.

*This is a list of people that came up to Jerusalem from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon, and Immer. But these people could not prove that their families really came from the people of Israel:

* The descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda: 642.

*And this is a list of those that are priests. They could not prove that their families really came from the people of Israel:

The descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz,
and Barzillai
(he was a man who had married a
daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite,
so he was named that name).

Those men looked for their family histories, but they could not find them. So they were not included in this list of priests. They were unclean and could not be priests. *So the governor gave an order that those men could not eat any of the most holy food. They could not eat any of this food until the high priest used the Urim and Thummim* to ask God for advice.

*The number of people in that whole group was 42,360. And they also had 7,337 men and women servants. They also had 245 men and women singers. *They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

Some of the family leaders gave money to support the work. The governor gave 19 pounds of gold to the treasury. He also gave 50 bowls and 530 pieces of clothing for the priests. *The family leaders gave 375 pounds* of gold to the treasury to support the work. And they also gave 1 1/3 tons* of silver. *And all together the other people gave 375 pounds* of gold, 1 1/3 tons* of silver, and 67 pieces of clothing for the priests.

So, the priests, the people from the family group of Levi, the gatekeepers, the singers, and the temple servants settled down in their own towns. And all the other people of Israel settled down in their own towns. And by the seventh month of the year all the people of Israel had settled down in their own towns.

unclean Or, "unacceptable." Not pure or not able to be used in worshiping God. See Lev. 11-15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

Urim and Thummim Used by the priest to learn God's answer to questions. They were something like lot-stones, sticks, or bones that were thrown like dice to make decisions.

19 pounds Literally, "1,000 drachmas."

375 pounds Literally, "20,000 drachmas."

1 1/3 tons Literally, "2,200 minas."

seventh month That is, September-October.

Ezra Reads the Law

8 And so all the people of Israel met together in the seventh month* of the year. They were together and in agreement just as if they were one man. They all met together in the open place in front of the Water Gate. All those people asked Ezra the teacher to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses. That is the Law that the Lord had given to the people of Israel. ²So Ezra the priest brought the Law before those people that had met together. This was on the first day of the month.* It was the seventh month of the year. At that meeting were men and women, and anyone old enough to listen and understand. ³Ezra read in a loud voice from the Book of the Law from early morning until noon. Ezra was facing the open place that was in front of the Water Gate. He read to all the men and women, and to everyone old enough to listen and understand. All the people listened carefully and paid attention to the Book of the Law.

⁴Ezra stood on a high wooden stage. It had been built just for this special time. On Ezra's right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Ananiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah. And on Ezra's left stood Pedaiah, Mishaël, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

⁵So Ezra opened the book. All the people could see Ezra because he was standing above them on the high stage. And as Ezra opened the Book of the Law, all the people stood up. ⁶Ezra praised the Lord, the great God. And all the people held up their hands and said, "Amen! Amen!" Then all the people bowed down and put their faces low to the ground and they worshiped the Lord.

⁷These men from the family group of Levi taught the people about the Law as they were all standing there. Those Levites were: Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah. ⁸Those Levites read the Book of the Law of God. They made it easy to

understand, and explained what it meant. They did this so the people could understand what was being read.

⁹Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher, and the men from the Levites that were teaching the people spoke. They said, "Today is a special day* to the Lord your God. Don't be sad and cry." They said that because all the people had begun to cry as they were listening to the messages of God in the Law.

¹⁰Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy the good food and sweet drinks. And give some food and drinks to those people that didn't prepare any food. Today is a special day to the Lord. Don't be sad! Why? Because the joy of the Lord will make you strong."

¹¹The men from the family group of Levi helped the people to calm down. They said, "Be quiet, calm down, this is a special day. Don't be sad."

¹²Then all the people went to eat the special meal. They shared their food and drinks. They were very happy and celebrated that special day. They finally understood the lessons from the Lord that the teachers had been trying to teach them.

¹³Then on the second day of the month,* the leaders of all the families went to meet with Ezra, the priests, and the Levites. They all gathered around Ezra the teacher to study the words of the Law.

^{14,15}They studied and found this commanded in the Law: In the seventh month* of the year, the people of Israel were supposed to go to Jerusalem, to celebrate a special holiday. They were supposed to live in temporary shelters. The Lord had used Moses to give that command to the people. And the people were supposed to make this announcement. They were supposed to go through all of their towns and Jerusalem and say these things: "Go out

seventh month That is, September-October.

first ... month This was a special day of worship. The people met together and shared a fellowship meal.

special day The first and second days of each month were special days of worship. The people met together and shared a fellowship meal.

second ... month The first and second days of each month were special days of worship. The people met together and shared a fellowship meal.

into the hill country and get branches from different kinds of olive trees. Get branches from myrtle trees, palm trees, and shade trees. Use those branches to make temporary shelters. Do what the Law says."

"So the people went out and got those tree branches. Then they built temporary shelters for themselves. They built shelters on their own roofs and in their own yards. And they built shelters in the temple* yard, in the open place near the Water Gate, and near Ephraim Gate. "The whole group of the people of Israel that had come back from captivity built shelters. They lived in the shelters they had built. Since the days of Joshua son of Nun up until that day, the people of Israel had not celebrated the Festival of Shelters like this. Everyone was very happy!

"Ezra read to them from the Book of the Law every day of the festival. Ezra read the Law to them from the first day of the festival to the last day. The people of Israel celebrated the festival for seven days. Then on the eighth day the people met together for a special meeting, like the Law says.

The People of Israel Confess Their Sins

9 Then on the 24th day of that same month, the people of Israel gathered together for a day of fasting.* They wore clothes of sadness and put ashes on their heads, to show they were sad and upset.. "Those people that were true Israelites separated themselves from foreigners. The Israelites stood in the temple, and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors.* "They stood there for about three hours, and the people read the Book of the Law of the Lord their God. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and bowed down to worship the Lord their God.

"Then these Levites stood on the stairs: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Kenani. They called out

to the Lord their God with loud voices. "Then these Levites spoke again: Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah. They said: "Stand up and praise the Lord your God!"

God has always lived!

And God will live forever!

People should praise your glorious name!

May your name be lifted above all blessing and praise!

⁶ You are God!

Lord, only you are God!

You made the sky!

You made the highest heavens,
and everything in them!

You made the earth,
and everything on it!

You made the seas,
and everything in them!

You give life to everything!
And all the heavenly angels
bow down and worship you!

⁷ You are the Lord God.

You chose Abram.

You led him from Ur in Babylonia.

You changed his name to Abraham.

⁸ You saw he was true and loyal to you.

And you made an agreement with him.

You promised to give him the land of
Canaan.

That land belonged to the Hittites and
Amorites.

It belonged to the Perizzites, Jebusites,
and Girgashites.

But you promised to give that land to
Abraham's descendants.

And you kept your promise!

Why? Because you are good!

⁹ Lord, you saw our ancestors suffering in
Egypt.

And you heard them call for help
by the Red Sea.

¹⁰ You showed the miracles to Pharaoh.

You did amazing things to his officials
and his people.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
fast(ing) To live without food for a special time of prayer
and worship to God.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

- You knew the Egyptians thought they
were better than our ancestors.
But you proved how great you are!
And they remember that even today!
- 11 You split the Red Sea in front of them.
And they walked through on dry land!
The Egyptian soldiers were chasing them.
But you threw that enemy into the sea.
And they sank like a rock into the sea.
- 12 You used the tall cloud to lead them by
day.
And at night you used the column of
fire.
That is the way you lit their path,
and showed them where to go.
- 13 Then you came down to Mount Sinai.
You spoke to them from heaven.
You gave them good laws.
You gave them true teachings.
You gave them laws and commands that
were very good!
- 14 You told them about your special day of
rest—the Sabbath.
You used your servant Moses,
and gave them commands, laws, and
teachings.
- 15 They were hungry,
so you gave them food from heaven.
They were thirsty,
so you gave them water from a rock.
And you told them,
'Come, take this land.'
You used your power,
and took the land for them!
- 16 But those people,
our ancestors,
became proud.
They became stubborn.
They refused to obey your commands.
- 17 They refused to listen.
They forgot the amazing things you did
with them!
They became stubborn.
They followed Miriam,
and became slaves again!
But you are a forgiving God!
- You are kind and full of mercy.
You are patient and full of love.
So you didn't leave them!
- 18 Even though they made golden calves,
and said,
'These calves are the gods
that led us out of Egypt!'
- 19 You are very kind!
So you didn't leave them in the desert.
You didn't take the tall cloud away from
them by day.
You continued to lead them.
You didn't take the column of fire away
from them at night.
You continued to light their path
and show them where to go.
- 20 You gave them your good Spirit
to make them wise.
You continued to give them manna for
food.
You continued to give them water for
their thirst.
- 21 You took care of them for 40 years!
They had everything they needed in the
desert.
Their clothes didn't wear out.
And their feet didn't swell and hurt.
- 22 Lord, you gave them kingdoms and
nations.
And you gave them faraway places
where few people live.
They got Sihon's land.
Sihon was king of Heshbon.
They got Og's land.
Og was king of Bashan.
- 23 You made their descendants
as many as the stars in the sky.
You brought them to the land
you promised to give their ancestors.
They went in and took that land.
- 24 Those children took the land.
They defeated the Canaanites living
there.
You let them defeat those people!
You let them do whatever they wanted
to those nations, people, and kings!

- ²⁵ They defeated powerful cities.
They took the fertile land.
They got houses filled with good things.
They got wells that were already dug.
They got vineyards, olive trees, and
plenty of fruit trees!
They ate until they were full.
They became fat.
They enjoyed all the wonderful things
you gave them.
- ²⁶ And then they turned against you!
They threw away your teachings!
They killed your prophets.
Those prophets warned the people.
They tried to get the people to come
back to you.
But our ancestors did terrible things to
you!
- ²⁷ So you let their enemies have them.
The enemy caused them much trouble.
When trouble came,
our ancestors called to you for help.
And in heaven, you heard them.
You are very kind.
So you sent people to save them.
And those people rescued them from
their enemies.
- ²⁸ Then, as soon as our ancestors were
rested,
they went back to doing those terrible
things.
So you let the enemy defeat them
and punish them.
They called to you for help,
and in heaven you heard them
and helped them.
You are so kind!
That happened so many times!
- ²⁹ You warned them.
You told them to come back.
But they were too proud.
They refused to listen to your
commands.
If a person obeys your laws,
then they will truly live!
But our ancestors broke your laws.

- They were stubborn.
They turned their backs on you.
They refused to listen.
- ³⁰ You were very patient with our ancestors.
You let them mistreat you for many
years.
You warned them with your Spirit.
You sent the prophets to warn them.
But our ancestors didn't listen.
So you gave them away to people in
other countries.
- ³¹ But you are so kind!
You didn't destroy them completely.
You didn't leave them.
You are such a kind and merciful God!
- ³² And you are our God!
You are the great God.
You are the awesome and powerful
soldier!
You are loyal!
You keep your agreement!
We have had many troubles.
And our troubles are important to you!
Bad things have happened to our kings
and leaders.
Bad things have happened to our priests
and prophets
and to all our people.
Those terrible things have happened
since the king of Assyria
until today!
- ³³ But God, you are fair about everything
that happens to us.
You did what is right.
We were wrong!
- ³⁴ Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors
did not follow your teachings.
They didn't listen to your commands.
They ignored your warnings.
- ³⁵ And even when our ancestors were living
in their kingdom,
they didn't serve you.
They didn't stop doing evil things.
They were enjoying all the good things
you had given them.
They were enjoying the land that was
rich and they had plenty of room,

but they didn't stop their evil ways.

- ³⁶ And now, as you can see,
we are slaves.
We are slaves in the land you gave our
ancestors.
You gave this land to them
so they could enjoy its fruit
and all the other good things that grow
here.
- ³⁷ The harvest is big in this land.
But we sinned,
so the harvest goes to the kings you
have put over us.
Those kings rule over us and our cattle.
They do anything they want.
We are in much trouble.
- ³⁸ So, as we think about all of these things,
we are making an agreement that can't
be changed.
We are putting this agreement in writing.
Our leaders, Levites, and priests
are putting their names on this
agreement.
And they are signing it with a seal.*

10 These are the names on the sealed
agreement: Nehemiah the governor.
Nehemiah was the son of Hacaliah. Zedekiah,
Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, Pashhur,
Amariah, Malkijah, Hattush, Shebaniah,
Malluch, Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, Daniel,
Ginnethon, Baruch, Meshullam, Abijah,
Mijamin, Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah.
These were the names of the priests that put
their names on the sealed agreement.

And these are the Levites that put their
names on the sealed agreement: Jeshua son of
Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad,
Kadmiel, and their brothers: Shebaniah,
Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, Mica, Rehob,
Hashabiah, Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

And these are the names of the leaders that
put their names on the sealed agreement:
Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,

Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, Adonijah, Bigvai,
Adin, Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, Hodiah,
Hashum, Bezai, Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, Meshezabel,
Zadok, Jaddua, Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, Hallohesh,
Pilha, Shobek, Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, Malluch, Harim, and
Baanah.

So, all these people now make this
special promise to God. And they all ask for
bad things to happen if they don't keep their
promise. All these people promise to follow the
Law of God. That Law of God was given to us
through Moses his servant of God. These
people promise to carefully obey all the
commands, rules, and teachings of the Lord our
God. Now, these are the people that are making
this promise: The rest of the people—the priests,
Levites, gatekeepers, singers, temple servants,
and all the people of Israel that separated
themselves from the people living around them.
They have separated themselves to obey God's
law. And also all their wives and all their sons
and daughters that are able to listen and
understand. All these people joined their
brothers and the important people to accept for
themselves the promise to obey God's Law.
And they accepted the curse that asks for bad
things to happen to them if they don't obey
God's Law.

We promise not to let our daughters
marry the people living around us. And we
promise not to let our sons marry their
daughters.

We promise not to work on the Sabbath
day. If the people living around us bring grain
or other things to sell on the Sabbath, we won't
buy those things on that special day or on any
other holiday. Every seventh year,* we won't
plant or work the land. And every seventh year,
we will cancel every debt that other people owe
to us.

We will accept the responsibility for
obeying the commands to take care of God's

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be
used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot
wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

seventh year See Ex. 23:10, 11.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

temple.* We will give 1/8 ounce* each year to support the temple service to honor our God. ¹¹This money will pay for the special bread that the priests put on the table in the temple. It will pay for the daily grain offerings and burnt offerings. It will pay for the offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moon* festivals, and other special meetings. It will pay for the holy offerings and for the sin offerings that make the people of Israel pure.* It will pay for any work needed on the temple of our God.

¹²"We—the priests, the Levites, and the people—have thrown lots.* Why? To decide when each of our families is to bring a gift of wood to the temple of our God at certain times each year. The wood is to burn on the altar of the Lord our God. We must do that just as it is written in the Law.

¹³"We also accept the responsibility of bringing the firstfruits from our crops and from every fruit tree. We will bring that fruit to the Lord's temple* each year.

¹⁴"Just as it is also written in the Law, this is what we will do: We will bring our firstborn sons, and the firstborn cows, sheep, and goats. We will bring those firstborn to the temple of our God. We will bring them to the priests that are serving there.

¹⁵"And we will also bring to the storage rooms of the Lord's temple,* to the priests, these things: The first of our ground meal, the first of our grain offerings, the firstfruit from all our trees, and first part from our new wine and oil. And we will bring a tenth of our crops to the Levites. Why? Because the Levites collect these things in all the towns where we work.

¹⁶A priest from the family of Aaron must be with the Levites when they receive those crops. And then the Levites must bring those crops to the temple of our God. Then they will put them in the storerooms of the temple treasury. ¹⁷The

people of Israel and the Levites must bring their gifts to the storerooms. They are to bring their gifts of grain, new wine, and oil. All the things for the temple are kept in those storerooms. And that is where the priests that are on duty stay. And also the singers and gatekeepers stay there.

"We all promise that we will take care of the temple of our God!"

New People Move into Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people of Israel moved into the city of Jerusalem. The other people of Israel had to decide who else would move into the city. So they threw lots,* and one out of every ten people had to live in Jerusalem, the holy city. The other nine people could live in their own home towns. ²Some people volunteered to live in Jerusalem. The other people thanked and blessed them for volunteering.

³Here are the leaders of the provinces that lived in Jerusalem. (Some of the people of Israel, priests, Levites, temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's servants lived in the towns of Judah. Each person lived on his own land in the different towns. ⁴And other people from the families of Judah and Benjamin lived in the city of Jerusalem.)

These are the descendants of Judah that moved into Jerusalem: Athaiah son of Uziah (Uziah was the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Amariah, who was the son of Shephatiah, who was the son of Mahalalel, who was a descendant of Perez) ⁵and Maaseiah son of Baruch, (Baruch was the son of Col-Hozeh, who was the son of Hazaiah, who was the son of Adaiah, who was the son of Joiarib, who was the son of Zechariah, who was a descendant of Shelah). ⁶The number of Perez's descendants living in Jerusalem was 468. All of them were brave men.

⁷These are the descendants of Benjamin that moved into Jerusalem: Sallu son of Meshullam (Meshullam was the son of Joed, who was the son of Pedaiiah, who was the son of Kolaiah, who was the son of Maaseiah, who was the son of Ithiel, who was the son of Jeshaiiah), ⁸and

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
1/8 ounce Literally, "1/8 shekel."

New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month.

There were special meetings on these days to worship God.
make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover or erase a person's sins."

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

those that followed Jeshaiiah were Gabbai and Sallai. All together there were 928 men. ⁹Joel son of Zicri was in charge of them. And Judah son of Hassenuah was in charge of the Second District of the city of Jerusalem.

¹⁰These are the priests that moved into Jerusalem: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jakin, ¹¹and Seraiah son of Hilkiyah (Hilkiyah was the son of Meshullam, who was the son of Zadok, who was the son of Meraioth, who was the son of Ahitub, who was the supervisor in the temple of God), ¹²822 men of their brothers that did the work for the temple, and Adaiah son of Jeroham (Jeroham was the son of Pelaliah, who was the son of Amzi, who was the son of Zechariah, who was the son of Pashhur, who was the son of Malkijah), ¹³242 men that were Malkijah's brothers (These men were leaders of their families), Amashai son of Azarel (Azarel was the son of Ahzai, who was the son of Meshillemoth, who was the son of Immer), ¹⁴and 128 of Immer's brothers. (These men were brave soldiers. The officer over them was Zabdai son of Haggedolim.)

¹⁵These are the Levites that moved into Jerusalem: Shemaiah son of Hasshub (Hasshub was the son of Azrikam, who was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Bunni), ¹⁶Shabbethai and Jozabad (These two men were leaders of the Levites. They were in charge of the outside work of God's temple), ¹⁷Mattaniah (Mattaniah was the son of Mica, who was the son of Zabdi, who was the son of Asaph, who was the choir director. Asaph led the people in singing songs of praise and prayer), Bakbukiah (Bakbukiah was the second in charge over his brothers), and Abda son of Shammua, (Shammua was the son of Galal, who was the son of Jeduthun). ¹⁸So, there were 284 Levites that moved into Jerusalem, the holy city.

¹⁹These are the gatekeepers that moved into Jerusalem: Akkub, Talmon, and 172 of their brothers. They watched and guarded the gates of the city.

²⁰The other people of Israel, and the other priests and Levites, lived in all the towns of Judah. Each person lived on the land that his ancestors had owned. ²¹The temple servants

lived on the hill of Ophel. Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of those temple servants.

²²The officer over the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi. Uzzi was the son of Bani (Bani was the son of Hashabiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Mica). Uzzi was a descendant of Asaph. Asaph's descendants were the singers that were responsible for the service in God's temple. ²³The singers obeyed orders from the king. Those orders from the king told the singers what to do from day to day. ²⁴The man that told the people what the king wanted done was named Pethahiah. (Pethahiah was the son of Meshezabel, who was one of the descendants of Zerah. Zerah was Judah's son.)

²⁵The people of Judah lived in these towns: In Kiriath Arba and the small towns around it, in Dibon and the small towns around it, in Jekabzeel and the small towns around it, ²⁶and in Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, ²⁷in Hazar Shual, in Beersheba and the small towns around it, ²⁸and in Ziklag, in Meconah and the small towns around it, ²⁹and in En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, ³⁰and in Zanoah and Adullam and the small towns around them, in Lachish and the fields around it, and in Azekah and the small towns around it. So the people of Judah were living all the way from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

³¹The descendants of the family of Benjamin from Geba lived in Micmash, Aija, Bethel and the small towns around it, ³²in Anathoth, Nob and Ananiah, ³³in Hazor, Ramah and Gittaim, ³⁴in Hadid, Zeboim, and Neballat, ³⁵in Lod and Ono, and in the Valley of the Craftsmen. ³⁶Some of the groups of the people from the family of Levi moved to the land of Benjamin.

Priests and Levites

12 These are the priests and Levites that came back to the land of Judah. They came back with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua. This is a list of their names: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, ²Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, ³Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, ⁴Iddo, Ginnethon, Abijah, ⁵Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, ⁶Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, ⁷Sallu, Amok,

Hilkiah, and Jedaiah. These men were the leaders of the priests and their relatives. They were leaders in the days of Jeshua.

⁹The Levites were: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah. These men, with Mattaniah's relatives, were in charge of the songs of praise to God. ¹⁰Bakbukiah and Unni were the relatives of those Levites. These two men stood across from them in the services. ¹¹Jeshua was the father of Joiakim. Joiakim was the father of Eliashib. Eliashib was the father of Joiada. ¹²Joiada was the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan was the father of Jaddua.

¹³In the days of Joiakim, these men were the leaders of the families of priests:

The leader of Seraiah's family was Meraiah.

The leader of Jeremiah's family was Hananiah.

¹⁴ The leader of Ezra's family was Meshullam.

The leader of Amariah's family was Jehohanan.

¹⁵ The leader of Malluch's family was Jonathan.

The leader of Shecaniah's family was Joseph.

¹⁶ The leader of Harim's family was Adna.
The leader of Meremoth's family was Helkai.

¹⁷ The leader of Iddo's family was Zechariah.

The leader of Ginnethon's family was Meshullam.

¹⁸ The leader of Abijah's family was Zicri.
The leader of Miniamin's and Maadiah's families was Piltai.

¹⁹ The leader of Bilgah's family was Shammua.

The leader of Shemaiah's family was Jehonathan.

²⁰ The leader of Joarib's family was Mattenai.

The leader of Jedaiah's family was Uzzi.

²¹ The leader of Sallu's family was Kallai.

The leader of Amok's family was Eber.

²² The leader of Hilkiah's family was Hashabiah.

The leader of Jedaiah's family was Nethanel.

²³The names of the leaders of the families of the Levites and the priests in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua were written down during the rule of Darius the Persian king. ²⁴The family leaders among the descendants* of the family of Levi and up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib were written in the Book of the Chronicles. ²⁵And these were the leaders of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, and their brothers. Their brothers stood across from them to sing praise and honor to God. One group answered the other group. That is what was commanded by David the man of God.

²⁶The gatekeepers that guarded the storerooms next to the gates were: Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub. ²⁷Those gatekeepers served in the days of Joiakim. Joiakim was the son of Jeshua, who was the son of Jozadak. And those gatekeepers also served in the days of Nehemiah the governor and in the days of Ezra the priest and teacher.

Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem

¹The people dedicated the wall of Jerusalem. They brought all the Levites to Jerusalem. The Levites came from the towns they lived in. They came to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem. The Levites came to sing songs of praise and thanks to God. They played their cymbals,* harps, and lyres.*

²⁻²⁹And all the singers also came to Jerusalem. Those singers came from the towns all around Jerusalem. They came from the town of Netophah, from Beth Gilgal, Geba, and

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

cymbals A pair of metal platters that are hit against each other to make a loud sound.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

Azmaveth. The singers had built small towns for themselves in the area around Jerusalem.

³⁰So, the priests and Levites made themselves pure in a ceremony. Then they also made the people, the gates, and the wall of Jerusalem pure in a ceremony.

³¹I told the leaders of Judah to go up and stand on top of the wall. I also chose two large singing groups to give thanks to God. One group was to start going up on top of the wall on the right side, toward the Ash Pile Gate. ³²Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah followed those singers. ³³Also following them were Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, ³⁴Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah. ³⁵And some of the priests with trumpets also followed them up to the wall. Also Zechariah followed them. (Zechariah was the son of Jonathan, who was the son of Shemaiah, who was the son of Mattaniah, who was the son of Micaiah, who was the son of Zaccur, who was the son of Asaph.) ³⁶There were also Asaph's brothers, who were Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani. They had the musical instruments that David, man of God, had made. Ezra the teacher led the group of people that were there to dedicate the wall. ³⁷They went to the Fountain Gate. They walked up the stairs all the way to the City of David.* They were on top of the city wall. They walked over the house of David and went toward the Water Gate.

³⁸The second group of singers started out in the other direction, to the left. I followed them as they went up to the top of the wall. Half of the people also followed them. They went past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall. ³⁹Then they went over these gates: the Gate of Ephraim, the Old Gate, and the Fish Gate. And they went over the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred. They went as far as the Sheep Gate. They stopped at the Guard Gate. ⁴⁰Then the two singing groups went to their places in God's temple.* And I stood in my place. And half the officials stood in their

places in the temple. ⁴¹Then these priests stood in their places: Eliakim, Maaseiah, Mijamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah. Those priests had their trumpets with them. ⁴²Then these priests stood in their places in the temple: Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam, and Ezer.

Then two singing groups began singing with Jezrahiah leading them. ⁴³So, on that special day, the priests offered many sacrifices.* Everyone was very happy. God had made everyone happy. Even the women and children were excited and happy. People far away could hear the happy sounds coming from Jerusalem.

⁴⁴Men were chosen to be in charge of the storerooms on that day. People brought their firstfruits and a tenth of their crops. So the men in charge put those things in the storerooms. The Jewish people were very happy about the priests and Levites on duty. So they brought many things to be put in the storerooms. ⁴⁵The priests and Levites did their work for their God. They did the ceremonies that made people pure. And the singers and gatekeepers did their part. They did everything that David and Solomon had commanded. ⁴⁶(Long ago, in the days of David, Asaph had been the director. And he had many songs of praise and thanks to God.)

⁴⁷So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all the people of Israel gave every day to support the singers and gatekeepers. The people also set aside the money for the other Levites. And the Levites set aside the money for the descendants of Aaron (*the priests*).

Nehemiah's Last Commands

13 On that day, the Book of Moses was read out loud so all the people could hear. They found this law written in the Book of Moses: No Ammonite person and no Moabite person would be permitted to join in the meetings with God. ²That law was written because those people didn't give the people of Israel food and water. And those people had

City of David A part of the city of Jerusalem.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

paid Balaam to say a curse* against the people of Israel. But our God changed that curse and made it a blessing for us. ¹So when the people of Israel heard that law, they obeyed it. They separated themselves from the people that were descendants* of foreigners.

²But, before that happened, Eliashib had given a room in the temple* to Tobiah. Eliashib was the priest in charge of the storerooms in God's temple. And Eliashib was a close friend of Tobiah. That room had been used for storing the grain offerings, incense, and the temple dishes and things. They also kept the tenth of grain, new wine, and oil for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers in that room. And they also kept the gifts for the priests in that room. But Eliashib gave that room to Tobiah.

³I was not in Jerusalem while all of this was happening. I had gone back to the king of Babylon. I went back to Babylon in the 32nd year that Artaxerxes was king of Babylon.* Later, I asked the king for permission to go back to Jerusalem. ⁴So I came back to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem I heard about the sad thing that Eliashib had done. Eliashib had given Tobiah a room in the temple* of our God! ⁵I was very angry about what Eliashib had done. So I threw all of Tobiah's things out of the room. ⁶I gave commands for those rooms to be made pure and clean. Then I put the temple dishes and things, the grain offerings, and the incense back into those rooms.

⁷I also heard that the people had not given the Levites their share. So the Levites and singers had gone back to work in their own fields. ⁸So I told the officials that they were wrong. I asked them, "Why didn't you take care of God's temple*?" Then I called all Levites together. I told them to go back to their places and duties in the temple. ⁹Then, everyone in Judah brought their tenth of grain, new wine, and oil to the temple. Those things were put into the storerooms.

¹⁰I put these men in charge of the storerooms: Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the teacher, and a Levite named Pedaiah. And I made Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah, their helper. I knew I could trust these men. They were responsible from giving the supplies to their relatives.

¹¹God, please remember me for these things I have done. And don't forget all I have faithfully done for the temple of my God and for its services.

¹²In those days in Judah, I saw people working on the Sabbath* day. I saw people pressing grapes to make wine. I saw people bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys. I saw people carrying grapes, figs, and all kinds of things in the city. They were bringing all these things into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I warned them about this. I told them they must not sell food on the Sabbath day.

¹³There were some men from the city of Tyre living in Jerusalem. Those men were bringing fish and all kinds of things into Jerusalem and selling them on the Sabbath* day. And the Jews were buying those things. ¹⁴I told the important people of Judah that they were wrong. I said to those important people, "You are doing a very bad thing. You are ruining the Sabbath. You are making the Sabbath day like it was any other day. ¹⁵You know that your ancestors* did the same things. That is why our God brought all the troubles and disaster to us and to this city. Now you people are making it so more of these bad things will happen to Israel. Why? Because you are ruining the Sabbath day and making it like it is not an important day."

¹⁶So, this is what I did: Every Friday evening, just before dark, I commanded the gatekeepers to shut and lock the gates to Jerusalem. They were not to be opened until the

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.
descendants A person's children and all of their future families.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
32nd year ... Babylon That is, 432 B.C.

Sabbath Saturday, a special day of rest and worship for the Jews.
ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Sabbath* day was over. I put some of my own men at the gates. Those men were commanded to make sure that no load was brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.

²⁰One or two times businessmen and merchants* had to stay the night outside Jerusalem. ²¹But I warned those businessmen and merchants. I said to them, "Don't stay the night in front of the wall. If you do that again, I will arrest you." So from that time on they didn't come on the Sabbath* day to sell their things.

²²Then I commanded the Levites to make themselves pure. After they did that, they were to go and guard the gates. This was done to make sure the Sabbath* day was kept a holy day.

God, please remember me for doing these things. Be kind to me and show me your great love!

²³In those days I also noticed that some Jewish men had married women from the countries of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.

²⁴And half of the children from those marriages didn't know how to speak the Jewish language. Those children spoke the language of Ashdod, Ammon, or Moab. ²⁵So I told those men that they were wrong. I said bad things to them. I hit some of those men, and I pulled out their hair. I forced them to make a promise in

God's name. I said to them, "You are not to let your daughters marry the sons of those foreign people. And you are not to let the daughters of those foreign people marry your sons. You are not to marry the daughters of those people."

²⁶You know that marriages like this caused Solomon to sin. In all the many nations, there was not a king as great as Solomon. God loved Solomon. And God made Solomon king over the whole nation of Israel. But even Solomon was made to sin because of foreign women.

²⁷And now, we hear that you also are doing this terrible sin. You are not being true to God. You are marrying foreign women.²⁸

²⁹One of the sons of Joiada was son-in-law to Sanballat from Horon. Joiada was the son of Eliashib the high priest. So I forced that son of Joiada to run away from me. ³⁰My God, remember them because they have ruined the priesthood. They have made the priesthood like it was not important. They have not obeyed the agreement you made with the priests and Levites.

³¹So I made the priests and Levites pure and clean from everything foreign. And I gave each man his own duties and responsibilities. ³²I also made plans for gifts of wood and firstfruits to be brought at certain times.

My God, remember me for doing these good things.

Sabbath Saturday, a special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

merchant(s) A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

Esther

Queen Vashti Disobeys the King

1 This is what happened during the time that Xerxes was king. Xerxes ruled over the 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. ²King Xerxes ruled from his throne* in the capital city of Susa.

³In the third year of Xerxes' rule, he gave a party for his officers and leaders. The army leaders and important leaders from all of Persia and Media were there. ⁴The party continued for 180 days. All during that time, King Xerxes was showing the great wealth of his kingdom. And he was showing everyone the majestic beauty and wealth of his palace.* ⁵And when those 180 days were over, King Xerxes gave another party that continued for seven days. That party was held in the inside garden of the palace. All the people that were in the capital city of Susa were invited, from the most important to the least important person. ⁶That inside garden had white and blue linen* hangings around the room. Those hangings were held in place with cords of white linen and purple material on silver rings and marble pillars. There were couches made of gold and silver. Those couches were setting on mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl, and other expensive stones. ⁷Wine was served in golden cups. And every cup was different! And there was plenty of the king's wine, because the king was very generous. ⁸The king had given a command to

his servants. He told them that each guest must be given as much wine as he wanted. And the wine server obeyed the king.

⁹Queen Vashti also gave a party for the women in the king's palace.

¹⁰⁻¹¹On the seventh day of the party, King Xerxes was in high spirits from drinking the wine. He gave a command to the seven eunuchs* that served him. Those eunuchs were: Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas. He commanded those seven eunuchs to bring Queen Vashti to him wearing her royal crown. She was to come so she could show her beauty to the leaders and important people. She was very beautiful.

¹²But when those servants told Queen Vashti about the king's command, she refused to come. Then the king became very angry. ¹³⁻¹⁴It was the custom for the king to ask the advice of the experts about the law and punishments. So King Xerxes spoke with the wise men that understood the laws. Those wise men were very close to the king. Their names were: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. They were the seven most important officials of Persia and Media. They had special privileges to see the king. They were the highest officials in the kingdom. ¹⁵The king asked those men, "What does the law say must be done to Queen Vashti? She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her."

throne The chair a king or queen sits on.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

¹⁶Then Memucan answered the king with the other officials listening, "Queen Vashti has done wrong. She has done wrong against the king and also against all the leaders and people of all the provinces of King Xerxes. ¹⁷I say that, because all the other women will hear about what Queen Vashti did. And then other women will stop obeying their husbands. They will say to their husbands, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought to him, but she refused to come.'

¹⁸"Today the wives of the Persian and Median leaders have heard what the queen did. And those women will be influenced by the thing she did. Those women will do the same thing to the king's important leaders. And there will be plenty of disrespect and anger.

¹⁹"So, if it pleased the king, here is a suggestion: Let the king give a royal command and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media. The laws of Persia and Media can't be changed. The royal command should be that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else that is better than she. ²⁰Then when the king's command is announced in all parts of his large kingdom, all the women will respect their husbands. From the most important to the least important, all the women will respect their husbands."

²¹The king and his important officials were happy with this advice. So King Xerxes did as Memucan suggested. ²²King Xerxes sent letters to all parts of the kingdom. He sent those letters to each province, written in its own language. He sent those letters to each nation in its own language. Those letters announced in every person's language that every man was to be ruler over his own family.

Esther Made Queen

2 Later, King Xerxes stopped being angry. Then he remembered Vashti and what she had done. He remembered his commands about her. ³Then the king's personal servants had a suggestion. They said, "Search for beautiful

young virgins* for the king. ³Let the king choose leaders in every province of his kingdom. Then let those leaders bring every beautiful young virgin to the capital city of Susa. Those girls will be put with the group of the king's women. And they will be under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch, that is in charge of the women. Then give beauty treatments to all of them. ⁴Then let the girl that is pleasing to the king become the new queen in the Vashti's place." The king liked this suggestion, so he accepted it.

⁵Now there was a Jew from the family group of Benjamin named Mordecai. Mordecai was the son of Jair, and Jair was the son of Kish. Mordecai was in the capital city, Susa. ⁶Mordecai had been carried into captivity from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. He was with the group that was taken into captivity with Jehoiachin, king of Judah. ⁷Mordecai had a girl cousin named Hadassah. She didn't have a father or a mother, so Mordecai took care of her. Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter when her father and mother died. Hadassah was also called Esther. Esther had a very pretty face and a good figure.

⁸When the king's command had been heard, many girls were brought to the capital city of Susa. Those girls were put under the care of Hegai. Esther was one of these women. Esther was taken to the king's palace* and put into Hegai's care. Hegai was in charge of the king's women. ⁹Hegai liked Esther. She became his favorite. So Hegai quickly gave Esther beauty treatments and special food. Hegai chose seven women servants from the king's palace and gave them to Esther. Then Hegai moved Esther and her seven girl servants into the best place where the king's women lived. ¹⁰Esther didn't tell anyone that she was a Jew. She didn't tell anyone about her family background, because Mordecai had told her not to. ¹¹Every day Mordecai walked back and forth near the area where the king's women lived. He did that

virgin(s) A pure woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

because he wanted to find out how Esther was, and what was happening to her.

¹²Before a girl could take her turn to go in before King Xerxes, this is what she had to do: She had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments. That was six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and different kinds of make-up. ¹³And this is the way a girl would go to the king: They gave her anything she wanted from the house of the king's women. ¹⁴In the evening, the girl would go to the king's palace.* And in the morning, she would return to another area where the king's women lived. Then she would be placed under the care of a man named Shaashgaz. Shaashgaz was the king's eunuch* in charge of the concubines.* The girl would not go back to the king again unless he was pleased with her. Then he would call her by name to come back to him.

¹⁵When the time came for Esther to go to the king, she didn't ask for anything. She only wanted Hegai, the king's eunuch* that was in charge of the king's women, to suggest what she should take. (Esther is the girl Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail). Everyone that looked at Esther liked her. ¹⁶So Esther was taken to King Xerxes in the palace.* This happened in the tenth month, the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his rule.

¹⁷The king loved Esther more than any of the other girls. And she became his favorite. He approved of her more than any of the other girls. So King Xerxes put a crown on Esther's head and made her the new queen in Vashti's place. ¹⁸And the king gave a big party for Esther. It was for all his important people and leaders. He announced a holiday in all the provinces. And he sent out gifts to people, because he was a generous king.

Mordecai Learns About An Evil Plan

¹⁹Mordecai was sitting next to the king's gate at the time the girls were gathered together the second time. ²⁰Esther had still kept it a secret that she was a Jew. She had not told anyone about her family background. That is what Mordecai had told her to do. She still obeyed Mordecai just as she had done when he was taking care of her.

²¹During the time Mordecai was sitting next to the king's gate, this happened: Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers that guarded the doorway, became angry at the king. They began to make plans to kill King Xerxes. ²²But Mordecai learned about those plans and told Queen Esther. Then Queen Esther told the king. She also told the king that Mordecai was the one that had learned about that evil plan. ²³Then the report was checked out. It was learned that Mordecai's report was true. The two guards that had planned to kill the king were hanged on a post. All these things were written down in a book of the king's histories in front of the king.

Haman's Plan to Destroy the Jews

3 After these things happened, King Xerxes honored Haman. Haman was the son of a man named Hammedatha, the Agagite. The king promoted Haman and gave him a place of honor more important than any of the other leaders. ²All of the king's leaders at the king's gate would bow down and give honor to Haman. That is what the king commanded those men to do. But Mordecai refused to bow down or give honor to Haman. ³Then the king's leaders at the gate asked Mordecai, "Why don't you obey the king's command to bow down to Haman?"

⁴Day after day, those king's leaders spoke to Mordecai. But he refused to obey the command to bow down to Haman. So those leaders told Haman about it. They wanted to see what Haman would do about Mordecai. Mordecai had told those leaders that he was a Jew. ⁵When Haman saw that Mordecai refused to bow down to him or give him honor, he was very angry.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

eunuch A man whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

concubines Women that were like wives to a man.

"Haman had learned that Mordecai was a Jew. But he was not satisfied with killing only Mordecai. Haman also wanted to find a way to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, in all of Xerxes' kingdom.

"In the twelfth year of King Xerxes' rule, in the first month, the month of Nisan, Haman threw lots* to choose a special day and month. And the twelfth month, the month of Adar was chosen. (At that time, the lot was called "pur.") "Then Haman came to King Xerxes. He said, "King Xerxes, there is a certain group of people scattered among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom. Those people keep themselves separate from other people. Their customs are different from those of all other people. And those people don't obey the king's laws. It is not best for the king to allow those people to continue to live in your kingdom.

"If it pleases the king, I have a suggestion: Give a command to destroy those people. And I will put 10,000 silver coins into the king's treasury. That money could be used to pay the men that do these things."

"So the king took the official ring off his finger and gave it to Haman. Haman was the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. Haman was the enemy of the Jews. "Then the king said to Haman, "Keep the money. Do what you want with those people."

"Then on the 13th day of the first month the king's secretaries were called. They wrote out all of Haman's commands in the language of each province. And they wrote them in the language of each group of people. They wrote to the king's satraps (*leaders*), the governors of the different provinces, and the leaders of the different groups of people. They wrote with the authority of King Xerxes himself, and sealed the commands with the king's own ring.

"Messengers carried the letters to all the king's provinces. The letters were the king's command to ruin, kill, and completely destroy all the Jews. That meant young people and old people, women, and little children, too. The

command was to kill all the Jews on a single day. That day was to be the 13th day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. And the command was to take all of the things that belonged to the Jews.

"A copy of the letters with that command was to be given as a law. It was to be a law in every province and announced to the people of every nation living in the kingdom. Then all those people would be ready for that day. "At the king's command the messengers hurried off. The command was given in the capital city of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was confused.

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help

4 Mordecai heard about all that had been done. When he heard about the king's commands against the Jews, he tore his clothes. Then he put on clothes of sadness and put ashes on his head. Then he went out into the city crying loudly. "But Mordecai went only as far as the king's gate. No one was allowed to enter that gate dressed in clothes of sadness. "In every province where the king's command had come, there was much crying and sadness among the Jews. They were fasting* and crying loudly. Many Jews were lying on the ground dressed in clothes of sadness with ashes on their heads.

"Esther's women servants and eunuchs* came to her and told her about Mordecai. That made Queen Esther very sad and upset. She sent clothes for Mordecai to put on instead of the clothes of sadness. But he would not accept those clothes. "Then Esther called Hathach. Hathach was one of the king's eunuchs that had been chosen to serve her. Esther commanded him to find out what was bothering Mordecai, and why. "So Hathach went out to where Mordecai was in the open place of the city in front of the king's gate. "Then Mordecai told Hathach everything that had happened to him.

fast(ing) To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

And he told Hathach about the exact amount of money Haman had promised to put into the king's treasury for killing of Jews. *Mordecai also gave Hathach a copy of the king's command to kill the Jews. That command had been sent out all over the city of Susa. He wanted Hathach to show it to Esther and tell her everything. And he told him to encourage Esther to go to the king and beg him for mercy for Mordecai and her people.

*Hathach went back and told Esther everything Mordecai had said. *Then Esther told Hathach to say this to Mordecai: "Mordecai, all the king's leaders and all the people of the king's provinces know this: The king has one law for any man or woman that goes to the king without being called. He must be put to death. The only way this law is not carried out is if the king puts out his gold scepter* to the person. If the king does that, then that person's life will be saved. And I have not been called to go see the king for 30 days."

¹²⁻¹³Then Esther's message was given to Mordecai. When Mordecai got her message, he sent his answer back: "Esther, don't think that just because you live in the king's house you will be the only Jew to escape. *If you keep quiet now, help and freedom for the Jews will come from another place. But you and your father's family will all die. And who knows, maybe you have been chosen to be the queen for such a time as this?"

¹⁵⁻¹⁶Then Esther sent this answer to Mordecai: "Mordecai, go and get all the Jews in Susa together, and fast* for me. Don't eat or drink for three days and nights. I will fast like you, and my girl servants will fast, too. After we fast, I will go to the king. I know it is against the law to go to the king if he didn't call me, but I will do it anyway. If I die, I die."

¹⁷So Mordecai went away. He did everything Esther told him to do.

Esther Speaks to the King

5 On the third day, Esther put on her special robes. Then she stood in the inside area of the king's palace.* That area was in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his throne* in the hall. He was sitting facing the place where people enter the throne room. *Then the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court. When he saw her, he was very pleased. He held out to her the gold scepter* that was in his hand. So Esther went in to the room and went near the king. Then she touched the end of the king's gold scepter.

*Then the king asked, "What is bothering you Queen Esther? What do you want to ask me? I will give you anything you ask for, even half my kingdom."

*Esther said, "I have prepared a party for you and Haman. Will you and Haman please come to the party today?"

*Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly so that we may do what Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the party Esther had prepared for them. *While they were drinking wine, the king asked Esther again, "Now Esther, what do you want to ask for? Ask for anything, I will give it to you. So, what is it you want? I will give you anything you want, up to half my kingdom."

*Esther answered, "This is what I want to ask for: *If the king approves of me, and if it pleases the king to give me what I ask for, let the king and Haman come tomorrow. I will prepare another party for the king and Haman tomorrow. Then I will tell what I really want."

Haman's Anger at Mordecai

*Haman left the king's house that day very happy and in a good mood. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate, he became very angry at Mordecai. Haman was very mad at Mordecai because Mordecai didn't show any respect when Haman walked by. Mordecai was not afraid of Haman, and that made Haman

scepter A special stick that a king holds in his hand.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

throne The chair a king or queen sits on.

mad. ¹⁰But, Haman controlled his anger and went home. Then Haman called his friends and his wife, Zeresh, together. ¹¹Haman started bragging about how rich he was. He was bragging to his friends about his many sons, and about all the ways the king had honored him. And he was bragging about how the king had promoted him higher than all the other leaders. ¹²"And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to be with the king at the party she gave. And the Queen has also invited me to be with the king again tomorrow. ¹³But all those things don't really make me happy. I'm not really happy as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

¹⁴Then Haman's wife Zeresh and all his friends had a suggestion. They said, "Tell someone to build a post to hang him on! Make it 75 feet* tall! Then in the morning, ask the king to hang Mordecai on it. Then just go to the party with the king and you can be happy."

Haman liked that suggestion, so he ordered someone to build the hanging post.

Mordecai Is Honored

6 That same night, the king could not sleep. So he told a servant to bring the history book and read it to him. (The Book of History of the Kings lists everything that happens during a king's rule.) ²The servant read the book to the king. He read about the evil plan to kill King Xerxes. That was when Mordecai had learned about Bigthana and Teresh. Those two men were the king's officers that guarded the doorway. They had planned to kill the king, but Mordecai learned about the plan and told someone about it.

³Then the king asked, "What honor and good things have been given to Mordecai for this?"

The servants answered the king, "Nothing has been done for Mordecai."

⁴Haman had just entered the outer area of the king's palace.* He had come to ask the king

to hang Mordecai on the hanging post Haman had commanded to be built. The king heard him. The king said, "Who just came into the courtyard?" ⁵The king's servants said, "Haman is standing in the courtyard."

So the king said, "Bring him in."

⁶When Haman came in, the king asked him a question. He said, "Haman, what should be done for a man the king wants to honor?"

Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would want to honor more than me? The king is talking about honoring me, I'm sure." ⁷So Haman answered the king, "Do this for the man the king loves to honor: ⁸Have the servants bring a special robe the king himself has worn. And also bring a horse the king himself has ridden. Have the servants put the king's special mark on that horse's head. ⁹Then put one of the king's most important leaders in charge of the robe and the horse. And let that leader put the robe on the man the king wants to honor. And then let him lead him on the horse through the city streets. As he leads him, let him announce, 'This is done for the man the king wants to honor!'"

¹⁰"Go quickly," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew. Mordecai is sitting near the king's gate. Do everything that you suggested."

¹¹So Haman got the robe and the horse. Then he put the robe on Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city streets. Haman announced ahead of Mordecai, "This is done for the man the king wants to honor!"

¹²After that, Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman hurried home. He covered his head because he was embarrassed and ashamed. ¹³Then Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him. Haman's wife and the men that gave him advice said, "If Mordecai is a Jew, then you can't win. You have already started to fall. Surely you will be ruined!"

¹⁴While those people were still talking to Haman, the king's eunuchs* came to Haman's

75 feet Literally, "50 cubits."

palace A large house for the king and his family.

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

house. They made Haman hurry to the party that Esther had prepared.

Haman Is Hanged

7 So the king and Haman went to eat with Queen Esther. Then as they were drinking wine on the second day of the party, the king again asked Esther a question, "Queen Esther, what is it you want to ask for? Ask anything and it will be given to you. What do you want? I will give you anything, even half my kingdom."

Then Queen Esther answered, "King, if you like me and it pleases you, please let me live! And I ask you to let my people live, too! That is what I ask for. 'Why? Because I and my people have been sold to be ruined, killed, and completely destroyed. If we had just been sold as slaves, I would have kept quiet, because that would not be enough of a problem to bother the king.'"

Then King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who did this to you? Where is the man that dared to do such a thing to your people?"

Esther said, "The man against us, our enemy, is this wicked Haman."

Then Haman was filled with terror before the king and queen. The king was very angry. He got up, left his wine, and went out into the garden. But Haman stayed inside to beg Queen Esther to save his life. Haman begged for his life because he knew that the king had already decided to kill him. Just as the king was coming back in from the garden to the party room, he saw Haman falling on the couch where Esther was lying. The king said with anger in his voice, "Will you attack the queen even while I am in the house?"

As soon as the king had said that, servants came in and killed Haman.* One of the eunuchs* that served the king was named Harbona. Harbona said, "A hanging post 75 feet* tall has been built near Haman's house.

Haman had it made so he could hang Mordecai on it. Mordecai is the man that helped you when he told about the evil plans to kill you."

The king said, "Hang Haman on that post!"

So they hanged Haman on the hanging post he had built for Mordecai. Then the king stopped being angry.

The King's Order To Help the Jews

8 That same day King Xerxes gave Queen Esther all the things that belonged to Haman, the enemy of the Jews. Esther told the king that Mordecai was her cousin. Then Mordecai came to see the king. The king had gotten his ring back from Haman. The king took that ring off his finger and gave it to Mordecai. Then Esther put Mordecai in charge of all of the things that belonged to Haman.

Then Esther spoke to the king again. She fell at the king's feet and began crying. She begged the king to cancel the evil plan of Haman the Agagite. Haman had thought up that plan to hurt the Jews.

Then the king held out the gold scepter* to Esther. Esther got up and stood in front of the king. Then Esther said, "King, if you like me and if it pleases you, please do this for me. Please do this if you think it is a good idea. If the king is happy with me, please write a command that would stop the command that Haman sent out. Haman the Agagite thought of a plan to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces, and he sent out commands for that to happen. I am begging the king because I could not bear to see those terrible things happen to my people. I could not bear to see my family killed."

King Xerxes answered Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew. This is what the king said, "Because Haman was against the Jews, I have given his property to Esther. And my soldiers have hanged him on the hanging post. Now write another command by the authority of the king. Write it to help the Jews in a way that seems best to you. Then seal that order with the king's special ring. No official letter written by

killed Haman Literally, "covered Haman's face."

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

75 feet Literally, "50 cubits."

scepter A special stick that a king holds in his hand.

the authority of the king and sealed with the king's ring can be cancelled."

⁹Very quickly the king's secretaries were called. This was done on the 23rd day of the third month, the month of Sivan. Those secretaries wrote out all of Mordecai's commands to the Jews, and to the satraps (*leaders*), the governors, and officials of the 127 provinces. Those provinces reached from India to Ethiopia. Those commands were written in the language of each province. And they were translated into the language of each group of people. And those commands were written to the Jews in their own language and their own alphabet. ¹⁰Mordecai wrote commands by the authority of King Xerxes. Then he sealed the letters with the king's ring. And he sent those letters by messengers on horses. Those messengers rode fast horses which were raised especially for the king.

¹¹The king's commands in those letters said this:

The Jews in every city have the right to gather together to protect themselves. They have the right to ruin, kill, and completely destroy any army from any group of people that might attack them and their women and children. And the Jews have the right to take and destroy the property of their enemies.

¹²The day that was set for the Jews to do this was the 13th day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar. The Jews were permitted to do this in all King Xerxes' provinces. ¹³A copy of the letter with the king's command was to be sent out. It became a law. It became a law in every province. They announced it to all the people of every nation living in the kingdom. They did this so the Jews would be ready for that special day. The Jews would be allowed to pay their enemies back. ¹⁴The messengers hurried out, riding on the king's horses. The king commanded those messengers to hurry. And that command was also put in the capital city of Susa.

¹⁵Mordecai left the king. Mordecai was wearing special clothes from the king. His

clothes were blue and white, and he had on a large gold crown. He also had a purple robe made of the best linen.* There was a special celebration in Susa. The people were very happy. ¹⁶It was an especially happy day for the Jews. It was a day of joy, happiness, and great honor. ¹⁷Wherever the king's command went in every province and every city, there was joy and gladness among the Jews. The Jews were having parties and celebrating. And many of the common people from other groups became Jews. They did that because they were very afraid of the Jews.

Victory for the Jews

9 On the 13th day of the twelfth month (Adar), the people were supposed to obey the king's command. That was the day the enemies of the Jews hoped to defeat them. But now, things had changed. Now, the Jews were stronger than their enemies that hated them. ²The Jews met together in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes. They met together so they would be strong enough to attack the people that wanted to destroy them. So no one was strong enough to stand against them. Those people were afraid of the Jews. ³And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps (*leaders*), the governors, and the king's administrators helped the Jews. All those leaders helped the Jews because they were afraid of Mordecai.

⁴Mordecai had become a very important man in the king's palace.* Everyone in the provinces knew his name and knew how important he was. And Mordecai became more and more powerful.

⁵The Jews defeated all their enemies. They used swords to kill and destroy their enemies. And the Jews did what they wanted to with those people that hated them. ⁶The Jews killed and destroyed 500 men in the capital city of Susa. ⁷The Jews also killed these men: Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, ⁸Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, ⁹Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. ¹⁰These men were the ten sons of

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

Haman. Haman son of Hammedatha was the enemy of the Jews. The Jews killed all those men, but they didn't take the things that had belonged to them.

¹¹The king heard about the 500 men that were killed in the capital city of Susa. ¹²So the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed 500 men in Susa. And they also have killed Haman's ten sons in Susa. Now, what do you want done in the other provinces of the king? Tell me, and I will have it done. Ask, and I will do it."

¹³Esther said, "If the king would be pleased to do so, give the Jews permission to do this: Let the Jews carry out the king's command again tomorrow in Susa. And let Haman's ten sons be hanged on the hanging post."

¹⁴So the king gave the command that the law be continued another day in Susa. He also commanded that they hang Haman's ten sons. ¹⁵The Jews in Susa came together on the 14th day of the month of Adar. Then they killed 300 men in Susa, but they didn't take the things that belonged to those 300 men.

¹⁶At that same time, the other Jews that lived in the king's provinces also met together. They met together so they would be strong enough to protect themselves. And so they got rid of their enemies. The Jews killed 75,000 of their enemies. But the Jews didn't take any of the things that belonged to those enemies they killed. ¹⁷This happened on the 13th day of the month Adar. And on the 14th day the Jews rested. The Jews made that day a happy holiday.

The Festival of Purim

¹⁸The Jews in Susa had met together on the 13th and 14th days of the month of Adar. And then on the 15th day they rested. They made the 15th day a happy holiday. ¹⁹So, the Jews that live in the country and small villages celebrate Purim on the 14th day. They keep the 14th day of the month of Adar as a happy holiday. And it is also a day for giving presents to each other.

²⁰Mordecai wrote everything down that had happened. And then he sent letters to all the

Jews in all of King Xerxes' provinces. He sent letters far and near. ²¹Mordecai did that to tell the Jews to celebrate Purim every year on the 14th and 15th days of the month of Adar. ²²The Jews were to celebrate those days because on those days Jews got rid of their enemies. And they were also to celebrate that month as the month when their sadness was turned into joy. And it was a month when their crying was changed into a day of celebration. Mordecai wrote letters to all the Jews. He told them to celebrate those days as a holiday. And it was to be a time of giving good food to each other and of giving presents to the poor.

²³So the Jews agreed to do what Mordecai had written to them. And they agreed to continue the celebration they had begun.

²⁴Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, was the enemy of all the Jews. He had made an evil plan against the Jews to destroy them. And Haman had thrown the lot* to choose a day to ruin and to destroy the Jews. At that time the lot was called a "pur," so the holiday is called "Purim." ²⁵But Esther went to talk to the king. So he sent out new commands. He sent out those commands to stop the evil plans that Haman had made against the Jews. He made those bad things happen to Haman and his family. And those commands said that Haman and his sons should be hanged on the hanging post.

²⁶So, these days were called Purim. That name Purim comes from the word pur, (the lot*). And so the Jews had decided to start the custom of celebrating these two days every year. They did this to help them remember what they had seen happen to them. The Jews and all the people that join them are to celebrate these two days every year in just the right way and time that Mordecai had commanded them in the letter. ²⁷These two days should be remembered and celebrated in every generation by every family. And they must be celebrated in every province and in

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

every city. And these days of Purim should never stop being celebrated by the Jews. The descendants* of those Jews should always remember to celebrate these two days of Purim.

²⁹So Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew wrote to confirm this second letter about Purim. Esther is the daughter of Abihail. They wrote with full authority of the king to prove this letter was true. ³⁰So Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of King Xerxes' kingdom. Mordecai wrote a message of peace and truth. ³¹Mordecai wrote to start the holiday of Purim. These days are to be celebrated at their chosen times. Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had sent out the command for the Jews. Mordecai and Esther had established this two-day holiday for themselves and their descendants.* They established these days so that the Jews can fast* and cry. ³²Esther's letter established these rules about Purim. These rules

about Purim were written down in the history books.

The Greatness of Mordecai

10 King Xerxes made people pay taxes. All the people in the kingdom, even the faraway cities on the sea coast, had to pay taxes. ²And all the great things that Xerxes did are written in the Book of History of the Kings of Media and Persia. And also written in those history books are all the things that Mordecai did. The king made Mordecai a great man. ³Mordecai the Jew was second in importance to King Xerxes. Mordecai was the most important man among the Jews. And his fellow Jews respected him very much. They respected Mordecai because he worked for the good of his people. And Mordecai spoke up for the good of all the Jews.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

Job

Job the Good Man

1 A man lived in the country of Uz. His name was Job. Job was a good and faithful man. Job worshiped God. Job stayed away from evil things. ²Job had seven sons and three daughters. ³Job owned 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 1,000 bulls,* and 500 female donkeys. He had many servants. Job was the richest man in the east.

⁴Job's sons always took turns having parties in their homes, and they invited their sisters. ⁵Job got up early in the morning after his children had a party. He offered a burnt offering for each of his children. He thought, "Maybe my children were careless and sinned against God at their party." Job always did this so his children would be forgiven of sins.

⁶Then the day came for the angels* to meet with the Lord. And Satan came with those angels. ⁷The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you been?"

Satan answered the Lord, "I have been wandering around on the earth."

⁸Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you seen my servant Job? No one on earth is like him. Job is really a good man. He worships God. He stays away from evil things."

⁹Satan answered, "Sure! But Job has a good reason for worshiping God! ¹⁰You always protect him, his family, and everything he has. You have made him successful in everything he does. Yes, you have blessed him. He is so

wealthy that his herds and flocks are all over the country. ¹¹But if you destroy everything he has, I promise you he will speak against you to your face."

¹²The Lord said to Satan, "All right. Do anything you want to the things Job has. But don't hurt his body."

Then Satan went away from the Lord.

Job Loses Everything

¹One day, Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house. ²Then a messenger came to Job and said, "The bulls were plowing and the donkeys were eating grass near by. ³But the Sabean people* attacked us and took your animals! The Sabeans killed the servants except me. I escaped to tell you!"

⁴While that messenger was still speaking, another messenger came to Job. The second messenger said, "Lightning struck from the sky and burned up your sheep and servants. I am the only one that escaped to tell you!"

⁵While that messenger was still speaking, another messenger came. This third messenger said, "The Chaldean people sent three groups that attacked us and took the camels! And they killed the servants. I am the only one that escaped to tell you!"

⁶While the third messenger was still speaking, another messenger came. The fourth messenger said, "Your sons and daughters were

1,000 bulls Literally "500 yoke of cows." Two bulls were harnessed together and used to plow in the fields.

angels Literally, "sons of God."

Sabean people A group of people from the desert area. They attacked people and took their things.

eating and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house. "Then a very strong wind suddenly blew in from the desert and blew the house down. The house fell on your sons and daughters, and they are dead. I am the only one that escaped to tell you!"

²⁰When Job heard this, he tore his clothes and shaved his head, to show he was sad and upset. Then Job fell on the ground and worshiped God. ²¹He said:

"I was naked when I was born into this world,
and I had nothing.
When I die and leave this world,
I will be naked,
and I will have nothing.
The Lord gives,
and the Lord takes away.
Praise the name of the Lord!"

²²In everything that happened, Job didn't sin. He didn't blame God.

The Devil Bothers Job Again

2 On another day, the angels* came to meet with the Lord. Satan was with them. Satan came to meet with the Lord. ²The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you been?"

Satan answered the Lord, "I have been wandering around on the earth."

³Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you been watching my servant Job? No one on earth is like him. He is really a good man. He worships God. He stays away from evil things. He still is faithful, even though you asked me to let you destroy everything he has for no reason."

⁴Satan answered, "Skin for skin!* A person will give everything he has to stay alive. ⁵If you use your power to hurt his body, then he will curse* you to your face!"

⁶So the Lord said to Satan, "All right, Job is in your power. But you are not permitted to kill him."

angels Literally, "sons of God."

Skin for skin This means that a person will do anything he can do to avoid pain.

curse(d) To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

⁷Then Satan went away from the Lord and gave Job painful sores. The painful sores were all over Job's body from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. ⁸So Job sat near the garbage piles. He used a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores. ⁹Job's wife said to him, "Are you still faithful to God? Why don't you curse* God and die!"

¹⁰Job answered his wife, "You talk like a foolish woman! When God gives good things, we accept it. So we should also accept trouble and not complain." In all this trouble, Job did not sin. He did not speak against God.

Job's Three Friends Come to See Him

¹¹Three of Job's friends were Eliphaz from Teman, Bildad from Shuah, and Zophar from Naamah. These three friends heard about all the bad things that happened to Job. These three friends left their homes and met together. They agreed to go and show sympathy to Job and to comfort him. ¹²But when the three friends saw Job from far away, they were not sure it was Job because he looked so different. They began to cry loudly. They tore their clothes and threw dirt in the air and on their heads, to show they were sad and upset. ¹³Then the three friends sat on the ground with Job for seven days and seven nights. No one said a word to Job, because they saw Job was suffering so much.

Job Curses the Day He Was Born

3 Then Job opened his mouth and cursed* the day he was born. ²He said:

"That day when I was born,
let it be gone.
Let that night be gone
when it was said,
'A boy is born!'
let it be gone.

- ⁴ Let that day be darkness.
May God not care about that day.
Don't let light shine on that day.
- ⁵ Let that day be as dark as death.
Let a cloud hide that day.
Let the black clouds scare away the light,

- of the day I was born.
- 6 And let deep darkness catch that night.
Don't let that night be counted as one of
the days of the year.
Don't put that night in any of the
months.
- 7 Let that night be empty of happiness.
Let no happy shout be heard on that
night.
- 8 Let the men of magic that say curses,
curse the day I was born.
Those are the men that know how to
make Leviathan* angry.
- 9 Let that day's morning star be dark.
Let that night wait for the light of the
morning,
but let that light never come.
Don't let that night see the first rays of
sunlight.
- 10 Why? Because that night didn't shut the
doors
of my mother's womb on me.
That night didn't hide trouble from my
eyes.
- 11 "Why didn't I die when I was born?
Why didn't I die while coming from my
mother?
- 12 Why did my mother hold me on her
knees?
Why did my mother's breasts feed me?
- 13 If I died when I was born,
I would be in peace now.
I wish I were asleep and at rest
- 14 with the kings and wise men that lived
on earth.
Those kings and wise men built places for
themselves
that are now destroyed and gone.
- 15 I wish I were buried with those rulers.
They had gold and filled their houses
with silver!
- 16 "Why wasn't I a child that died at birth
and was buried in the ground?

- I wish I were like a baby
that never saw the light of day.
- 17 Bad people stop making trouble
when they are in the grave.
And people who are tired
find rest in the grave.
- 18 Even prisoners are comfortable in the
grave.
They don't hear the voice of the slave
boss.
- 19 All kinds of people are in the grave—
the important people and the people that
are not important.
And the slave is freed from his master.
- 20 "Why let the person that is very sad and
suffering
go on living?
Why is life given to the person whose
soul is bitter?
- 21 That person wants to die,
but death does not come.
That sad person searches for death
more than for hidden treasure.
- 22 Those people are very happy
when they find the grave.
- 23 God keeps their future secret,
and builds a wall around them.
- 24 I don't eat.
But I make sad sounds.
My complaints pour out like water.
- 25 I was afraid that something terrible might
happen to me.
It has happened to me!
- 26 I have no peace,
no rest.
I have no rest,
only trouble!"

Eliphaz Speaks

4 ¹²Then Eliphaz answered: "If a person
tries to speak to you, will it upset you? I
have to speak!

- 3 "Job, you have taught many people.
You have given strength to weak hands.
4 Your words comforted people that
stumbled.

Leviathan Some people think this is a crocodile. Other
people think this is a giant sea monster. People thought
magicians were able to make him cause eclipses of the sun.

- You made weak knees strong with encouragement.
- ⁵ But now trouble comes to you, and you are discouraged. Trouble hits you, and you are upset! "You are faithful to God, So you should trust in your faithfulness. You are innocent, so let that be your hope.
- ⁷ "Job, think about this now: No innocent person has ever been destroyed. Good people are never destroyed.
- ⁸ I have noticed people that start evil and trouble. They will get the same things.
- ⁹ God's breath kills those people. God's anger destroys them.
- ¹⁰ The bad people roar and growl like lions. But God makes the bad people be quiet, and God breaks their teeth.
- ¹¹ The bad people are like lions that have nothing to eat. They die, and their children are scattered and gone.
- ¹² "A message was brought to me in secret. My ears caught a whisper of it.
- ¹³ Like a bad dream in the night, it bothered my sleep.
- ¹⁴ I was afraid, and shook. All my bones shook! ¹⁵ A ghost passed by my face. The hair on my body stood up!
- ¹⁶ The spirit stood still, but I could not see what it was. A shape stood before my eyes, and there was silence. Then I heard a very quiet voice:
- ¹⁷ "A person can't be more right than God. Man can't be more pure than his Maker.
- ¹⁸ God can't trust even his heavenly servants. God finds things wrong even with his angels.

- ¹⁹ So God finds more things wrong with people; people live in houses of clay.* The foundations of these houses of clay are in the dirt. They are crushed to death more easily than a moth!
- ²⁰ Between dawn and sunset, these people die, and they are not even noticed. They die and are gone forever.
- ²¹ The ropes of their tent are pulled up, and these people die without wisdom.'
- 5** "Job, call out if you want, but no one will answer you! You can't turn to any of the angels!
- ² A foolish person's anger will kill him. The jealousy of a simple-minded person will kill him.
- ³ I have seen a foolish person that thinks he is strong and safe. But then suddenly, his home is cursed.*
- ⁴ That foolish person's children were not safe. No one is there in court to defend them.
- ⁵ Hungry people eat up that foolish person's crops. Those hungry people will even take the grain growing among the thorns. And thirsty people will be jealous for his wealth.
- ⁶ Bad times don't come up from the dirt. Trouble does not grow from the ground.
- ⁷ But man is born to have trouble, as sure as sparks fly upward from the fire.
- ⁸ "But Job, if I were you, I would turn to God and tell him about my problem.
- ⁹ People can't understand the wonderful things God does. There is no end to the miracles God does.

houses of clay This means the human body.

curse(d) To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

- ¹⁰ God sends rain on the earth.
He sends water to the fields.
- ¹¹ God raises up the humble person,
and he makes a sad person very happy.
- ¹² God stops the plans of clever, evil people,
so they have no success.
- ¹³ God catches wise people in their own
smart plans.
So the plans of the clever person are not
successful.
- ¹⁴ When it is daytime,
those clever people stumble around in
darkness.
- ¹⁵ God saves poor people from death.
He saves the poor people from the
power of the clever people.
- ¹⁶ So poor people have hope,
and he destroys bad people that are not
fair.
- ¹⁷ "The person that God corrects is happy!
So don't complain when God,
All-Powerful punishes you.
- ¹⁸ God puts bandages on the wounds he
makes.
He injures, but his hands also heal.
- ¹⁹ He will save you from six troubles;
yes, in seven troubles you won't be
hurt!
- ²⁰ God will save you from death
when there is famine.
And God will protect you from death
in war.
- ²¹ God will save you when people speak
evil about you with their sharp
tongues.
You won't need to be afraid when
destruction comes!
- ²² You will laugh at destruction and famine.
You won't need to be afraid of wild
animals!
- ²³ Why? Because the fields you plow
won't have rocks,
and the wild animals will never attack
you.
- ²⁴ You will live in peace because your tent
is safe.
You will count your property and find
nothing missing.

- ²⁵ You will have many children.
They will be many like the blades of
grass on the earth.
- ²⁶ You will be like the wheat that grows ripe
until harvest time.
Yes, you will live to a ripe old age.
- ²⁷ "We have studied these things Job,
and we know they are true.
So Job, listen,
and know them for yourself."

Job Answers Eliphaz

- 6** ¹⁻² Then Job answered:
"If my suffering could be weighed,
and all my trouble put on the weighing
scales,
³ you would understand that my sadness
would be heavier than the sands of the
seas!
That is why my words seem foolish.
⁴ God, All-Powerful's arrows are in me.
My spirit drinks in these arrows' poison!
God's terrible things are put together
against me.
⁵ A wild donkey does not complain if it has
grass to eat.
A cow does not complain if it has food.
⁶ Food that has no taste,
is eaten with salt.
And the white of an egg does not have a
taste.
⁷ I refuse to touch it;
that kind of food makes me sick!- ⁸ "I wish I could have what I ask for;
I wish God would give me what I hope
for.
⁹ I hope that God would be willing to crush
me,
and go ahead and kill me! "If he would
kill me,
I would be comforted about one thing.
I would be happy in my continued pain
about one thing:
I did not refuse to obey the commands of
the Holy One.

- 11 "My strength is gone, so
I have no hope to go on living.
I don't know what will happen to me in
the end,
so I have no reason to be patient.
12 I am not strong like a rock.
My body is not made from bronze.
13 I don't have power to help myself now.
Why? Because success has been taken
away from me.
14 "A person's friends should be kind
to him if he has troubles.
A person should be loyal to his friend,
even if that friend turned away from
God, All-Powerful.
15 But you, my brothers, are not faithful.
I can't depend on you.
You are like streams that flow sometimes
and don't flow sometimes.
You are like streams that overflow
16 when they are choked with ice and
melting snow.
17 But those streams stop flowing in the dry
time.
When it is hot weather, the water is gone
and the streams are gone.
18 Groups of traders turn away from their
roads.
They go into wasteland, and die there.
19 The groups of traders from Tema look for
water.
Travelers from Sheba look hopefully.
20 These traders worry, because they had
been sure before.
But this time when they arrive there, they
are disappointed.
21 Now you are like those streams. You
don't help.
You see my troubles and are afraid.
22 I never said, 'Give me something.
Give me money from your wealth.'
I never said, ²³'Save me from the enemy's
power.
Save me from cruel people.'
- 24 "So now, teach me,
and I will be quiet.

- Show me what I have done wrong.
25 Honest words are powerful.
But your arguments prove nothing.
26 You criticize the things I say.
I am without hope. You treat my words
like they are nothing.
27 Yes, you would even gamble to win the
things
that belong to children without fathers.
You would trade away your friend.
28 "But now, please study my face.
I would not lie to you
29 So now, change your mind.
Don't be unfair. Yes, think again.
I have done nothing wrong.
30 I am not lying.
There is no evil in my words.
I know right from wrong."

- 7** Job said, "Man has a hard struggle
on earth.
His life is like the life of a hired worker.
1 Man is like a slave that wants the
cool shade after hard work on a hot day.
Man is like a hired worker that is waiting
for payday. ²So month after month have
been given to me.
Those months are empty and full of
frustration.
Night after night of suffering have been
given to me.
4 When I lie down, I think,
'How much longer until it's time to get
up?'
The night drags on.
I toss and turn until the sun comes up.
5 My body is clothed with worms and dirt.
My skin is broken and full of running
sores.
6 "My days go by faster than a weaver's
shuttle.*
My life ends without hope.
7 "God, remember that my life is only a
breath.

weaver's shuttle The tool a person that makes cloth uses
to pass the thread between the other threads.

My eyes will never see anything good again.

- ¹ You see me now,
but you won't see me again.
You will look for me,
but I will be gone. ^aA cloud disappears
and is gone.

In the same way, the person that dies
and is buried in the grave
won't come back.

- ¹⁰ He will never come back
to his house again.
His place won't know him any more.
- ¹¹ "So I won't be quiet!
I will speak out!
My spirit is suffering!
I will complain because my soul is bitter.
- ¹² O God, why do you guard me?
Am I the sea or a sea monster?
- ¹³ When it seems that my bed will give me
comfort,
and my couch will give me rest and relief,
- ¹⁴ God, you scare me with dreams
and make me afraid with visions.*
- ¹⁵ So I prefer to be choked to death
than to live.
- ¹⁶ I hate my life;
I give up. I don't want to live forever.
Let me alone! My life means nothing!
- ¹⁷ "God, why is man so important to you?
Why should you honor him?
Why should you give man so much
attention?
- ¹⁸ Why do you visit man every morning
and test him every moment?
- ¹⁹ God, you never look away from me.
You don't let me alone even for a
second.
- ²⁰ If I have sinned, what have I done to you,
Watcher of people?
God, why did you use me for target
practice?
Did I become a problem for you? ^aWhy
don't you excuse my wrongs

and forgive my sins?
Soon I will die and be in my grave.
Then you will search for me,
but I will be gone."

Bildad Speaks to Job

8 Then Bildad from the country of Shuah
answered,

- ² "How long will you talk like that?
Your words blow like a strong wind.
- ³ God is always fair.
God, All-Powerful God never changes
the things that are right.
- ⁴ If your children sinned against God,
then he has punished them.
They paid for their sins.
- ⁵ But now Job, look to God
and pray to God, All-Powerful.
- ⁶ If you are pure and good,
then he will come and help you,
and he will give your family and things
back to you.
- ⁷ Everything you lost will seem like
nothing. Why?
Because your future will be very
successful.
- ⁸ "Ask people that lived long ago,
and find out what their ancestors*
learned.
- ⁹ Why? Because it seems like we were
born only yesterday.
We know nothing.
Our days on earth are very short, like a
shadow.
- ¹⁰ The people that lived long ago will
teach you.
They will give you a message of wisdom
from their understanding.
- ¹¹ Bildad said, "Can papyrus* grow tall in a
dry land?
Can reeds grow without water?

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
papyrus A plant used to make a kind of paper to write on. Its bark is also used to make coverings for boats and ships.

- ¹² No. If the water dries up,
they will dry up quickly.
They will be too small to cut and use.
- ¹³ Any person that forgets God is like those
reeds.
The person that forgets God,
won't have hope.
- ¹⁴ That person's trust is very weak.
That person trusts a spider's web.
- ¹⁵ That person leans on the spider's web,
but the web breaks.
He holds on to the spider's web,
but it won't support him.
- ¹⁶ He is like a plant that has plenty of water
and plenty of sunshine.
The plant's branches spread all through
the garden. ¹⁷It wraps its roots around
a pile of rocks
and looks for a place to grow in the
rocks.
- ¹⁸ But when the plant is torn from its place,
no one will know it was there.
That garden will say, 'I never saw you
before.'
- ¹⁹ So, that is all the happiness the plant has.
And then other plants grow from that dirt.
- ²⁰ "But God won't leave an innocent person.
He won't help bad people.
- ²¹ God will still fill your mouth with
laughter
and your lips with happy shouts.
- ²² But God will shame your enemies.
And he will destroy the homes of those
that
hate you."

Job Answers Bildad

- 9** Then Job answered:
²"Yes, I know what you say is true.
But how can man be right with God?
³ A person can't argue with God!
God can ask 1,000 questions and
no person can answer even one!
- ⁴ God's wisdom is deep and his power is
great.
No person can fight God and not be hurt.

- ⁵ God moves mountains and they don't
know it.
He turns mountains over when he is
angry.
- ⁶ God sends earthquakes to shake the earth.
God makes the earth's foundations
shake.
- ⁷ God can speak to the sun,
and make it not rise.
He can lock up the stars, so they don't
shine.
- ⁸ God alone made the skies.
He walks on the ocean waves.
- ⁹ He is the One that made the Bear, Orion,
and the Pleiades.*
He made the planets that cross the
southern sky.*
- ¹⁰ God does wonderful things that people
can't understand.
There is no end to God's great miracles.
- ¹¹ When God goes past me,
I can't see him.
When God goes by, I can't understand his
greatness.
- ¹² If God takes away, no one can stop him.
No one can say to him, 'What are you
doing?'
- ¹³ God won't hold his anger back.
Even the sea monster's helpers* are
afraid of God."
- ¹⁴ Job also said, "So I can't argue with God.
I don't know the words to say to argue
with him.
- ¹⁵ I, Job, am innocent,
but I can't give him an answer.
All I can do is beg my Judge (God) for
mercy.

Bear ... Pleiades These are names of well-known
constellations (*groups of stars*) in the night sky.

planets ... sky Literally, "Rooms of the South," or
"Rooms of Teman." This might be the planets or it might be
some star groups, possibly the twelve constellations of the
Zodiac. In places north of the equator, these seem to move
across the southern sky.

sea monster's helpers Literally, "Rahab's helpers."
Rahab is the story name for a sea monster. People thought
Rahab was a symbol for anything evil.

- ¹⁶ Even if I called him, and he answered,
I don't think God would listen to me.
¹⁷ God will just send storms to crush me.
He will just give me more wounds for no
reason.
¹⁸ God won't let me catch my breath again.
He will give me more trouble.
¹⁹ I can't defeat God.

God is powerful!

- I can't make God go to court and be fair
to me.
Who will force God to come to court?
²⁰ I, Job, am innocent, but the things I say
make me seem guilty.
So if I am innocent,
my mouth announces me guilty.
²¹ "I am innocent,
but I don't care about myself.
I hate my own life.
²² Life is just the same thing,
it does not matter.
So I think, 'God destroys the innocent
people,
and the evil people.'
²³ When something terrible happens
and an innocent person dies suddenly,
God laughs at his suffering.
²⁴ When land is given to evil people,
God will make the judges blind.
If God didn't do this,
then who did?
²⁵ "My days go faster than a runner.
My days fly away and there is
no happiness in them.
²⁶ My days go by quickly
like the papyrus* boats.
My days are swift like eagles that fly
down on the animals they catch.
²⁷ If I say, 'I won't complain.
I will forget my pain, and change my
face and smile,' ²⁸ I am still afraid of
all my suffering.
Why?

Because I know that God still says I am
guilty!

- ²⁹ I am already judged guilty.
So why should I keep trying? I say,
'Forget it!'
³⁰ Even if I did wash myself with snow
and make my hands clean with soap,
³¹ God would push me into a slime pit.*
Then even my clothes would hate me.
³² "God is not a man like me.
That is why I can't answer him.
We can't meet each other in court.
³³ I wish there were someone to stand
between us.*
I wish there were someone to judge both
of us in a fair way.
³⁴ I wish there were someone to take God's
punishing stick away.
Then God would not scare me any more.
³⁵ Then I could say what I want to say
without being afraid of God.
But now I can't do that."

- 10** Job said,
"I hate my own life.
So I will complain freely.
My soul is very bitter,
so now I will speak.
² I will say to God:
'Don't blame me!
Tell me, what have I done wrong?
What do you have against me?
³ God, are you happy that you are mean to
me?
It seems that you don't care about
what you made.
Are you happy with the plans that bad
people make?
⁴ God, do you have human eyes?
Do you see things like people do?
⁵ The days of your life are not short like
ours.
Your years are not short like the years of
a man.

papyrus A plant used to make a kind of paper to write on. Its
bark is also used to make coverings for boats and ships.

slime pit The grave, a place where bodies rot.
someone ... between us Literally a "mediator" or an
"umpire." Someone to listen to both people and then help
them come to an agreement.

- ⁶ You look for my wrong
and search for my sin.
- ⁷ But you know I am innocent,
but no one can save me from your
power!
- ⁸ "God, your hands made me and shaped
my body.
But now you are destroying me!
- ⁹ Remember God, that you made me like
clay.
But now why are you changing me to dirt
again?
- ¹⁰ You pour me out like milk.
You spin me and change me
like someone making cheese.
- ¹¹ You put me together with bones and
muscles.
And then you clothed me with skin and
flesh.
- ¹² You gave me life and were very kind to
me.
You cared for me and watched over my
spirit.
- ¹³ "But this is what you hid in your heart,
and I know this is what you secretly
planned in your heart.
Yes, I know this is what was in your
mind:
- ¹⁴ If I sinned, you would be watching me,
so you could punish me for doing
wrong.
- ¹⁵ When I sin, I am guilty
and it will be very bad for me.
But even if I am innocent, I can't lift up
my head.
Why?
Because I am full of shame and pain.
- ¹⁶ If I have any success and feel proud
you will hunt me like a person hunts a
lion.
You will again show your power against
me.
- ¹⁷ You will always have someone to witness
against me.
Your anger will become worse against
me.

You will bring new armies against me.

- ¹⁸ "So, God, why did you let me be born?
I wish I could have died before anyone
saw me.
- ¹⁹ I wish I never was a person.
I wish I had been carried from my
mother's
womb straight to the grave.
- ²⁰ My life is almost finished.
So leave me alone!
Let me enjoy the little time I have left
- ²¹ before I go to the place where no one
comes back—
to the place of darkness and death.
- ²² Let me enjoy the little time I have left,
before I go to the place that no one can
see—
that is a place of darkness, shadows, and
confusion.
That is, a place where even the light is
darkness."

Zophar Speaks to Job

11 Then Zophar from the country of
Naamah answered Job:

- ² "This flood of words should be answered!
Does all this talking make Job right?
No!
- ³ Job, do you think we don't have an
answer for you?
Do you think no one will warn you when
you laugh at God?
- ⁴ Job, you say to God, 'My beliefs are
right,
and you can see I am pure.'
- ⁵ Job, I wish that God would answer you
and tell you that you are wrong.
- ⁶ Then God could tell you the secrets about
wisdom.
And he would tell you that truly,
every story has two sides.
That is true wisdom!
Job, know this: God is punishing you less
than he really should punish you.
- ⁷ "Job, can you understand God's secret

truths?

You know you can't understand the limits
and boundaries that show God's
greatness and power.

* Those limits are higher than the sky!
So, Job, you can't understand!
Those limits are deeper than the depths
of the grave.

But you can't understand that!

* Those limits measure longer
than the earth and wider than the sea.

¹⁰ "If God arrests you,
and brings you to court,
no person can stop him.

¹¹ Truly, God knows who is worthless.
When God sees evil, he remembers it.

¹² But a stupid person will never become
wise,
same as a wild donkey can't give birth
to a man.

¹³ "But Job, you should make your heart
ready to serve only God,
and you should lift up your hands to
him.

¹⁴ You should put away the sin
that is in your home.
Don't let evil live in your tent.

¹⁵ Then surely you can look up to God
without shame.

You will stand strong and not be afraid.

¹⁶ Job,, then you can forget your trouble.
You will remember your troubles like
they were

waters that have passed on by.

¹⁷ Your life will be brighter
than the sunshine at noon.
Life's darkest hours will shine
like the morning sun.

¹⁸ Job,, you will be safe, because there is
hope.

God will care for you and give you rest.

¹⁹ You will lie down to rest,
and no one will bother you or hurt you.
And many people will ask you to help
them.

²⁰ But the bad people will look for help,

but there will be no hope.

They will not be able to escape their
troubles.

Their only hope is that they will die."

Job Answers Zophar

12 Then Job answered Zophar:
²"Without doubt, you think you
are

the only wise people.

You think when you die,
wisdom will be gone with you.

³ But my mind is as good as yours.
I am not lower than you.
Other people know this is true.

⁴ Job said, "My friends laugh at me now.
Yes, I prayed to God,
and he answered me.
But I am still laughed at,
even though I am good and innocent.

⁵ People that don't have trouble
make fun of people that have trouble.
Those people hit a man that is falling
down.

⁶ Robbers' tents are not bothered.
Those that make God angry live in peace.
Their only god is their own strength.

⁷ "But ask the animals,
they will teach you.
Or ask the birds of the air,
they will tell you.

⁸ Or speak to the earth,
it will teach you.
Or let the fish in the sea tell you their
wisdom.

⁹ Everyone knows the Lord
made those things.

¹⁰ Every animal that lives,
and every person that breathes,
is under God's power.

¹¹ But just like the tongue enjoys tasting
food,
the ears enjoy hearing words.

¹² Old people have wisdom, too.
Long life brings understanding."

- ¹³ Job also said, "Wisdom and power belong to God.
Good advice and understanding are his.
- ¹⁴ If God tears down anything,
people can't build it again.
If God puts a person in prison,
people can't free the person.
- ¹⁵ If God holds back the rain,
the earth will dry up.
If God lets the rain loose,
it will flood the earth.
- ¹⁶ God is strong and always wins.
Both the person that fools
and the person that is fooled belong to God!
- ¹⁷ God strips away the wisdom of kings,
and makes leaders act like fools.
- ¹⁸ Kings put chains on prisoners,
but God takes them off.
Then God puts a belt on those kings.
- ¹⁹ God strips priests, and make them humble.
He makes strong and powerful men humble.
- ²⁰ God makes the trusted advisers be silent.
He takes away the wisdom of old people.
²¹ God pours hate down on important officials.
He takes away the strength of the rulers.*
²² God shows secret truths from the deep darkness.
He sends light into places that are dark as death.
- ²³ God makes nations become big and powerful,
and then he destroys them.
He makes nations grow large,
then he scatters their people.
- ²⁴ God makes earth's leaders foolish and without understanding.
He sends them to wander through a desert that has no road.
- ²⁵ Those leaders reach out in darkness.
They don't have any light.

God makes them walk like people who are drunk.

- 13** Job said, "My eyes have seen all this before.
I have already heard everything you say.
I understand it all.
- ² I know as much as you do.
I am not less than you.
- ³ But I don't want to argue with you.
I want to speak to God, All-Powerful.
I want to argue with God about my troubles.
- ⁴ But you three men try to cover up your ignorance with lies.
You are like worthless doctors that can't heal anyone.
- ⁵ I wish you would be completely silent.
That would be the wisest thing you could do.
- ⁶ "Now, listen to my argument.
Listen while I make my plea.
- ⁷ Will you speak lies for God?
Do you really believe your lies are what God wants you to say?
- ⁸ Are you trying to defend God against me?
Are you going to defend God in court?
- ⁹ If God checked you very closely,
would he find anything good?
Do you really think you can fool God the same as you fool people?
- ¹⁰ God would surely scold you
if you secretly chose a person's side in court.
- ¹¹ His bright glory will scare you.
You would be afraid of him.
- ¹² You think you say smart and wise things.
But your sayings are as worthless as ashes.
Your arguments are as weak as clay.
- ¹³ "Be quiet and let me talk!
Then let what must happen to me, happen.
- ¹⁴ I put myself in danger,
and take my life in my own hands.
- ¹⁵ Even if God kills me,
I will hope in him.

takes away ... rulers Literally, "unties the belt of the strong."

I will defend my ways to his face.
 16 But, maybe God will save me
 because I am bold in front of him.
 No bad person would dare
 meet God face to face.
 17 Listen carefully to what I say.
 Let your ears hear me explain.
 18 I am ready now to defend myself.
 I know I will be shown to be right. 19 No
 person can prove I am wrong.
 If any person could do that,
 I will be quiet and die.
 20 "God, just give me two things,
 and then I won't hide from you:
 21 Stop punishing me,
 and stop scaring me with your terrors.
 22 Then call to me and I will answer you.
 Or let me speak, and you answer me.
 23 How many sins have I done?
 What have I done wrong?
 Show me my sins and my wrongs.
 24 God, why do you avoid me,
 and treat me like your enemy?
 25 Will you scare me?
 I (*Job*) am only a leaf that the wind
 blows.
 You are attacking a little piece
 of dry straw!
 26 God, you say bitter things against me.
 You make me suffer from the sins
 I did when I was young.
 27 You put chains on my feet.
 You keep close watch on every step I
 take.
 You limit my footsteps.
 28 "So I waste away like a rotten thing,
 like a piece of clothing eaten by moths."

14 Job said, "We all are born to
 have
 a life that is short and full of trouble.
 2 Man's life is like a flower.
 He grows quickly, and then dies away.
 Man's life is like a shadow
 that is there a short time, and does not
 stay.
 3 God, will you watch a man?

Will you bring him in front of you to
 judge him?
 4 Who can get something clean
 from something that is dirty?
 No one!
 5 Man's life is limited.
 God, you decided the number of man's
 months.
 You put limits that man can't change.
 6 So God, look away from man.
 Leave him alone.
 Let him enjoy his hard life until his time
 is finished.
 7 "But, there is hope for a tree.
 If it is cut down, it can grow again.
 It will keep sending out new branches.
 8 Its roots might grow old in the ground
 and its stump die in the dirt,
 9 but with water it will give new growths.
 It will grow branches like a plant.
 10 But man dies,
 and his body is buried.
 When man dies, he is gone.
 11 Just as water disappears from the sea,
 and a river becomes low and dries up,
 12 in the same way,
 when a person dies,
 he lies down and does not get up again.
 People that die won't wake up or stop
 sleeping
 until the skies disappear.
 13 "I (*Job*) wish you would hide me in my
 grave.
 I wish you would hide me there,
 until your anger is gone.
 Then you can pick a time to remember
 me.
 14 If a person dies, will he live again?
 I will wait,
 and I will struggle hard until I am free.
 15 God, you will call me
 and I (*Job*) will answer you.
 You made me, and you will want me.
 16 Then you will watch every step I take.
 But you won't remember the sins I have
 done.

- ¹⁷ I wish my sins were put away,
as if they were tied up in a bag.
Then you will cover up my sin.
- ¹⁸ "Just like a mountain falls and collapses,
and a rock is moved from its place,
¹⁹ and water washes over stones and wears
them out,
and water washes away the dirt on the
ground,
in the same way, God,
you destroy a person's hope.
- ²⁰ You defeat man once
and you are finished.
Then man is gone.
You change his face to the look of death,
and send him away forever.
- ²¹ If his sons are honored,
he never knows it.
If his sons do wrong,
he never sees it.
- ²² That man only feels the pain in his own
body,
and he cries loudly only for himself."

Eliphaz Answers Job

15 Then Eliphaz from the town of Teman
answered Job:

- ¹ "Job, if you were really wise,
you would not answer with empty
words.
Do you think a wise man would answer
like the
hot east wind?
- ³ Do you think a wise man would argue
with worthless words
and with speeches that mean nothing?
- ⁴ Job, if you had your way,
no person would respect God
and pray to him.
- ⁵ The things you say
clearly show your sin.
Job, you are trying to hide your sin
by using clever words.
- ⁶ I don't need to prove to you that you
are wrong. Why?
The things you say with your own mouth

show that you are wrong.
Your own lips speak against you.

- ⁷ "Job, do you think you were the first
person ever to be born?
Were you born before the hills were
made?
- ⁸ Did you listen to God's secret plans?
Do you think you are the only wise
person?
- ⁹ Job, we know more than you know.
We understand things that you don't
understand.
- ¹⁰ The gray-haired men
and the old people agree with us.
Yes, even people older than your father
are on our side.
- ¹¹ God tries to comfort you,
but that is not enough for you.
We have spoken God's message to you
in a gentle way.
- ¹² Job, why have you truly wanted to turn
away?
Why do you open your eyes wide in
anger against us?
- ¹³ You are against God
when you say these angry words.
- ¹⁴ "A man can't really be pure.
Man is born from a woman and lives on
the earth;
he can't be right with God.
- ¹⁵ God does not even trust his angels.* Even
the heavens where the angels live
are not pure.
- ¹⁶ Man is even worse.
Man is dirty and ruined.
He drinks up evil like water.
- ¹⁷ "Listen to me Job,
and I will explain it to you.
I will tell you what I know.
- ¹⁸ I will tell you the things
wise men have told me.
The wise men's ancestors* told them
these things.

angels Literally, "holy ones."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Those wise men didn't hide any secrets
from me.

- ¹⁹ The country was given only to their
ancestors. No stranger was in their
country to bother them.

- ²⁰ The evil person will suffer hurt all his
life.

The cruel person will suffer
through all the years saved up for him.

- ²¹ Terrible sounds will be in his ears.
And the enemy will attack him
when he thinks he is safe.

- ²² The evil person is very frustrated,
and there is no hope for him to
escape the darkness.

There is a sword somewhere
that is waiting to kill him.

- ²³ He wanders here and there,
but his body will be food for the
vultures.

He knows that his death*
is very near.

- ²⁴ Worry and suffering make him afraid.
These things attack him like a king ready
to destroy him.

- ²⁵ Why? Because the evil person shakes his
fist at God.

The evil person refuses to obey God.
The evil person tries to be strong against
God, All-Powerful.

- ²⁶ That man is very stubborn.
The evil person tries to attack God with a
thick,
strong shield.

- ²⁷ "The evil person's face is covered with
fat.

His waist is fat with flesh.

- ²⁸ But he will live in towns that are ruined.
The evil person will live in houses that no
person lives in,
Houses that, are weak and ruined.

- ²⁹ The evil person won't be rich for long.
His wealth won't last.
His crops won't grow large.

- ³⁰ The evil person won't escape the

darkness.

He will be like a tree
that has its branches burned with fire.
God's breath will carry the evil person
away.

- ³¹ The evil person should not fool himself
when he trust worthless things.
Why? He will get nothing.

- ³² Before his life is over,
the evil person will be old and dried up.
He will be like a dried branch,
never to be green again.

- ³³ The evil person will be like a vine
that loses its grapes that are not yet ripe.
That person will be like an olive tree that
loses its flowers.

- ³⁴ Why? Because people without God will
be empty.
People that love money
will have their homes destroyed with
fire.

- ³⁵ They plan trouble
and do evil things.
They plan ways to fool people."

16 Then Job answered:
"I have already heard these
things before.

You three give me trouble, not comfort.

- ³ Your long talking never ends!
Why do you continue arguing?

- ⁴ I also could say the same things you say,
if you had my troubles.
I could say wise things against you
and shake my head at you.

- ⁵ But I could encourage you
and give you hope
with the things I say.

- ⁶ "But nothing I say
can make my pain go away.
But if I don't speak,
I have no comfort.

- ⁷ Truly, God, you took away my strength.
You destroyed my whole family.

- ⁸ You tied me up,
and everyone can see.
My body is sick, I look terrible,

- and people think that means I am guilty.
- ⁹ God attacks me,
he is angry at me and tears my body
apart.
God grinds his teeth against me.
My enemy's eyes look at me with hate.
- ¹⁰ People laugh at me.
They all agree to crowd around me
and slap my face.
- ¹¹ God has given me to evil people.
- ¹² Everything was fine with me,
but then God crushed me!
Yes, he took me by the neck
and broke me into pieces!
God is using me for target practice.
- ¹³ God's archers* are all around me.
He shoots arrows in my kidneys.
He shows no mercy.
He spills my gall* on the ground.
- ¹⁴ Again and again God attacks me.
He runs at me like a soldier in battle.
- ¹⁵ "I (*Job*) am very sad,
so I wear clothes made from sackcloth.*
I sit here in the dust and ashes,
and I feel defeated.
- ¹⁶ My face is red from crying.
Deep shadows are like rings around my
eyes.
- ¹⁷ I have never done any cruel crime.
I pray from my heart.
- ¹⁸ "Earth, don't hide the wrong
things done to me.
Don't let my begging for fairness
be stopped.
- ¹⁹ Even now, maybe there is someone in
heaven
that is on my side.
There is someone on high
that supports and defends me.

archers Soldiers that use bows and arrows in war.

gall When the gall bladder is torn open, gall or bile comes out. The gall bladder is a pouch on the liver where bile or gall is stored. Spilling gall means having to endure something bitter and painful.

sackcloth The rough cloth that shows a person is sad or upset.

- ²⁰ My friends are against me.
But my eyes pour out tears to God.
- ²¹ I want a person to beg with God for me,
like a man begs for his friend.
- ²² "Only a few years will pass
until I go where I won't come back
(*death*).

- 17** "My spirit is broken;
I am ready to give up.
My life is almost gone,
the grave is waiting for me.
- ² People stand around me
and laugh at me.
I watch them as they tease
and insult me.
- ³ "God, show me (*Job*) that you really
support me.
No other person will support me.
- ⁴ You have closed my friends' minds
and they don't understand me.
Please don't let them win.
- ⁵ You know what people say,
'A man helps his friends
and neglects his own children.'*
And now my friends have turned against
me.
- ⁶ "God has made my name (*Job*) a bad
word to everyone.
People spit in my face.
- ⁷ My eyes have become almost blind
because I am very sad and in great pain.
My whole body has become very thin,
like a shadow.
- ⁸ Good people are upset about this.
Innocent people are upset against people
that don't care about God.
- ⁹ But good people will continue to believe
that they are right.
Those that are innocent will become
stronger.
- ¹⁰ "But come on, all of you,
try again to show me that it is all my

You know ... children Literally, "He promises a share to his friends and his children's eyes go blind."

fault.

None of you are wise.

¹¹ My life is passing away.

My plans are destroyed.

My hope is gone.

¹² But my friends think night is day.

When it is dark they say,

'Light is near!'

¹³ If the only home I hope for

is the grave,

if I make my bed in darkness,

¹⁴ if I say to evil, 'You are my father,'

and to the worm, 'My mother,' or 'My sister,'

¹⁵ then I have no hope.

No person can see any hope for me.

¹⁶ My three friends will go down

to death's gates

when we go down together into the dirt."

Bildad Answers Job

18 Then Bildad, from the country of Shuah, answered:

² "Job, when will you stop all this talking?

You should be quiet and listen.

Then we can talk.

³ Why do you think we are stupid like cows?

⁴ Job, you are only hurting yourself with your anger.

Should people leave the earth just for you?

Do you think God will move mountains just to satisfy you?

⁵ "Yes, the evil person's light will go out.

His fire will stop burning.

⁶ The light in his house will become dark.

The lamp next to him will go out.

⁷ That person's steps won't be strong and fast again.

But he will walk slowly and be weak.

His own evil plans will make him fall.

⁸ His own feet will throw him into a trapping net.

He will walk into a trap and be stuck.

⁹ A trap will catch his heel.

A trap will hold him tight.

¹⁰ A rope will be hidden in the ground for him.

A trap is waiting in his path.

¹¹ Terror is waiting for him all around.

Fears will follow every step he takes.

¹² Bad troubles are hungry for him.

Ruin and disaster are ready for him when he falls.

¹³ Terrible sickness will eat away parts of his skin.

It will rot his arms and legs.

¹⁴ The evil person will be taken away from the safety of his house, and he will be marched off to meet the king of terrors.

¹⁵ He will have nothing left in his house.

Why? Burning sulfur will be scattered all through his home.

¹⁶ His roots below will dry up, and his branches above will die.

¹⁷ People on earth won't remember him.

No person remembers him anymore.

¹⁸ People will push him away from light.

He will be pushed into darkness.

They will chase him out of the world.

¹⁹ He will have no children

or descendants* from his people.

There will be no people still living in his home.

²⁰ People living in the west will be shocked when they hear

what happened to the evil person.

People living in the east will be numb with terror.

²¹ It is true, this is what will happen to the evil person's home.

This is what will happen to the person that does not care about God!"

Job Answers

19 Then Job answered:

² "How long will you hurt me

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

- and break me with words?
- ³ You have insulted me ten times now.
You show no shame when you attack me!
- ⁴ Even if I have sinned,
it is my problem.
It does not hurt you.
- ⁵ You just want to make yourselves look
better than me.
You say that my troubles
are my own fault.
- ⁶ But it is God that has done wrong to me.
He has pulled his trapping net around me.
- ⁷ "I shout, 'Wrong has been done to me!'
I get no answer.
Even if I call loudly for help,
no person hears my cry for fairness.
- ⁸ God has blocked my way
so I can't go through.
He has hidden my path in darkness.
- ⁹ God has taken away my wealth.
He has taken away the crown from my
head.
- ¹⁰ God breaks me down from side to side
until I am dead.
He takes away my hope
like a tree is taken out with its roots.
- ¹¹ God's anger burns against me.
He calls me his enemy. ¹²God sends his
army to attack me.
They build attack towers around me.
They camp around my tent.
- ¹³ "God has made my brothers hate me.
I am a stranger to all my friends.
- ¹⁴ My relatives have left me.
My friends have forgotten me.
- ¹⁵ Visitors in my home
and my girl servants
look at me like I am
a stranger and a foreigner.
- ¹⁶ I call for my servant,
but he does not answer.
Even if I beg for help,
my servant will not answer.
- ¹⁷ My wife hates the smell of my breath.
My own brothers hate me.
- ¹⁸ Even little children make fun of me.

- When I come near them,
they talk against me.
- ¹⁹ All my close friends hate me.
Even the people I love have turned
against me.
- ²⁰ I am so thin,
my skin hangs loose on my bones.
I have little life left in me.
- ²¹ "Pity me, my friends,
pity me!
Why? God's hand touched me
and he gave me trouble.
- ²² Why do you persecute me like
God does?
Why are you never satisfied with hurting
me?
- ²³ "I (*Job*) wish someone would remember
what I say,
and write it in a book.
I wish the things I say were written on a
scroll.
- ²⁴ I wish the things I say were carved
with an iron tool on lead
or scratched on a rock
so they would last forever.
- ²⁵ I know there is someone to defend me.
I know in the end he will stand up for me.
- ²⁶ After my skin has been destroyed,
after I leave this body,
I know I will still see God.
- ²⁷ I will see God
with my own eyes.
It will be God Himself, and no one else!
My heart becomes weak in me!
- ²⁸ "Maybe you will say,
'We will bother Job.
We will find a reason to blame him!'
²⁹ But you yourselves should be afraid
of the sword!
Why?
God's anger against sin will bring
punishment.
God will use the sword to punish you.
Then you will know that there is
judgment."

Zophar Answers

20 Then Zophar, from the country of Naamah, answered:

- ² "Job, you have troubled thoughts.
So I must answer you.
I must hurry to tell you what I am thinking.
- ³ Your answers to what we have said insults us!
But I am wise, I know how to answer you.
- ⁴ "You know that since long ago,
from the time Adam was first put on the earth,
- ⁵ that an evil person's joy
doesn't last long.
The person that doesn't care about God
has joy only for a short time.
- ⁶ Maybe the evil person's pride will
reach up to the sky,
and his head will touch the clouds.
- ⁷ But he will be gone forever,
like his own body waste.
People who know him will say,
'Where is he?'
- ⁸ He will fly away like a dream
quickly flies away.
No person will see him again, he will be gone.
He will be chased away like a vision* at night.
- ⁹ The people that saw him,
won't see him again.
His family will never look at him again.
- ¹⁰ The evil person's children
will give back what he took from the poor.
The evil person's own hands
must give back his wealth.
- ¹¹ When he was young his body was strong,
but soon it will become dirt.
- ¹² "Evil will taste sweet

- in the bad person's mouth.
He will hide it under his tongue.
- ¹³ The bad person will hold on to this evil.
He will hate to let it go.
So he will keep it in his mouth.
- ¹⁴ But his food will become poison
in his stomach.
It will become like bitter poison inside him,
like a snake's poison.
- ¹⁵ The evil man has swallowed riches.
But he will vomit them out.
Yes, God will make the evil person's stomach
vomit them out.
- ¹⁶ The evil person will suck the poison
from snakes.
The snake's fangs will kill him.
- ¹⁷ Then the evil person won't enjoy
seeing the rivers that flow
with honey and cream.
- ¹⁸ The evil person will be forced to give
back his profits.
He won't be permitted to enjoy
the things he worked for.
- ¹⁹ Why? The evil person didn't treat poor
people right.
He didn't care about them, and he took
their things.
He took houses someone else built.
- ²⁰ "The evil person is never satisfied.
His wealth can't save him.
- ²¹ When he eats,
there is nothing left.
His success won't continue.
- ²² While the evil person has plenty,
he will become pressed down with
trouble.
His problems will come down on him!
- ²³ When the evil person has eaten all he
wants,
God will throw his burning anger
against that person.
God will rain punishment down on the
evil person.
- ²⁴ Maybe the evil person will run away
from an iron sword.

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

- But a bronze arrow will shoot him down.
- ²⁵ The bronze arrow will go
all the way through his body,
and stick out from his back.
The arrow's shining point will pierce his
liver,
and he will be shocked with terror.
- ²⁶ All his treasures will be destroyed.
A fire that was not started by any person
will destroy him.
The fire will destroy what is left in his
house.
- ²⁷ Heaven will prove that the evil person is
guilty.
The earth will witness against him.
- ²⁸ Everything in his house will be
carried away in the flood of God's
anger.
- ²⁹ That is what God plans to do to evil
people.
That is what God plans to give them."

Job Answers

- 21** Then Job answered:
²¹"Listen to what I say.
Let your listening be the comfort you
give me.
- ³ Be patient while I speak.
Then after I have finished speaking,
you may make fun of me.
- ⁴ "I am not complaining against people.
There is a good reason
why I am not patient.
- ⁵ Look at me and be shocked.
Put your hand over your mouth,
and stare at me in shock!
- ⁶ When I think about what happened to me
I feel afraid, and my body shakes!
- ⁷ Why do evil people live long lives?
Why do they grow old and become
successful?
- ⁸ Evil people see their children grow with
them.
Evil people live to see their
grandchildren.
- ⁹ Their homes are safe

- and they are not afraid.
God does not use his rod
to punish evil people.
- ¹⁰ Their bulls never fail to mate.
Their cows have baby calves
and the baby calves never die
when they are born.
- ¹¹ Evil people send their children out
to play like lambs.
Their children dance around.
- ¹² They sing and dance
to the sound of harps and flutes.
- ¹³ Evil people enjoy success
during their lives.
Then they die and go to their grave
without suffering.
- ¹⁴ But evil people say to God,
'Leave us alone!
We don't care what you want us to do!'
- ¹⁵ And the evil people say,
'Who is God, All-Powerful?
We don't need to serve him!
It won't help to pray to him!'
- ¹⁶ "Evil people think their success
comes from themselves,
but I can't accept their ideas.
- ¹⁷ But, does it happen often
that the evil people's light is blown out?
How often does trouble come
to the evil people?
Does God become angry at them and
punish them?
- ¹⁸ Does God blow the evil people away,
like the wind blows straw,
and the strong winds blow
the grain husks?
- ¹⁹ But you say, 'God punishes a child
for his father's sins.'
No! Let God punish the evil person
himself.
Then that evil person will know he is
being punished
for his own sins!
- ²⁰ Let the sinner see his own punishment.
He will feel the anger of God,
All-Powerful.
- ²¹ When the evil person's months of life

are finished, and he is dead,
he won't care about the family he leaves
behind.

- ²² "No person can teach knowledge to God.
God judges even people in high places.
²³ One person dies after a full and
successful life.
He lived a life completely safe and
comfortable.
²⁴ His body was well fed
and his bones were still fresh with
marrow.*
²⁵ But another person dies
after a hard life, with a bitter soul.
He never enjoyed anything good.
²⁶ These two people lie together in the dirt.
The worms will cover them both.
²⁷ "But, I know what you are thinking,
and I know you have plans to do wrong
to me.
²⁸ You say this about me:
'Where is this great man's house now?
Where is the house the evil person lived
in?'
²⁹ But you never asked people that travel.
You have not accepted their stories
³⁰ that the evil person is always saved
in the day God punishes in his anger.
³¹ There is no person to criticize the evil
person
to his face about what he did.
No person punishes him for the evil he
did.
³² When the evil person is carried to the
grave,
a guard stands near his grave.
³³ The soil in the valley will be sweet for
that evil person.
Thousands will join in his funeral march.
³⁴ "So you can't comfort me with your
empty words.
Your answers are still lies!"

Eliphaz Answers

22 Then Eliphaz, from the city of Teman
answered:

- ² "No person can help God.
Even a very wise person can't be useful
to God.
³ Even if you did what was right,
that would not give pleasure to God,
All-Powerful.
If you were always good,
God would not gain anything.
⁴ Job, why does God punish and blame
you?
It is not because you are faithful.
⁵ No, it is because you have sinned much.
Job, your sins never stop!
⁶ Job, you forced your brothers
to pay you back the money they owe
you.
You did that for no reason.
You took clothes from people
and left them with nothing to wear.
⁷ You didn't give water to tired people.
You didn't give food to hungry people.
⁸ Job, you didn't help those people,
even though you were a powerful and
wealthy man.
You owned much land, and you were an
honored man.
⁹ But you sent widows*
away
without giving them anything.
Job, you robbed and treated badly orphan
children.
¹⁰ That is why traps are all around you,
and sudden trouble makes you afraid.
¹¹ That is why it is so dark you can't see,
and why a flood of water covers you.
¹² "God lives in the highest part of heaven.
He looks down on the highest stars.
You can see how high the stars are.
¹³ But Job, you say,

- 'God knows nothing!
How can God judge us through the dark
clouds?
- ¹⁴ Clouds cover him,
so that he can't see us while he walks
in the highest part of heaven.'
- ¹⁵ Job, you are walking on the old path
that evil people walk on.
- ¹⁶ Evil people were taken away
before it was their time to die.
They were washed away by a flood.
- ¹⁷ Those are the people that say to God,
'Leave us alone!
'God, All-Powerful can't do anything to
us!'
- ¹⁸ But God made those people successful
and wealthy.
I can't accept the way evil people think.
- ¹⁹ "Good people are happy when they see
evil people ruined.
Innocent people laugh at evil people, and
say,
- ²⁰ 'Truly our enemies are destroyed!
Fire burns up their wealth!'
- ²¹ "Now, Job, give yourself to God.
Then you will have peace with him.
If you do this, you will be blessed and
successful.
- ²² Accept his teaching.
Save his words in your heart.
- ²³ Job, if you come back
to God, All-Powerful,
you will be restored.
You must take evil far away from your
house.
- ²⁴ You must throw your gold in the dirt,
and throw your gold from Ophir
to the rocks in the rivers.
- ²⁵ Then God, All-Powerful will be your
gold and silver for you.
- ²⁶ Then you will be very happy
and find delight in God, All-Powerful.
You will trust in God.
- ²⁷ When you pray to him, he will hear you.
You will do what you promised him you
would do.

- ²⁸ You will succeed in everything you do,
and light will shine on your path.
- ²⁹ God makes proud people ashamed.
But God will save humble people.
- ³⁰ God will save even the person that is not
innocent.
He will be saved through the cleanness of
your hands."

Job Answers

- 23** Then Job answered:
²⁴ "I still complain bitterly today.
God is punishing me hard,
so I continue complaining.
- ³ I wish I knew where to find God.
I wish I knew how to go to God!
- ⁴ I would explain to God my story.
My mouth would be full of arguments
to show I am innocent.
- ⁵ I want to know how God would
answer my arguments.
Then I would understand God's answers.
- ⁶ Would God be against me with great
power?
No, he would listen to me!
- ⁷ There, in front of God,
a good person could explain his story to
God.
Then I would be saved forever from my
Judge!
- ⁸ "But if I go to the east,
God is not there.
If I go to the west,
I still don't see God.
- ⁹ When God is working in the north,
I don't see him.
When God turns to the south,
I still don't see him.
- ¹⁰ But God knows every step I take.
When he has finished testing me,
He will see that there is nothing dirty in
me.
He will see that I am like pure gold.
- ¹¹ I have always walked in the way God
wants.
I have never turned away from following
God's way.

- ¹² I always do the things God commands.
I love the words from God's mouth
more than I love my food.
- ¹³ "But God never changes.
No person can stand against him.
God does anything he wants.
- ¹⁴ God will do what he planned against me.
He has many other plans for me.
- ¹⁵ That is why I am afraid
as I live in front of God.
When I think of all these things,
I am afraid of God.
- ¹⁶ God makes my heart weak,
and I lose my courage.
(God, All-Powerful makes me afraid.
- ¹⁷ But the darkness does not make me be
quiet.
Thick darkness covers my face.

24 "Why won't (God, All-Powerful
decide on a time for judging?
Why do people that obey God have to
wait
for that time of judging for nothing?

² People move the property markers
to get more of their neighbor's land.
People steal flocks and lead them
to other grasslands.

³ They steal the donkey
that belongs to children without parents.
They take the widow's*
cow away from her
until she pays what she owes them.

⁴ They force the people to wander
from place to place without a home.
All the poor people are forced to hide
from these evil people.

⁵ The poor people are like wild donkeys
that search in the desert for food.
The desert gives food for poor people
and their children.

⁶ The poor people have to gather
hay and straw in fields they don't own
anymore.

- They pick up fruit from evil people's
grape fields.
- ⁷ Poor people must spend the night without
clothes.
They have nothing to cover themselves in
the cold.
- ⁸ They are wet from rain in the mountains.
They must stay very close to large rocks
because they have nothing to protect
them from the weather.
- ⁹ Evil people take a child that has no father
from the mother.
They take the poor person's child.
Evil people make the child a slave to pay
for what the poor person owes.
- ¹⁰ The poor people have no clothes.
So they are naked while they work.
They carry the sheaves*
for the evil people.
But the poor people still go hungry.
- ¹¹ The poor people press out the olive oil.
They walk over the winepress.* But they
are still thirsty.
- ¹² The sad sounds the dying people make,
are heard in the city.
The hurt people cry out for help.
But God does not listen.
- ¹³ "There are people that rebel against the
light.
They don't want to know what God wants
them to do.
They don't walk in God's way.
- ¹⁴ The murderer gets up early in the
morning,
and kills the poor and needy people.
And at night he becomes a thief.
- ¹⁵ The person that does adultery,*
waits for the night to come.
He thinks, 'No person will see me.'
So he covers his face.
- ¹⁶ Evil people break into houses
at night when it is dark.

sheaves Stacks of grain.

winepress A place for squeezing the juice from grapes.
Sometimes this was only a shallow hole in a large rock in the
ground.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these
women had no one to care for them.

But in the day, they hide in their own houses.

They avoid the light.

- ¹⁷ Darkness is like morning for those evil people.

They are friends with the terrors of darkness.

- ¹⁸ "But the evil people are taken away like foam on the flood water.

The land they own is cursed,*
so they don't go to work in the grape fields

to gather the grapes.

- ¹⁹ Hot and dry weather takes away the snow.

In the same way, the evil people will be taken away to the grave.

- ²⁰ Even his own mother will forget the evil person when he is dead.

Worms eat the evil person's body.
He will not be remembered any more.
Evil people are destroyed like a fallen tree.

- ²¹ Evil people do wrong things to the woman that can't have children.
They hurt the woman that has no children.

They do not show kindness to the widow.*

- ²² But God uses his power to destroy the strong people.

The strong people become powerful,
but they can't be sure of their own lives.

- ²³ Maybe God will let the powerful people be safe for a short time.

But God is always watching them.

- ²⁴ For a short time the bad people are successful.

Then they are gone.

They are gathered up like all other people.

They die like heads of grain that are cut down.

- ²⁵ "If these things are not true,
who can prove that I have lied?
Who can show my words are nothing?"

Bildad Answers Job

25 Then Bildad, from the country of Shuah, answered:

- ² "God is the ruler.
Every person must fear and respect God.
God keeps his heavenly kingdom in peace.

- ³ No person can count God's angels.
God's sun rises on all people.

- ⁴ But a person can't really be good in front of God.

A person born from woman can't really be pure.

- ⁵ Even the moon is not bright to God's eyes.

The stars are not pure to God's eyes.

- ⁶ Man is much less.
Man is only a maggot,*
a worm that is worthless!"

Job Answers Bildad

26 Then Job answered:
² "Bildad, Zophar, and Eliphaz,
you really can help people that are weak!
Oh yes, you have made weak arms
strong again!

- ³ Yes, you have given wonderful advice
to the person with no wisdom!

And you have shown much wisdom!*

- ⁴ Who helped you say these things?

maggot An insect that looks like a small worm and becomes a fly. It is usually found in dead bodies and decaying things.

Bildad ... wisdom Job doesn't really mean what he is saying in verses 2 and 3. He saying these things in a way that the person listening knows he doesn't mean it. This is called sarcasm.

curse(d) To ask for bad things to happen to someone or something.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

Whose spirit inspired you?

- 5 "The spirits of the people that have died
shake in the waters under the earth.
- 6 The place of death
is open to God's eyes.
Death is not covered up to God.
- 7 God stretches the northern sky over
empty space.
God hangs the earth on nothing.
- 8 God fills the clouds with water.
But God does not let the clouds break
with the heavy weight of the water.
- 9 God covers the full moon.
God spreads his clouds over the moon
and hides it.
- 10 God makes the horizon*
on the ocean as a boundary line between
light and darkness.
- 11 The foundations that hold up the skies
shake with fear
when God threatens them.
- 12 God's power makes the sea quiet.
God's wisdom destroyed the sea
monster's helpers.*
- 13 God's breath makes the skies clear.
God's hand destroyed the snake that tried
to get away.* "These are only a small
part of God's powerful works.
We only hear a small whisper from God.
But no person can truly understand
how great and powerful God is."

27 Then Job continued speaking:

- 27^a Truly, God lives.
And just as truly as God lives,
He has truly been unfair with me.
Yes, God, All-Powerful has made my
life bitter.
- 3 But as long as life is in me
and God's breath of life is in my nose,

- 4 then my lips will not speak evil things.
And my tongue will never tell a lie.
- 5 I will never admit that you men are right.
I will continue saying I am innocent
until the day I die.
- 6 I will hold tightly
to the right things I did.
I will never stop doing right things.
My conscience will never bother me
as long as I live.
- 7 "Let my enemies be like evil people,
and be punished like evil people are
punished.
- 8 There is no hope for the person
that does not care about God
when that person dies.
That person has no hope when God takes
his life away.
- 9 When that evil person has troubles,
and cries to God,
God won't listen.
- 10 That person should have wanted
the happiness God gives.
That person should have prayed to God
all the time.
- 11 "I will teach you about God's power.
I will not hide God, All-Powerful's
plans.
- 12 You have seen God's power with your
own eyes.
So why do you say such useless things?
- 13 "This is what God has planned for evil
people.
This is what the cruel person will get
from God, All-Powerful: "Maybe the
evil person will have many children.
But his children will be killed in war.
The evil person's children will never have
enough to eat.
- 15 If the evil person's children still live after
he dies,
terrible sicknesses will kill them.
His sons' widows*

horizon The horizon is the line far away where the sky meets the earth.

sea monster's helpers Literally, "Rahab's helpers." Rahab is the story name for a sea monster. People thought Rahab was a symbol for anything evil.

snake that tried to get away Or, "the escaping monster." See Isaiah 27:1.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

won't be sad for them.

- ¹⁶ Maybe the evil person will pile up much silver like it was dirt.
Maybe he will have many clothes like piles of clay.
- ¹⁷ A good person will wear the clothes the evil person kept getting.
Innocent people will share the evil person's silver.
- ¹⁸ The house that the evil person builds does not last a long time.
It is like a spider's web or a watchman's tent.
- ¹⁹ The evil person is rich when he lies down.
But after that he won't be rich any more.
When he opens his eyes, all his riches are gone.
- ²⁰ Fears will grab him like a sudden flood.
A storm will take him away in the night.
- ²¹ The east wind will carry him away.
Then he will be gone.
The storm will sweep him out of his home.
- ²² The evil person will try to run away from the storm's power.
But the storm will hit him without mercy.
- ²³ Men will clap their hands as the evil person runs away.
They will whistle against the evil person as he runs from his home.

28 "There are mines where people get silver.

There are places where people melt gold and make it pure.

- ¹ Men dig iron from the ground.
Copper is melted from the rocks.
- ³ Workers bring light into* the caves.
They search deep into the caves.
They look for rocks in the deep darkness.
- ⁴ Workers cut deep holes far from where people live.
No other person has ever touched these

holes.

The worker is far from other people while he hangs from ropes deep in the pits.

- ⁵ Food comes from the top of the ground.
But under the ground, it is changed, like fire changes things.
- ⁶ Sapphires* are found under the ground in the rocks.
And the dirt under the ground has gold in it.
- ⁷ Birds that catch animals for food don't know about the paths under the ground.
No falcon* sees this path.
- ⁸ Fierce animals have not walked on this path.
Lions have not traveled over this path.
- ⁹ Workers dig the hardest rocks.
Those workers dig away at the mountains and make them bare.
- ¹⁰ Workers cut tunnels through the rocks.
They see all the rock's treasures.
- ¹¹ The workers make dams to keep the waters from overflowing.
They bring hidden things out to the light.
- ¹² "But where can a person find wisdom?
Where can we go to learn how to understand?"
- ¹³ People don't understand that wisdom is very valuable.
People living on the earth don't have wisdom.
- ¹⁴ The deep ocean says, 'Wisdom is not in me.'
The sea says, 'Wisdom is not with me.'
- ¹⁵ The most expensive gold will not buy wisdom.
Wisdom's cost can't be counted in silver.
- ¹⁶ Gold from the country of Ophir, or valuable onyx,* or sapphires*

falcon A kind of bird, like a hawk.

onyx A semi-precious stone with many layers of blue or gray.

sapphires A very rare and expensive stone.

bring light into Literally, "put an end to the darkness."

can't buy wisdom.

- ¹⁷ Wisdom is worth more than gold and crystal.

Expensive jewels made with gold can't buy wisdom.

- ¹⁸ Wisdom is worth more than coral* and jasper.*

Wisdom costs more than rubies.

- ¹⁹ The topaz* from the country of Ethiopia is not as good as wisdom.
You can't buy wisdom with pure gold.

- ²⁰ "Then where can we go to find wisdom?
Where can we go to learn how to understand?

- ²¹ Wisdom is hidden from every person on the earth.
Even the birds high in the sky can't see wisdom.

- ²² Death and destruction* say, 'We have heard only rumors about wisdom.'

- ²³ "But only God knows the way to wisdom.
God knows where wisdom lives.

- ²⁴ God knows wisdom because God sees all the way
to the last parts of the earth.

God sees everything under the skies.

- ²⁵ When God gave the wind its power,
and decided how big to make the oceans,

- ²⁶ and when God decided where he would send the rain,
and where the thunderstorms would travel,

- ²⁷ that was when God saw wisdom
and tested it to see how much wisdom was worth.

Then God approved of wisdom.

- ²⁸ And God said to people,
'To fear and respect the Lord—

that is wisdom.

Turning away from evil things—
that is understanding.'"

Job Continues His Talk

29 Job continued talking. Job said:

¹ "I wish my life was like it was
in months past,

when God watched me and cared for me.

² I wish for the time when God's light
was shining on my head to give me light
when I walked through the darkness.

³ I wish for the days when my life was very
successful,
and God was my close friend.
Those were the days when God blessed
my home.

⁴ I wish for the time when God,
All-Powerful was still with me,
and my children were near me.

⁵ That was when my life was very good.
It seemed like my path was full of cream,
and the rocks poured out rivers of olive
oil for me.

⁶ "Those were the days when I went to the
city gate
and sat with the elders of the city in the
open place.

⁷ All the people respected me there.
When the young men saw me, they
stepped out of my way.
And the old men got up and stood to
show they respected me.

⁸ When the leaders of the people saw me
they stopped speaking.

⁹ Even the most important leaders lowered
their voices
when I came near them.

Yes, it seemed like their tongues
stuck to the roof of their mouths.

¹⁰ Any person that heard me talking said
good things about me.

Any person that saw me, gave praise to
me.

¹¹ Why? Because when the poor person

coral A mineral found in the ocean. It is often pink or red.

jasper A semi-precious stone that is often dark green.

topaz A semi-precious stone that is usually yellow.

Death and destruction Literally, "Abaddon." The
Hebrew word for "death and destruction," or "destroyer," or
"place of destruction."

- cried out for help, I helped.
And I helped the child that had no parents
and no one to care for him.
- ¹³ The person that was dying blessed me.
I helped widows* that were in need.
- ¹⁴ Right Living was my clothing.
Fairness was like my robe and my turban.*
- ¹⁵ I helped blind people with my eyes,
and I helped crippled people with my feet.
- ¹⁶ I was like a father for poor people.
I took the side of strangers that were in trouble.
- ¹⁷ I destroyed evil people's power.
I saved the innocent people from the evil people.
- ¹⁸ "I always thought, 'I will live a very long life,
then I will die in my own home.
- ¹⁹ I was like a tree that had roots that always
reached water,
and branches that were always wet with dew.
- ²⁰ My glory will always be new in me.
I will always be strong,
like I had a new bow in my hand.'
- ²¹ "In the past, people listened to me.
They were quiet while they waited for my advice.
- ²² After I had finished speaking,
the people listening to me
didn't have anything else to say.
My words fell gently into their ears.
- ²³ People waited for me to speak,
like they waited for rain.
They drank in my words,
like my words were rain in the spring.
- ²⁴ I smiled at people that were discouraged.
My happy face made depressed people
feel better.
- ²⁵ I took charge and made decisions for the

- people.
I became the leader.
I lived like a commander among his army groups.
I was like a person that gives comfort
to people who are very sad.

- 30** "But now there are men that are
younger
than I am that make fun of me.
Those young men have fathers that are
worthless.
I would not even let their fathers help the
dogs guard the sheep.
- ² The fathers of those young men
have no strength to help me.
They are old and tired.
- ³ Those men are the same as dead,
because they have nothing and are
hungry.
They even try to eat the dry and empty
land.
- ⁴ Those men pull up salt plants in the
desert.
They eat the roots from the broom tree.
- ⁵ Those men are forced away from other
people.
People shout at those men like they shout
at thieves.
- ⁶ Those old men are forced to live in the
dry river beds
with the rocks, and in holes in the ground.
- ⁷ They howl in the bushes.
They gather together under the thorny
bushes.
- ⁸ They are a group of worthless people
with no names.
They have been forced to leave their
country!
- ⁹ "Now those men's sons
sing songs about me to make fun of me.
My name has become a bad word to
them.
- ¹⁰ Those young men hate me,
they stand away from me,
they think they are better than me.
They even spit in my face!

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

turban A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

- 11 God has taken the string
from my bow and made me weak.
Those young men don't stop themselves
but turn against me with all their anger.
- 12 On my right side, those young men attack
me.
They make me fall.*
They build ramps against me to attack
and destroy me.
- 13 Those young men guard my road to
escape.
They succeed in destroying me.
They don't need anyone to help them
destroy me.
- 14 They attack me like they go through
a hole in the wall.
They charge in and come crashing down
on me.
- 15 Fears catch me.
Those young men chase away my honor
like the wind blows things away.
My safety disappears like a cloud.
- 16 "Now my life is almost gone,
and I will soon die.
Days of suffering have grabbed me.
- 17 All my bones ache at night.
Pain never stops chewing on me.
- 18 God grabs the collar of my coat with
much power.
He twists my clothes out of shape.
- 19 God throws me into the mud,
and I become like dirt and ashes.
- 20 "God, I cry out to you for help,
but you don't answer.
I stand up and pray,
but you don't pay attention to me.
- 21 God, you are mean to me.
You use your power to hurt me.
- 22 God, you let the strong wind blow me
away.
You throw me around in the storm.
- 23 I know you are carrying me away to my
death.
Death is what is planned for every person.

- 24 "But, surely no one will hurt a person
that is already ruined, and cries out for
help.
- 25 God, you know that I have cried for
people in trouble.
You know that my heart was very sad for
poor people.
- 26 But when I looked for good things
bad things came instead.
When I looked for light, darkness came.
- 27 I am torn up inside.
It never stops.
Times of suffering are ahead of me.
- 28 I am always very sad, but I get no
comfort.
I stand up in the assembly and yell for
help.
- 29 I have become the brother to the wild
dogs.
I have friends that are the ostriches.
- 30 My skin has become very dark.
My body is hot with fever.
- 31 My harp is tuned to play sad songs.
My flute makes sounds like sad crying.

- 31** "I made an agreement with my
eyes
not to look with lust at a girl.
- 2 What does God, All-Powerful do to
people?
How does God pay people back from his
high heavenly home?
- 3 God sends trouble and ruin to wicked
people,
and disaster to people that do wrong.
- 4 God knows everything I do,
and he sees every step I take.
- 5 "If I have lived a life of lies,
or if I have run to lie and fool people,
then let God use fair scales to weigh me.
Then God will know I am innocent.
- 6 If I have walked off the the right path,
if my eyes have led my heart away to
evil,
or if my hands are dirty with sin,
then let other people eat the crops I
planted,

and let my crops be pulled up.

- ⁹ "If I have been lustful for women,
or if I have waited by my neighbor's
door
to do the sin of adultery with his wife,
¹⁰ then let my wife cook another man's
food,
and let other men sleep with her.
¹¹ Why? Because sexual sin is shameful.
It is a sin that must be punished.
¹² Sexual sin is like a fire that burns and
destroys.
Sexual sin would destroy everything I
have.
- ¹³ "If I have refused to be fair to my male
and female slaves
when they had a complaint against me,
¹⁴ what will I do when I must face God?
What will I answer God when he calls me
to explain what I did?
¹⁵ God made me in my mother's body.
God also made my slaves.
God shaped us both inside our mothers.
- ¹⁶ "I have never refused to help poor people.
I have never let widows* live without
help.
- ¹⁷ I have never been selfish with my food.
I have never let children with no parents
be hungry.
- ¹⁸ All my life,
I have been like a father
to children that had no father.
All my life I have cared for the widow.
- ¹⁹ When I found someone suffering
because they didn't have clothes,
or a poor man with no coat,
²⁰ I always gave them clothes.
I used the wool from my own sheep to
make them warm.
Then they would bless me with all their
heart.
- ²¹ If I ever tried to cheat a child with no
parents,

- knowing I would win in court,
²² if I have done that,
then let my arm fall off from my
shoulder!
Let my arm be broken off from its socket!
²³ But I didn't do any of those bad things.
Why?
Because I was afraid of God's
punishment.
- ²⁴ "I have never trusted in my riches.
I never said to pure gold,
'You are my hope.'
²⁵ I have never been full of pride
because I was wealthy,
or rejoiced with the many riches I
earned.
- ²⁶ I have never worshiped the bright sun,
or the beautiful moon.
- ²⁷ I was never fooled into offering
the sun and moon reverent worship.
- ²⁸ If I have ever done any of those things,
that would be sins I should be punished
for.
Because I would be unfaithful to God,
All-Powerful
by doing those bad things.
- ²⁹ "I have never been happy
when my enemies were destroyed.
I have never laughed when my enemies
had trouble.
- ³⁰ I have never let my mouth sin
by cursing*
my enemies, and wishing for them to die.
- ³¹ All the people in my house know that I
have always
given food to strangers.
- ³² I always invited strangers into my home
so they would not have to sleep
in the streets at night.
- ³³ Other people try to hide their sins.
But I have not hidden my guilt.
Why? "Because I have never been
afraid
of what people say.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

cursing Asking for bad things to happen to someone.

I have never kept quiet,
and refused to go outside
because I am not afraid of people's hate
for me.

- ³⁵ "Oh, I wish I had someone to hear me!
I give my defense now.
Let the God, All-Powerful answer me.
Let the One who blames me
write down the things he blames me of
doing.
- ³⁶ For sure, I would wear the writing on my
shoulder.
I would put it on like a crown.
- ³⁷ I would explain to God everything I have
done.
I would come near God with my head
held high
as if I were a ruler.
- ³⁸ "If I had stolen the land I farm,
and had taken it from its owners,
so that the land is wet with its own
tears,
- ³⁹ and if I had stolen the things
the land grows without paying the
farmers,
- ⁴⁰ yes, if I did any of these bad things,
then let thorns come up instead of
wheat,
and weeds grow in the fields instead of
barley*!"
- Job's words are finished.

Elihu Adds to the Argument

32 Then Job's three friends gave up trying
to answer Job. They gave up because
Job was so sure that he himself was truly
innocent. ²A man named Elihu was there also.
Elihu was the son of Barakel. Barakel was a
descendant* of a man named Buz. Elihu was
from the family of Ram. Elihu became very
angry with Job. Why? Because Job was saying
that he himself was right. And Job was blaming
God. ³Elihu was also angry with Job's three

friends. Why? Because Job's three friends
could not answer Job's questions and prove to
Job that he was wrong. So then, it seemed like
God was wrong. ⁴Elihu was the youngest
person there, so he waited until everyone was
finished talking. Then he felt like he could
begin to talk. ⁵When Elihu saw that Job's three
friends had nothing more to say, he became
angry.

⁶So Elihu began to talk. He said:

- "I am young.
You men are old.
That is why I was afraid to tell you what I
think.
- ⁷ I thought to myself,
'Older people should speak first.
People that have lived many years
should share their wisdom.'
- ⁸ But it is God's Spirit
in a person,
God, All-Powerful's breath,
that gives a person wisdom.
- ⁹ Old men are not the only wise people,
and aged people are not the only ones
that understand with is right.
- ¹⁰ "So that is why I, Elihu, say,
Listen to me!
I also, will tell you men what I think.
- ¹¹ While you men were talking,
I waited patiently.
I listened to the answers you gave to Job.
- ¹² I paid attention to you
while you tried to answer Job
with smart words.
But you three men have not proved
to Job that he is wrong.
Not one of you has answered Job's
arguments.
- ¹³ You three men can't say
that you have found wisdom.
God must answer Job's arguments,
not people.
- ¹⁴ But Job was not speaking against me.
So I won't use the arguments
you three men have used.
- ¹⁵ "Job, your three friends

barley A kind of grain.

descendant(s) A person's children and all of their future
families.

are embarrassed.

They don't have anything more to say.

They don't have any more answers.

- ¹⁶ These three men are quiet,
they stand there
and have no answer.

So do I still have to wait? "No! I will
give my answer also.

I will tell you what I think also.

- ¹⁷ Why? Because I have much to say.
The Spirit that is in me
forces me to speak.

- ¹⁸ Inside me I am like wine that is
soon to bubble out.

I am like a new wineskin
that will soon break open.

- ¹⁹ So I must speak.

Then I will feel better.

I must open my lips and answer Job's
complaints.

- ²⁰ I won't join sides with any person
in this argument.

I won't flatter any person.

- ²¹ I don't know how to flatter
a person.

If I did know how to flatter someone,
God would punish me very quickly.

33 "But now, Job, listen to my message.

Pay attention to the things I say.

- ² I will soon begin to talk.

I am almost ready to speak.

- ³ My heart is honest,
so I will speak honest words.

I will speak the truth
about the things I know.

- ⁴ God's Spirit made me.

My life comes from (God) All-Powerful.

- ⁵ Job, listen, and answer me,
if you think you can.

Get your answers ready,
so you can argue with me.

- ⁶ You and I are the same
in front of God.

God used clay to make both of us.

- ⁷ Job, don't be afraid of me.

I won't be hard on you.

- ⁸ "But Job, this is what I heard you say:

- ⁹ You said:

'I, Job, am innocent!

I didn't sin, or do anything wrong.

I am not guilty!

- ¹⁰ And even though I did nothing wrong,
God has found something wrong with
me.

God thinks I, Job, am his enemy.

- ¹¹ So, God puts chains on my feet.
God watches everything I do.'

- ¹² "But Job, I must tell you
that you are wrong
about this.

Why? Because God knows more than
any person.

- ¹³ Job, why do you complain,
and argue with God?

Why do you complain that God does not
explain to you about everything he
does?

- ¹⁴ But God does explain about what he does.
God speaks in different ways.
But people don't understand.

- ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Maybe God speaks into peoples' ears
in a dream,

or in a vision* at night,
when they are in a deep sleep.

Then they become very afraid
when they hear God's warnings.

- ¹⁷ God warns people to stop them
from doing wrong things,
and to stop them from becoming proud.

- ¹⁸ God warns people to save them
from going to the place of death.*
God does that to save a person
from being destroyed.

- ¹⁹ "Or, a person might hear God's voice
when that person is in bed
and suffering from God's punishment.
God is warning that person with pain.
That person is in so much pain

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to
people.

place of death Literally, "the Pit." This is where bad
people go when they die.

- all his bones hurt.
- ²⁰ Then that person can't eat.
That person has so much pain
that he hates even the best food.
- ²¹ His body wastes away until
he becomes very skinny,
and all his bones stick out.
- ²² That person is near the place of death.*
And his life is close to death.
- ²³ "But maybe there will be an angel
to help that person.
Truly, God has thousands of angels.
Then that angel will tell that person
the right thing to do.
- ²⁴ And that angel will be kind to that person.
That angel will say,
'Save this person from the place of
death!
I have found a way to pay for him.'
- ²⁵ Then that person's body
will become young and strong again.
That person will be the same
as when he was young.
- ²⁶ That person will pray to God,
and God will answer that person's
prayer.
Then that person will see God
as he worships God,
and that person will be very happy.
Why? Because God will give that person
a normal life again.
- ²⁷ "Then that person will confess to people.
He will say, 'I sinned.
I changed good into bad.
But God didn't punish me
as bad as he should.
- ²⁸ God saved my soul from going down
to the place of death.
I will live longer,
and I will enjoy life again.'
- ²⁹ "God does all these things to a person
again and again.
- ³⁰ Why? To warn that person,

and save that person's soul from
the place of death.*
Then that person can enjoy his life.

- ³¹ "Job, pay attention to me.
Listen to me.
Be quiet and let me talk.
- ³² Job, if you have anything to say,
then let me hear it.
Go ahead and talk,
because I want you to prove to me
that you are innocent.
- ³³ But Job, if you have nothing to say,
then listen to me.
Be quiet, and I will teach you how to be
wise."

- 34** Then Elihu continued talking:
¹ "Listen to the things I say,
you wise men.
Pay attention to me,
you smart men.
- ² The ear tests the things it hears.
And in the same way the tongue
tastes the food it touches.
- ³ So, let us test this situation
and decide for ourselves what is right.
Together we will learn what is good.
- ⁴ "Job says, 'I, Job, am innocent.
But God is not fair to me.
- ⁵ I am right, but people think I am wrong,
and they think I am a liar.
Even though I am innocent,
my wound can't be healed.'
- ⁶ There is no person the same as Job.
Job does not care if you insult him.
- ⁷ Job is friends with bad people.
Job likes to be with evil people.
- ⁸ Why? Because Job says,
'If a person tries to obey God,
it won't do that person any good.'
- ⁹ "So listen to me, you men
that can understand.
God would never do what is evil.

- God, All-Powerful would never do wrong.
- 11 God will pay a person back for the things that person has done. God gives people what they should get.
- 12 It is true, God won't do wrong. God, All-Powerful will always be fair.
- 13 No person chose God to be in charge over the earth. No one gave God responsibility for the whole world.
- 14 If God decided to take his spirit and his breath of life away from people, then all the people on the earth would die. Then people would become dust again.
- 16 "If men are wise, then you will listen to what I say.
- 17 A person that hates to be fair can't be a ruler. Job, do you think you can judge guilty the strong and good One, God?
- 18 God is the One who says to kings, 'You are worthless!' God says to leaders, 'You are evil!'
- 19 God does not love leaders more than other people. And God does not love rich people more than poor people. Why? Because God made every person.
- 20 A person might die very quickly in the night. God makes people sick, and they pass away. Powerful people die and no human can help.
- 21 "God watches what people do. God knows every step a person takes.
- 22 There is no dark place, and no place dark enough where an evil person can hide from God.
- 23 God does not need to pick a time to test people some more.

- God does not need to bring people in front of him to be judged.
- 24 God does not need to ask questions. But God will destroy powerful people, then put others in their place.
- 25 So God knows what people do. That is why God will defeat evil people in the night and destroy them.
- 26 God will punish the bad people because of the evil things they did. And God will let everyone see the bad peoples' punishment.
- 27 Why? Because the bad people stopped obeying God. And those bad people didn't care about doing what God wants.
- 28 Those bad people hurt the poor people, and made them cry to God for help. And God hears the poor people cry for help.
- 29 But if God decided to not help the poor people, no person could judge God guilty. If God hides his face from people, there would be no person to help them. But God rules over individuals and nations.
- 30 Then the person that is against God and cheats people, can't be a ruler.
- 31 "Maybe a person will say to God, 'I am guilty. I won't sin any more.
- 32 God, teach me about the things I don't know. If I have done wrong, I won't do it again.'
- 33 But Job, should God reward you the way you want to be rewarded when you refuse to change? Job, it is your decision, not mine. Tell me what you think.
- 34 "Any man that is wise and understands will agree with me. Any wise man that hears me will say, 'Job talks like an ignorant person.

The things Job says don't make sense!"

- 36 I wish Job would be given
even more troubles to test him!
Why? Because Job answers
us the way an evil person would answer.
37 Job added rebellion to all his sin.
Job insults us and makes fun of God
in front of us!"

35 Elihu continued talking. He said:
35 "Job, it is not fair for you to say,
'I, Job, am more right than God.'
3 And Job, you ask God,
'God, how does my sin hurt you?
What good thing do I get if I don't sin?'

4 "Job, I (*Elihu*) want to answer you
and your friends here with you.

5 Job, look up to the sky.
Look up and see that the clouds
are higher than you.

6 Job, if you sin,
it does not hurt God.
If you have many sins,
that does nothing to God.

7 Job, if you are good,
that does not help God.
God gets nothing from you.

8 Job, your sins only hurt
you, yourself.
And the good things you do,
only help other people.

9 "When people are being treated
in a bad and unfair way,
they cry out for help.
They beg for the powerful people
to help them.

10 But they don't ask God for help.
God made them.
God gives people hope when they are
depressed.

11 They don't ask God for help.
God makes people wise.
God does not make animals and birds
wise.

12 But bad people are proud,
so if they cry out to God for help,

God does not answer them.

13 It is true, God won't listen
to their worthless begging.
God, All-Powerful won't
pay attention to them.

14 Job, in the same way,
God won't listen to you
when you say that you don't see him.
God knows about your troubles,
you must be patient and wait for God to
help.

15 Job, you think that God
does not punish bad people,
and that God does not pay attention to
sin.

16 "So Job continues his worthless
talking.
It is easy to see that Job does not
know what he is talking about."

36 Elihu continued talking. He said:
36 "Job, be patient with me a little
longer.

I will show you that there is more
to be said for God's side.

3 My knowledge is great.
God made me.

I will use what I know to show you
that God is fair.

4 Job, you can be sure that everything I say
is true.
I am very wise,
and I am with you.

5 "God is powerful.
But he does not hate people.
God is mighty, and he has his plans.

6 God won't let evil people live.
And God always treats poor people fairly.

7 God takes care of people that
do what is right.
He lets good people be rulers.
God gives good people honor forever.

8 But if people are being punished
and in chains,
if people are suffering and have troubles,
9 then God will tell them
what they did wrong.

- God will tell them that they sinned
and that they have been proud.
- ¹⁰ God will force those people
to listen to his warning.
He will command them to stop sinning.
- ¹¹ If those people listen to God,
and obey him,
God will let them have success
and a happy life.
- ¹² But if those people refuse
to obey God,
they will join the world of the dead.
They will be ignorant when they die.
- ¹³ "People that don't care about God
are always bitter.
Even when God punishes them
they refuse to pray to God for help.
- ¹⁴ Those people will die
when they are still young.
They will die in shame
with the male prostitutes.*
- ¹⁵ But God will save suffering
people from their troubles.
God uses troubles
to make people wake up
and listen to him.
- ¹⁶ "Job, God wants to help you
by being kind to you and bringing you
away from your troubles.
God wants to give you a safe place,
and put plenty of food on your table.
- ¹⁷ But now, Job, you are being punished
with the kind of punishment
that evil people get.
God's judgment and justice
have caught you.
- ¹⁸ Job, don't let riches
lead you to do wrong.
Don't be fooled with the offer of much
money.
- ¹⁹ You know that all your money
can't help you now.
It won't help to cry out for help.
- ²⁰ Don't wish for night time to come,
so you can take people away from their
homes.
- ²¹ Job, be careful not to do wrong.
Your troubles were sent to you
so you would not choose evil.
- ²² "God has much power.
God is the greatest teacher of all.
- ²³ No person can tell God what to do.
No person can say to God,
'God, you have done wrong.'
- ²⁴ Don't forget to praise God's work.
People have praised God's
work with songs.
- ²⁵ Every person has seen
God's work.
People have looked at God's work from
far away.
- ²⁶ It is true, God is great.
We can't understand
his greatness.
No person can count
the number of God's years.
- ²⁷ "God takes up water from the earth
and turns it into rain.
- ²⁸ God makes the clouds
pour out their water,
and much rain falls on people.
- ²⁹ No person can understand
how God spreads the clouds out.
No person can understand how thunder
roars through the sky where God lives.
- ³⁰ See how God scatters
his lightning through all the sky,
covering the deep sea.
- ³¹ God uses these clouds
to control the nations
and to give plenty of food.
- ³² God grabs the lightning
with his hands.
God commands the lightning to hit
where he wants.
- ³³ The thunder tells that a storm
is coming.
Even the cattle know the storm is coming.

"Job, when I think about these

- things,
my heart beats very fast.
- ² Listen everyone!
God's voice sounds the same as thunder.
Listen to the thundering sound
that comes from God's mouth.
- ³ God sends his lightning
to flash across the whole sky.
It flashed all over the earth.
- ⁴ Then after the lightning flashes,
God's roaring voice can be heard.
God thunders with his wonderful voice!
While the lightning flashes,
God's voice thunders.
- ⁵ God's thundering voice is wonderful!
He does great things
that we can't understand.
- ⁶ God says to the snow,
'Fall on the earth.'
And God says to the rain,
'Pour down on the earth.'
- ⁷ God does that so
all people God has made will know
what he can do.
God stops every person from working.
- ⁸ The animals run
into their dens and stay there.
- ⁹ The storm comes out from
the south.*
The cold comes from the north.*
- ¹⁰ God's breath makes ice,
and freezes the oceans.
- ¹¹ God fills the clouds with water.
He scatters his lightning through the
clouds.
- ¹² God orders the clouds
to blow all around the earth.
The clouds do anything God commands.
- ¹³ God brings the clouds
to punish people
or to bring water to show his love.
- ¹⁴ "Job, stop for a minute and listen.
Stop and think about the wonderful
things God does.

- ¹⁵ Job, do you know how God controls
the clouds?
Do you know how God makes his
lightning flash?
- ¹⁶ Do you know how the clouds
hang in the sky?
God's knowledge is perfect.
And clouds are God's wonderful works.
- ¹⁷ No, Job, you don't know these things.
All you know is that you sweat,
and your clothes are sticky
when the land is quiet under the hot south
wind.
- ¹⁸ Job, can you help God
spread out the sky,
and make it hard like a polished mirror?
- ¹⁹ "Job, tell us what we should say
to God!
We can't think of anything to say,
because our minds are empty.
- ²⁰ I won't tell God I want to talk
to him.
That would be the same as asking
to be destroyed.
- ²¹ Now, no person can look
at the bright sun.
It is very bright and shiny in the sky
after the wind has blown the clouds
away.
- ²² God's golden glory shines from
the north.
God comes in wonderful glory.
- ²³ God, All-Powerful is truly great.
We can't go near God.
God always treats people in a right
and fair way.
- ²⁴ So that is why people respect God.
But God doesn't respect proud people
that think they are wise."

God Speaks to Job

38 Then the Lord answered Job from the
storm. God said:

- ¹ "Who is this person that does not
accept my wisdom,
and questions me with worthless and
ignorant words?

south Literally, "storehouse."
north Literally, "scattering winds."

- ³ Job be strong like a man,
and get ready to answer the questions
I will ask you.
- ⁴ "Job, where were you
when I made the earth?
If you are so smart, then answer me.
- ⁵ Job, who decided how big
the world would be?
It seems like you know!
Who measured the world
with a measuring line?
- ⁶ What are the earth's supports
put on?
Who laid out the earth's
most important stone for its
foundation?
- ⁷ When that happened,
the morning stars sang together
and the angels*
shouted and were very happy!
- ⁸ "Job, who closed the gates
to stop the sea
when it flowed from deep in the earth?
- ⁹ At that time I covered the
sea with clouds,
and wrapped the sea in darkness.
- ¹⁰ I set the limits for the sea
and put it behind locked gates.
- ¹¹ I said to the sea,
'You can come up here, but no farther.
Here is where your proud waves will
stop.'
- ¹² "Job, did you ever in your life
order the morning to start,
and the day to begin?
- ¹³ Job, did you ever tell the morning
light to grab the earth,
and make the morning light force
the evil people to leave their hiding
places?
- ¹⁴ The morning light makes the hills
and the valleys easy to see.
When the daylight comes to the earth,
the shapes of those places stand out

- like the folds of a coat.
Those places take shape like soft clay
that is pressed with a stamp.
- ¹⁵ Evil people don't like
the daylight.
When it shines bright, it stops them
from doing their bad things.
- ¹⁶ "Job, have you ever gone
to the deepest parts of the sea
where the sea begins?
Have you ever walked on the ocean
bottom?
- ¹⁷ Job, has any person ever shown you
the gates that stand in front
of the dark place of death?
- ¹⁸ Job, do you really understand
how large the earth is?
Tell me, if you know all this.
- ¹⁹ "Job, which way is it
to go where the light comes from?
Where does darkness come from?
- ²⁰ Job, can you take light and dark
to the places they come from?
Do you know which way to go to
where they live?
- ²¹ Job, I am sure you know these things
because you are very old,
and you were there when the earth
was made!*
- ²² "Job, have you ever gone into
the storerooms where I keep
the snow and the hail?
- ²³ I save the snow and the hail
to use for times of trouble,
and for days of war and battle.
- ²⁴ Job, have you ever gone to the place
where the sun comes up?
Have you ever gone to the place
where the east winds come from
to blow all over the earth?
- ²⁵ Job, who dug a road in the sky
for the heavy rain?

Job ... made God doesn't really mean this. This kind of talking is called sarcasm. It is saying something that is not true in a way that everyone knows it is not true.

- Who made a path for the thunderstorm?
 26 Job, who was it that did these things
 so there would be water where no
 person lives,
 27 and water to satisfy the empty land
 and make it green with much grass?
 28 Job, does the rain have a father?
 Where do the drops of dew come from?
 29 Job, who is the mother of the ice?
 Who gives birth to the frost from the sky
 30 when the waters freeze as hard
 as rock,
 and the top of the oceans are frozen?
 31 "Job, can you tie up the Pleiades?*"
 Can you unfasten the belt of Orion?*"
 32 Job, can you bring out the constellations*
 at the right times?
 Or can you lead out the Bear*
 with its cubs?
 33 Job, do you know the laws
 that rule the sky?
 Can you begin their rule over the earth?
 34 "Job, can you shout orders
 to the clouds so that they will
 cover you with heavy rain?
 35 Job, do you send the lightning
 where you want it?
 And does the lightning come to you and
 say,
 'Job, here we are, what do you want?'
 36 Who puts wisdom in a person's
 mind?
 Who gives understanding to the mind?
 37 Job, who is wise enough
 to count the clouds
 and tip them over to pour out their rain?
 38 That rain makes the dust become hard
 and the lumps of dirt stick together.
 39 "Job, do you find food for

- the female lion?
 Can you feed hungry young lions?
 40 They lie down in their dens
 or sit, covered by their hiding places.
 41 Job, who feeds the ravens
 when their babies yell out to God,
 and wander around because they have no
 food?

- 39** "Job, do you know when
 the mountain goats are born?
 Do you watch when the mother deer
 has her baby?
 2 Job, do you know how many months
 the mother mountain goat
 and the mother deer carry their babies?
 Do you know when it is the right time
 for them to be born?
 3 They lie down and their babies
 are born.
 Then their birth pains are finished.
 4 The mother mountain goat's babies
 and the mother deer's babies
 grow strong in the fields.
 Then they leave their homes,
 and don't come back.
 5 "Job, who let the wild donkeys
 go free?
 Who untied their ropes and let them
 loose?
 6 It was I (*the Lord*) that gave
 the desert to the wild donkey
 for a home.
 I gave the salt lands to them
 for a place to live.
 7 The wild donkey doesn't go close
 to the noisy towns.
 And no person tames them to force
 them to work and pull wagons.
 8 The wild donkeys live in the mountains.
 That is where they eat grass.
 That is where they look for anything
 green
 to eat.
 9 "Job, will the wild bull
 agree to serve you?
 Will he stay in your barn at night?

Pleiades A famous constellation, or group of seven stars in the night sky.

Orion A famous constellation, or group of stars in the night sky whose shape looks like a hunter or powerful soldier.

constellations Star groups in the night sky.

Bear A famous constellation in the night sky whose shape looks like a bear. It is also called the Big Dipper.

- ¹⁰ Job, can you make a wild bull
plow your field with only a rope?
Will he plow the valleys for you?
- ¹¹ Job, can you depend on the wild bull
to use his strength to serve you?
Do you expect him to do
your hardest work?
- ¹² Can you trust him
to gather your grain and bring it
to your threshing* place?
- ¹³ "The ostrich flaps his wings
because he is happy.
But the ostrich's wings are not the same
as the stork's wings.
- ¹⁴ The ostrich lays her eggs
on the ground and they become
warm in the sand.
- ¹⁵ But the ostrich forgets
that someone might walk on her eggs
and break them,
or that some wild animal might
break them.
- ¹⁶ The ostrich is mean to her babies.
She treats her babies the same
as if they were not hers.
If her babies die,
she doesn't care
that all her work was for nothing.
- ¹⁷ Why? Because I, God, didn't give
wisdom
to the ostrich.
The ostrich is foolish,
and I made her that way.
- ¹⁸ But when the ostrich gets up to run,
she laughs at the horse and its rider,
because she can run faster than a horse.
- ¹⁹ "Job, did you give strength
to the horse,
or put the mane*
on his neck?
- ²⁰ Job, do you make the horse jump
the way a locust jumps?
The horse snorts*

- loudly, and scares people.
- ²¹ The horse is happy
that he is so strong,
and he scratches the ground
with his foot.
The horse runs fast going to the battle.
- ²² The horse laughs at fear.
He is not afraid!
He won't run away from a battle.
- ²³ The quiver*
shakes on the horse's side.
The spear and weapons his rider carries
shine in the sun.
- ²⁴ The horse is very excited!
He runs fast over the ground.*
When the horse hears the trumpet blow
he can't stand still.
- ²⁵ When the trumpet sounds,
the horse says, 'Aha!'
He smells the battle from far away.
He hears the commanders shouting orders
and all the other sounds of the battle.
- ²⁶ "Job, did you teach the hawk
how to fly as he spreads his wings
and flies to the south?
- ²⁷ Job, do you command the eagle
to fly and build his nest high
in the mountains?
- ²⁸ The eagle lives on a cliff.
The cliff is the eagle's fortress.*
- ²⁹ The eagle watches for his food
from his fortress.
He can see food that is far away.
- ³⁰ The baby eagles eat blood.
They gather around the dead bodies."

40 The Lord said to Job:
"Job, you argued with
God, All-Powerful.
You judged me of doing wrong,
now answer me!"

*Then Job answered God. Job said:

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls
from the grain.

mane The hair on a horse's neck.

snorts The sound a horse makes.

quiver A container in which arrows are kept.

runs ... ground Literally, "swallows up the ground."

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for
protection.

- 4 "I am not important.
What can I say to you?
I can't answer you!
I will put my hand over my mouth.
5 I spoke once,
but I won't answer again.
I spoke twice,
but I won't say anything more."

*Then the Lord spoke to Job again from the storm. The Lord said:

- 7 "Job, stand up like a man!
I will ask you some questions,
and you will answer me.
8 "Job, do you think I am not fair?
Do you blame me for doing wrong,
so you can make it seem
like you are right?
9 Job, are your arms as strong
as my arms?
Can you make your voice thunder loudly
like my voice?
10 If you can do that,
then give honor and glory to yourself.
And put glory and brightness
on like clothes.
11 Job, if you are like me,
then look down at the people
that are proud.
Job, pour your anger out on those proud
people.
Make those proud people humble.
12 Yes, Job! Look at those proud people
and make them humble.
Crush evil people where they stand.
13 Bury all the proud people
in the dirt.
Wrap their bodies up
and put them in their graves.
14 Job, if you can do all these things,
then I will confess to you
that you are able to save yourself.
15 "Job, look at the behemoth.*

- I (God) made the behemoth
and I made you (Job).
The behemoth eats grass like a cow.
16 The behemoth has much strength
in his body.
The muscles in his stomach are very
powerful.
17 The behemoth's tail stands strong
like a cedar tree.
His leg muscles are very strong.
18 The behemoth's bones are strong
like bronze.
His legs are like iron bars.
19 The behemoth is the most amazing
animal that I (God) made.
But I can defeat him.
20 The grass that the behemoth eats
grows on the hills where
the wild animals play.
21 The behemoth lies under
the lotus plants.*
The behemoth hides in the reeds
in the swamp.
22 The lotus plants hide the behemoth
in their shade.
He lives under the willow trees
that grow near the river.
23 If the river floods,
the behemoth will not run away.
He is not afraid
if the Jordan River splashes on his face.
24 No person can blind the behemoth's eyes
and catch him in a trap.

- 41** "Job, can you catch the
leviathan*
with a fishhook?
Can you tie his tongue down with a rope?
2 Job, can you put a rope through
the leviathan's nose,
or put a hook through his jaw?
3 Job, will the leviathan beg you
to let him go free?
Will he speak to you with gentle words?

behemoth Some people think the behemoth is a hippopotamus or an elephant.

lotus plants A kind of tree. Its leaves give much shade.

leviathan Some people think this is a crocodile. Other people think it is a giant sea monster.

- ⁴ Job, will the leviathan
make an agreement with you
and promise to serve you forever?
- ⁵ Job, will you play with the leviathan
like you would play with a bird?
Will you put a rope on him
so your servant girls can play with him?
- ⁶ Job, will fishermen try to
buy the leviathan from you?
Will they cut him in pieces
so they can sell him to the merchants?*
- ⁷ Job, can you throw many harpoons
into the leviathan's skin,
or throw many fishing spears into his
head?
- ⁸ Job, if you put a hand on the leviathan,
you will never forget your hard
battle with him!
And you will never fight it again!
- ⁹ If you think you might defeat
the leviathan,
forget it! There is no hope!
Just looking at him scares you!
- ¹⁰ There is no person brave enough
to make the leviathan angry.
So then, Job, who is able to stand against
me?
- ¹¹ I (God) owe no person anything.
Everything under all heaven belongs to
me.
- ¹² Job, I will tell you about
the leviathan's legs,
his strength and graceful shape.
- ¹³ No person can take off the leviathan's
skin.
No person can come close to him
with a bridle.
- ¹⁴ No person can force the leviathan
to open his jaws.
The teeth inside his jaws
make people afraid.
- ¹⁵ The leviathan's back has
rows of shields tightly sealed together.
- ¹⁶ The shields are so close to each other
that no air can pass between them.
- ¹⁷ The shields are joined to each other.
They hold together so tightly
that they can't be pulled apart.
- ¹⁸ When the leviathan sneezes,
it is like light flashing out.
His eyes are like the light of dawn.
- ¹⁹ Burning torches come out from his
mouth.
Sparks of fire shoot out.
- ²⁰ Smoke pours from the leviathan's nose
like burning weeds under a boiling pot.
- ²¹ The leviathan's breath
makes coals burn,
and flames shoot from his mouth.
- ²² The leviathan's neck
is very powerful,
and people are afraid
and run away from him.
- ²³ There is no weakness in the leviathan's
skin. It is hard like iron.
- ²⁴ The leviathan's heart is like a rock,
he has no fear.
It is hard like a lower millstone.*
- ²⁵ When the leviathan gets up,
strong people are afraid.
They run away
when the leviathan swings his tail.
- ²⁶ The sword, spear, the dart
hit the leviathan, but only bounce off.
Those weapons don't hurt him at all!
- ²⁷ To the leviathan,
iron is easy to break like straw,
and bronze is easy to break
like rotten wood.
- ²⁸ Arrows don't make the leviathan
run away.
Rocks thrown at him
are like dry straw.
- ²⁹ When a wood club hits the leviathan,
it feels like a piece of straw to him.
He laughs when men throw spears at him.
- ³⁰ The skin under the leviathan's body
is like hard, sharp broken pieces

merchant(s) A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

lower millstone A lower millstone was a flat rock where grain was put. Another stone was put on top of the flat rock. Then the grain was ground into flour between the stones.

of pottery.

When he walks, he leaves holes in the mud like a threshing* hammer.

- ³¹ The leviathan stirs up the water like a boiling pot.
He makes it bubble like a pot of boiling oil.
- ³² When the leviathan swims, he leaves a path behind himself.
He stirs up the water, and leaves white foam behind him.
- ³³ No animal on earth is like the leviathan.
He is an animal made without fear.
- ³⁴ The leviathan looks down on the most proud animals.
He is king over all the wild animals."

Job Answers the Lord

42 Then Job answered the Lord. Job said:

²⁴"Lord, I know you can do everything.

You make plans, and none of your plans can ever be changed or stopped.

- ³ Lord, you asked this question:
'Who is this man that asks ignorant questions about my advice?'
I (Job) talked about things that I didn't understand.
I talked about amazing things that were too wonderful for me to know about.

- ⁴ "Lord, you said to me,
'Listen Job, and I will speak.
I will ask you questions,
and you will answer me.'

- ⁵ Lord, in the past,
I heard about you,
but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

- ⁶ So now, I am ashamed of myself.
Lord, I am sorry.
As I sit in the dust and ashes,
I promise to change my heart and my life."

The Lord Gives Job's Wealth Back

⁷After the Lord finished talking to Job, he spoke to Eliphaz. Eliphaz was from the city of Teman. The Lord said to Eliphaz, "I am angry at you and your two friends. Why? Because you didn't say right things about me. But Job said right things about me. Job is my servant. "So now Eliphaz, get seven bulls and seven rams. Take them to my servant Job and sacrifice them for a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you. Then for sure, I will answer his prayer. Then I won't punish you like you should be punished. You should be punished because you were very foolish. You didn't say right things about me. But Job, my servant, said right things about me."

⁸So Eliphaz from the city of Teman, and Bildad from the country of Shuah, and Zophar from the country of Naamah obeyed the Lord. Then the Lord answered Job's prayer.

⁹So Job finished praying for his friends. Then the Lord gave Job success again. God gave Job twice as much as he had before. ¹¹All Job's brothers and sisters came to Job's house. And everyone that knew Job before came to his house. They all ate a big meal with Job. They comforted Job because the Lord has brought much trouble to him. Each person gave a piece of silver and a gold ring to Job.

¹²The Lord blessed the last part of Job's life more than the first part of his life. Job owned 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 2,000 cows, and 1,000 female donkeys. ¹³Job also had seven sons and three daughters. ¹⁴Job named the first daughter Jemimah. Job named the second daughter Keziah. And Job named the third daughter Keren-Happuch. ¹⁵Job's daughters were the most beautiful women in all the country. Job gave his daughters part of his property. Their brothers also got their share of Job's property.

¹⁶So, Job lived for 140 more years. He lived to see his children, his grandchildren, his great-grandchildren, and his great-great-grandchildren. ¹⁷When Job died, he was a very old man. Job had a very good and long life.

threshing Beating or walking on grain to remove the hulls from the grain.

PSALMS

BOOK 1

Psalm 1

- ¹ A person will be truly happy
if he doesn't follow the advice of bad
people,
and if he doesn't live like sinners,
and if he doesn't feel at home with
people that don't obey God.*
- ² That good person loves the Lord's
teachings.
He thinks about those teachings day and
night.
- ³ So that person becomes strong like a tree
planted by streams of water.
He is like a tree that makes fruit at the
right time.
He is like a tree with leaves that don't
die.
Everything he does is successful.
- ⁴ But bad people are not like that.
Bad people are like chaff*
that the wind blows away.
- ⁵ If good people gather together to decide a
court case,
then bad people will be proved guilty.

A person ... God Or, "Blessed is the person that doesn't follow the advice of bad people, or turn on to Sinners Road, or stay at Scoffers' House."

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

Those sinners will not be judged
innocent.*

- ⁴ Why? Because the Lord protects good
people,
and he destroys bad people.

Psalm 2

- ¹ Why have the non-Jewish people become
so angry?
Why are those nations making foolish
plans?
- ² The kings and leaders of those nations
join together
to be against the Lord and the king he
chose.
- ³ Those leaders said,
"Let us rebel against God and the king
he chose.
"Let us break free from them!"
- ⁴ But my Master,
the King in heaven,
laughs at those people.
- ^{5a} God is angry and he tells those people,
"I chose this man to be king!
And he will rule on Mount Zion.
Zion is my special mountain."
And that makes those other leaders afraid.
- ⁷ Now I will tell you about the Lord's

If good ... innocent Or, "Bad people will not rise in the place of judgment nor the sinners in the meeting of good people." It is not clear if this verse means that bad people will not become judges, or that bad people will be judged guilty.

agreement.

The Lord said to me,
"Today I become your father!*"

And you are my son.

- 8 If you ask me,
I will give the nations to you.
All the people on earth will be yours!
- 9 You will have the power to, destroy
those nations
like an iron rod can shatter a clay pot.**

- 10 So, you kings be wise.
All you rulers, learn this lesson.
Obey the Lord with much fear.
- 11 And show that you are loyal to God's
son.*

If you don't do this,
then he will become angry and destroy
you.

People that trust the Lord are happy.
But other people should be careful.
He is almost ready to show his anger.

Psalms 3

This is David's song from the time he ran away
from his son Absalom.

- 1 Lord, I have many, many enemies.
Many people have turned against me.
- 2 Many people are talking about me.
Those people say,
"God, won't rescue him!"
- SELAH*
- 3 But Lord, you are my shield.
You are my Glory.
Lord, you make me important!*
- 4 I will pray to the Lord.

I become your father Literally, "I fathered you." This probably shows that God was adopting the king as his son.

You ... pot Or, "You will shepherd them with an iron rod. You will shatter them like a clay pot."

show ... son Literally, "Kiss the son!"

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

You ... important Literally, "You are my Glory, the One who lifts my head."

And he will answer me from his holy
mountain!

SELAH*

- 5 I can lie down and rest,
and I will wake up.
How do I know this?
Because the Lord covers me and
protects me!
- 6 There might be tens of thousands of
soldiers around me.
But I am not afraid of those enemies!
- 7 Lord, get up!*
- My God, come rescue me!
You are very strong!
If you hit my bad enemies on the cheek,
you will break all their teeth.
- 8 The Lord can rescue his people.
Lord, please do good things for your
people.
- SELAH*

Psalms 4

To the director.* With stringed instruments. A
song of David.*

- 1 My good God, when I pray to you,
answer me!
Hear my prayer and be kind to me!
Any time I have troubles, make me free!
- 2 People, how long will you say bad things
about me?
You people keep looking for new lies
to tell about me.
You people love telling those lies.
- SELAH*
- 3 You know that the Lord listens to his
good people.
When I pray to the Lord, he listens to
me.

Lord get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle with them. This showed that God was with them. See Numbers 10:35-36.

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

- ⁴ If something is bothering you, then,
be angry*
but don't sin.
Think about those things when you go to
bed,
and then relax.*
SELAH*
- ⁵ Give good sacrifices* to God.
And trust the Lord!
- ⁶ Many people say,
"Who will show us God's, goodness?
Lord, let us see your shining face!"
- ⁷ Lord, you have made me very happy!
I am happier now than at harvest time—
when we celebrate because we have
much grain and wine.
- ⁸ I go to bed and sleep in peace.
Why? Because, Lord, you lay me down
to sleep in safety.

Psalm 5

To the director.* For the flutes.* A song of
David.*

- ¹ Lord, hear my words.
Understand what I am trying to say to
you.
- ² My King and my God, listen to my
prayer.
- ³ Lord, every morning I give my gifts to
you.
I look to you for help,
And you hear my prayers.

be angry This Hebrew word can mean "be angry," "be upset," or "be excited."

relax Or, "be calm" or "be silent."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

director Or, "performer."

For the flutes This might be a name of a tune rather than a type of instrument.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

- ⁴ Lord, you are not like the false gods.
You don't like evil.
You don't want bad people coming to
visit you at your temple.*
- ⁵ Fools* can't come to you.
You send away people that always do
bad things.
- ⁶ You destroy people that tell lies.
The Lord hates people that make secret
plans to hurt other people.
- ⁷ Lord, I come to your temple,*
I know that you are very kind.
I fear and respect you, Lord,
as I bow toward your holy temple.
- ⁸ Lord, people are looking for my
weaknesses.
So show me your right way of living.
Show me clearly how you want me to
live.
- ⁹ Those people don't tell the truth.
They are liars that twist the truth.
Their mouths are like empty* graves.
Those people say nice things to other
people,
but they are only trying to trap them.
- ¹⁰ Punish them, God!
Let them be caught in their own traps.
Those people have turned against you,
so punish them for their many crimes.
- ¹¹ But let all the people that trust God be
happy.
Let those people be happy forever.
God, protect and give strength to the
people that love your name.
- ¹² Lord, if you do good things to good
people,
then you are like a large shield
protecting them.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Fools Usually this means people that don't believe and obey God. This shows they are very foolish.

empty Literally, "open."

Psalm 6

To the director,* with stringed instruments, by the Sheminith.* A song of David.*

- ¹ Lord, don't be angry and correct me.
Don't be angry and punish* me.
- ² Lord, be kind to me!
I am sick and weak.
Heal me!
My bones are shaking.
- ³ My whole body is shaking.
Lord, how long, until you heal me,?*
Lord, make me strong again!
You are very kind, so save me.
- ⁴ Dead people in their graves don't remember you.
People in the place of death don't praise you.
(So heal me!)
- ⁶ Lord, all night I prayed to you.
My bed is wet from my tears.
Tears are dripping from my bed.
And I am weak from crying to you.
- ⁷ My enemies have given me many troubles.
This made me very sad with grief.
And now my eyes are weak and tired from crying.
- ⁸ Go away you bad people!
Why? Because the Lord heard me crying.
- ⁹ The Lord heard my prayer.
And the Lord accepted and answered my prayer.
- ¹⁰ All my enemies will be upset and disappointed.

director Or, "performer."

by the Sheminith This might be a special instrument, a special way of tuning an instrument, or this might be one of the two major groups that play instruments in the temple orchestra; the group that played harps.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song or that this song was dedicated to him.

punish Literally, "teach" or "correct."

Lord ... me Literally, "As for you, Lord, how long?"

They will all be ashamed,
so they all will turn and leave.

Psalm 7

A song* of David that he sang to the Lord. This song is about Saul, the son of J. Kish* from the family group of Benjamin.

- ¹ Lord my God, I trust you.
Save me from the people that are chasing me.
Rescue me!
- ² If you don't help me,
then I will be like an animal caught by a lion.
I will be carried away—
no person will be able to save me!
- ³ Lord my God, I am not guilty of doing wrong.
I did nothing wrong!
- ⁴ I did not do bad things to my friend.*
And I did not help my friend's enemies.
- ⁵ But an enemy is chasing me.
He wants to kill me.
That enemy wants to trample my life into the ground,
and push my soul into the dirt.
SELAH*
- ⁶ Lord, get up* and show your anger!
My enemy is angry, so stand and fight against him.
Get up and demand fairness!
- ⁷ Lord, judge the people.
Gather the nations around you,
and judge the people.
Lord, judge me.
Prove that I am right.

song Literally, "Shiggayon." This probably means a song full of emotion.

Kish Or, "Cush."

friend Or, "ally," a person or country that has agreed to help another person or country.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

Lord, get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle with them. This showed that God was with them. See Num. 10:35-36.

- Prove that I am innocent.
 9 Punish the bad people,
 and help the good people.
 God, you are good.
 And you can look deep into peoples'
 hearts.
- 10 God helps people with honest hearts.
 So God will protect me.
- 11 God is a good judge.
 And God will show his anger at any
 time.
- 12 If God makes a decision,
 he does not change his mind.
- 13 And God has the power to punish
 people.*
- 14 Some people are always planning to do
 evil things.
 Those people make secret plans and tell
 lies.
- 15 They try to trap and hurt other people.
 But they will be hurt in their own traps.
- 16 They will receive the punishment they
 should get.
 They were cruel to other people.
 But they will get what they deserve.
- 17 I praise the Lord because he is good.
 I praise the name of the Lord
 Most-High.

Psalm 8

To the director,* accompanied, by the Githith.*
 A song of David.*

- 1 Lord my Master,
 your name is the most wonderful name
 in all the earth.
 Your name brings you praise
 everywhere in heaven.

If God ... **punish people** Literally, "He will not turn back. He will sharpen his sword. He will draw and aim his bow. He has prepared the weapon of death. He has made his flaming arrows."

director Or, "performer."

by the Githith Or, "on the Githith." This might be a type of instrument, or it might mean a performer in the temple orchestra, possibly Obed-edom from Gath.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

- 2 From the mouths of children and little
 babies
 come songs of praise to you.
 You do this to silence your enemies.
- 3 Lord, I look at the heavens you made
 with your hands.
 I see the moon and stars you created,
 and I wonder, .
- 4 Why are people so important to you?
 Why do you even remember them?
 Why are human beings* so important to
 you?
 Why do you even notice them?
- 5 But people are important to you!
 You made them almost like gods.
 And you crowned people with glory
 and honor.
- 6 You put people in charge of everything
 you made.
- 7 People rule over the sheep, the cattle,
 and all the wild animals.
- 8 They* rule over the birds in the sky,
 and the fish that swim in the ocean.
- 9 Lord, our Master,
 your name is the most wonderful name
 in all the earth!

Psalm 9

To the director.* Alamoth to Ben.* A song of
 David.*

- 1 I praise the Lord with all my heart.
 Lord, I will tell about all the wonderful
 things you did.
- 2 You make me so very happy.

people ... human beings Literally, "Man ... Son of Man" or "Enosh ... son of Adam." This is a Hebrew way of saying people-descendants of Adam and Enosh. In the New Testament, this was used as a title for a particular person, Jesus.

They Literally, "him ... he." In Hebrew this is talking about "man" and "son of man" and can be understood as one person or as all people.

Alamoth to Ben This might be the name of a tune, "On the Death of the Son." Or it might mean it is one of the two main orchestral groups in the temple. Ben might be Benaiah, one of the musicians. See 1 Chron. 15-16.

- God Most-High, I sing praises to your name.
- ³ My enemies turned to run from you.
But they fell and were destroyed.
- ⁴ You are the good judge.
You sat on your throne as judge.*
Lord, you listened to my case.
And you made the decision about me.
- ⁵ You spoke harshly to those non-Jewish people.*
Lord, you destroyed those bad people.
You erased their names from the list of living people, forever and ever.
- ⁶ The enemy is finished!
Lord, you destroyed their cities!
Now, only ruined buildings are left.
Nothing is left to make us remember those bad people.
- ⁷ But the Lord rules forever.
The Lord made his kingdom strong.
He did this to bring fairness to the world.
- ⁸ The Lord judges all the people on earth fairly.
The Lord judges all the nations the same.
- ⁹ Many people are trapped and hurting because they have many troubles.
Those people are crushed by the weight of their problems.
Lord, be a safe place for them to run to.
- ¹⁰ People that know your name should trust you.
Lord, if people come to you,
you will not leave them without help.
- ¹¹ You people living on Zion, sing praises to the Lord.*
Tell other nations about the great things the Lord did.

- ¹² The Lord remembered the people that went to him for help.*
Those poor people cried for help.
And the Lord didn't forget them.
- ¹³ I said this prayer to God:,
"Lord, be kind to me.
See the way that my enemies are hurting me.
Save me from the 'gates of death.'"
- ¹⁴ Then, at the gates of Jerusalem, I can sing praises to you, Lord.
I will be very happy because you saved me."
- ¹⁵ Those non-Jewish people dug holes to trap other people.
But those non-Jewish people fell into their own traps.
Those people hid nets to trap other people.
But their own feet were caught in those nets.
- ¹⁶ People learned that the Lord brings fairness.
Those bad people were trapped by what the Lord did.
Think about that!
HIGGAYON*
SELAH*
- ¹⁷ People that forget God are bad.
Those people will go to the place of death.
- ¹⁸ Sometimes it seems that God forgets about people with troubles.
It is like those poor people have no hope.
But God does not forget about those poor people forever.

throne as judge A chair that showed a person was a king or leader of the people.

non-Jewish people Or "to those people", that is, the enemy.

You ... Lord Or, "Sing praises to the Lord that sits as King in Zion."

went ... help Literally, "sought blood." If someone killed a person, then the dead man's family could go to court to have the killer punished. Here, this means that God is the Judge who listens to people that have been hurt by other people.

HIGGAYON Or, "Meditation." This may mean a time to think quietly during the song.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

²⁹ Lord, get up* and judge the nations.
Don't let people think they are
powerful.

³⁰ Teach people a lesson.
Let them know that they are only
human (*people*).

SELAH*

Psalm 10

¹ Lord, why do you stay so far away?
People with troubles can't see you.

² Proud and wicked people make their evil
plans.
And they hurt poor people.

³ Evil people brag about the things they
want.

And those greedy*
people curse* God.

In this way, the evil people show that
they hate the Lord.

⁴ Those bad people are too proud to follow
God.

They make all their evil plans.
And they act like there is no God.

⁵ Those bad people are always doing
crooked things.

They don't even notice your laws and
wise teachings.*

Lord, all of your enemies ignore your
teachings.

⁶ Those people think bad things will never
happen to them.

They say,

"We will have fun and never be
punished."

⁷ Those people are always cursing.

Lord get up The people said this when they lifted the Box
of the Agreement and took it into battle with them. This
showed that God was with them. See Numbers 10:35-36.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
music should be louder here.

greedy People that want to take more and more wealth from
other people.

curse To ask for bad things to happen to someone.

They ... teachings Literally, "Your justice is far above
him."

They are always saying bad things
about other people.

They are always planning evil things to
do.

⁸ Those people hide in secret places and
wait to catch people.

They hide, looking for people to hurt.
They kill innocent people.

⁹ Those bad people are like lions trying to
catch the animals they will eat.

They attack poor people.

The poor people are caught in the
traps the evil people make.

¹⁰ Again and again, those bad people hurt
those poor, hurting people.

¹¹ So those poor people begin thinking these
things:

"God has forgotten us!

God has turned away from us forever!

God does not see what is happening to
us!"

¹² Lord, get up
and do something!

God, punish the bad people!

Don't forget the poor people!

¹³ Why do bad people turn against God?

Because they think God will not punish
them.

¹⁴ Lord, surely you see the cruel and evil
things that bad people do.

Look at those things,

and do something!

People with many troubles come to you
for help.

Lord, you are the One that helps

children without parents.

(So help them!)

¹⁵ Lord, destroy the evil people.

¹⁶ Remove those people from your land!

¹⁷ Lord, you have heard the things the poor
people want.

Do the things they ask!

Hear their prayers!

¹⁸ Lord, protect the children without
parents.

Don't let the sad people suffer more

troubles.
Make the bad people too afraid to stay
here.

Psalm 11

To the director.* To David.*

- 1 I trust the Lord.
So why did you tell me, to run and
hide?
You told me,
"Fly like a bird to your mountain!"
- 2 Like a hunter, the bad people, pull back
on the bowstring.
They aim their arrows.
And from the dark,
the bad people are ready to shoot
straight into the hearts of good, honest
people.
- 3 What would happen if they destroyed all
that is good?*

What would good people do then?

- 4 The Lord is in his holy palace.*
The Lord sits on his throne* in heaven.
And the Lord sees everything that
happens.
The Lord's eyes look closely at people
to see if they are good or bad.
- 5 The Lord tests people
to see if they are good or bad.
Bad people love to hurt other people.
And the Lord hates*
those cruel people.
- 6 The Lord will make hot coals and burning
sulphur
fall like rain on those bad people.
The only thing those bad people will

- get is a hot, burning wind.*
- 7 But the good Lord loves* good people.
Good people will be with the Lord and
they will see his face.

Psalm 12

To the director,* by the Sheminith.* A song of
David.*

- 1 Save me, Lord!
The good people are all gone.
There are no true believers left among
all the people on earth.*
- 2 People tell lies to their neighbors.
Each and every person flatters* his
neighbors with lies.
- 3 The Lord should cut off those lips that tell
lies.
The Lord should cut out those tongues
that tell their big stories.
- 4 Those people think these things:
"Our lies will help us to become
important people.
With our tongues, no one will be our
master."
- 5 But the Lord says:
"Bad people have stolen things from
poor people.
Those helpless people sighed (*breathed
hard*) to show their sadness.
But now I will stand and defend those
tired people."
- 6 The Lord's words are true and pure.*

hot burning wind This is like the hot fire a worker uses
to melt silver. The silver separates from all the worthless
things in it. These things are thrown away and only the pure
silver is left.

loves Or "accepts."

by the Sheminith This might be a special instrument, a
special way of tuning an instrument, or this might be one of
the two major groups that play instruments in the temple
orchestra; the group that played harps.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

all ... earth Literally, "the sons of man."

flatters To say good things about people when you don't
really mean it.

true and pure Literally, "clean" or "pure." Here this
means that we can believe God. We know that his words are
not dirty with lies like we know 24k gold is pure gold without
any other thing in it.

director Or, "performer."

To David This might mean, "David's song," or
"Dedicated to David."

What ... good Literally, "What if the foundations were
really destroyed?"

palace A large house built for a king. Here this means God's
temple.

throne The chair a king or queen sits on.

hates Or "rejects," or "refuses to accept."

Those words are pure like silver melted
in a hot fire.*

Those words are pure like silver that
was melted and poured seven
times.

- ⁷ Lord, take care of helpless people.
Protect them now and forever!
- ⁸ Those bad people walk around like they
are important.
But they are like some jewelry that
people own.
It looks expensive.
But it is really very cheap.*

Psalm 13

To the director.* A song of David.*

- ¹ How long will you forget me, Lord?
Will you forget me forever?
How long will you refuse to accept me?*
- ² How long must I wonder if you have
forgotten me?
How long must I feel this sadness in my
heart?
How long will my enemy win over me?
- ³ Lord, my God, look at me!
Answer my question!
Let me know the answer
or I will die!
- ⁴ Then my enemy might say "I beat him!"
My enemy would be happy that I am
finished.
- ⁵ Lord, I trusted in your love to help me.
You saved me and made me happy!
I sing a happy song to the Lord
because he has done good things for me.

fire Literally, "furnace." This can also be "like silver that has
become made really pure."

Those ... cheap Literally, "Bad people strut around like
expensive cheap things belonging to sons of man."

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

refuse to accept me Literally, "hide your face from
me."

Psalm 14

To the director.* To David.*

- ¹ A foolish person* says in his heart,
"There is no God."
Foolish people do terrible and rotten
things.
Not even one of them does good things.
- ² The Lord looked down from heaven at
people.
The Lord tried to find a wise man.
(A wise man turns to God for help.)
- ³ But every person had turned away from
God.
Together, all people had become bad.
Not even one person did good things.
- ⁴ Bad people have destroyed my people.
And those bad people don't know God.
Bad people have plenty of food to eat.*
And those people don't worship the
Lord.
- ⁵ Those bad people didn't want to listen to
advice from a poor man.
Why? Because that poor man depended
on God.
But those bad people became very scared.
Why? Because God is with his good
people.
- ⁷ Who on Zion* saves Israel?
It is the Lord who saves Israel!
The Lord's people were taken away and
forced to be prisoners.
But the Lord will bring his people back.
At that time, Jacob (*Israel*) will be
very, very happy.

To David This might mean "David's song," or
"Dedicated to David."

foolish person Here this means a person that does not
follow God and his teachings.

destroyed ... eat In Hebrew the word "destroyed" is like
the word "eat." This word play shows that the bad people hurt
God's followers, and those bad people still received good
things. This confused the writer.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Psalm 15

A song of David.*

- ¹ Lord, who can live in your Holy Tent?
Who can live on your holy mountain?*
- ² Only a person that lives a pure life,
and does good things,
and speaks truth from the heart
(can live on your mountain).
- ³ That kind of person does not say bad
things about other people.
That person does not do bad things to
his neighbors.
That person does not tell shameful
things about his own family.
- ⁴ That person does not respect the people
that hate God.
But that person shows honor to all the
people that serve the Lord.
If that person makes a promise,
then he does what he promised to do.*
- ⁵ If that person lends money to someone,
then he does not charge interest.
And that person will not take money
to do bad things to innocent people.
- If a person lives like that good man,
then that person will always be near
God.*

Psalm 16

A miktam of David.*

- ¹ Protect me, God,
because I depend on you.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

Holy Tent The special tent where the people of Israel worshiped God. Here this probably means the temple in Jerusalem.

holy mountain Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem is built on.

If that ... do Or, "That person promised not to do bad things. And he does not do bad things."

that person ... near God Literally, "that person will never be moved."

A miktam of David The exact meaning of "miktam" is not clear, but it might mean "a well-arranged song." This song was either written by David or dedicated to him.

- ¹ I said to the Lord,
"Lord, you are my Master.
Every good thing I have comes from
you."*
- ³ The Lord does wonderful things for his
followers on earth.
The Lord shows he truly loves those
people.
- ⁴ But people that run to worship other gods
will have much pain.
I will not share in their gifts of blood to
those idols.
I will not even speak those idols'
names.
- ⁵ No, I will share only in the Lord.
My share, my cup, comes only from the
Lord.
Lord, you support me.
You give me my share.
- ⁶ My share* is very wonderful.
My inheritance* is very beautiful.
- ⁷ I praise the Lord because he taught me
well.
At night, instructions came from deep
inside me.
- ⁸ I keep the Lord before me always.
And I will never leave his right side.
- ⁹ So, my heart and soul will be very happy.
Even my body will live in safety.
- ¹⁰ Why? Because, Lord, you will not leave
my soul in the place of death.
You will not let your holy one rot in the
grave.*
- ¹¹ You will teach me the right way to live.
Just being with you, Lord, will bring
complete happiness.
Being at your right side will bring
happiness forever.

I said ... you Or, "I said to the Lord my Master, 'You are my goodness. There is none but you.'"

share Or, "section of land."

inheritance This means the land that each Jewish family received from God.

rot ... grave Literally, "see decay" or "see the place where dead bodies decay."

Psalm 17

A prayer of David.*

- ¹ Lord, hear my prayer for fairness.
Listen to my prayer song.
Hear my honest prayer.
- ² Lord, the right decision about me will
come from you.
You can see the truth.
- ³ You have looked deep into my heart to
test it.
You were with me all night.
You questioned me and found nothing
wrong.
I didn't plan any bad thing.
- ⁴ I have tried as hard as humanly possible
to obey your commands.
- ⁵ I have followed your paths.
My feet have not moved from your way
of living.
- ⁶ Every time I called to you, God,
you answered me.
So listen to me now.
- ⁷ God, you help people that trust you—
those people stand by your right side.
So listen to this prayer from one of your
followers.
- ⁸ Protect me like the pupil of your eye.*
Hide me in the shadow under your
wings.
- ⁹ Lord, save me from the bad people that
are trying to ruin me.
Protect me from the people that are
around me trying to hurt me.
- ¹⁰ Those bad people have become too proud
to listen to God.
And they brag about themselves.
- ¹¹ Those people chased me.
Now they are all around me.
And they are ready to attack.*
- ¹² Those bad people are like lions waiting to
kill and eat another animal.

A prayer of David Or possibly, "A prayer dedicated to David."

pupil ... eye The lens of the eyeball. Our eyes are very important to us, so we try very hard to protect them.

And ... attack Literally, "They set their eyes to lie on the ground."

They hide like lions, ready to attack.

- ¹³ Lord, get up* and go to the enemy.
Make them surrender.
Use your sword and save me from the bad
people.
- ¹⁴ Lord, use your power and remove the
bad people from the land of living
people.
Lord, many people come to you for
protection.
Let those people have plenty of food.
Let their children become full.
Let those people have much wealth to
give to their children.
- ¹⁵ I prayed for, fairness.
So I will see your face, Lord.
And seeing you, Lord,*
I will be fully satisfied.

Psalm 18

To the director.* The song of the Lord's servant,
David. David sang this song at the time the Lord
saved him from Saul and his other enemies.

- ¹ The Lord is my strength.
He said,
"I will show mercy to you."
- ² The Lord is my Rock,*
my Fortress,*
my Place of Safety.
My God is the Rock.
I run for safety.
- ³ I will call to the Lord.
(The Lord is worthy to be praised.)
And I will be saved from my enemies.
- ^{4,5} My enemies have put many traps in front
of me.

Lord get up The people said this when they lifted the Box of the Agreement and took it into battle with them. This showed that God was with them. See Numbers 10:35,36.

you Lord Literally, "your likeness."

director Or, "performer."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Deadly traps are ahead of me.
The ropes of death are being wrapped
around me.

Those ropes of destruction*
are making me afraid.

The ropes of the place of death are all
around me.

- 6 Trapped, I call to the Lord for help.
I call to my God.
God is in his holy palace,*
and hears me.
He hears my call for help.

- 7 The Lord is coming to help me,
The earth begins to shake.
The mountains begin trembling.

- 8 Smoke comes from God's nose.
Burning flames come from God's
mouth,
Sparks fly from him.

- 9 The Lord tears open the sky and comes
down.

There is a dark cloud under his feet.

- 10 He rides on the flying Cherub angels.
He soars high on the wind.

- 11 The Lord is hidden in the great dark cloud
that surrounds him.

He is hidden in the thick thunder cloud.

- 12 Then, God's shining brightness breaks
through the clouds.

And there is hail and flashes of
lightning.

- 13 The Lord's voice thundered loudly in the
sky.

God Most-High let his voice be heard.

And there was hail and flashes of
lightning.

- 14 The Lord shot his arrows* and the enemy
scattered.

His many bolts of lightning defeated
them.

- 15 Lord, you spoke strongly,

and you made the powerful wind blow
from your mouth.*

The water was pushed back, and we
could see the bottom of the sea.

We could see the earth's foundations.

- 16 The Lord reached down from above and
saved me.

He pulled me from my troubles.*

- 17 My enemies were stronger than me.

Those people hated me, and they were
more powerful than me.

So God saved me.

- 18 Those people attacked me at my time of
trouble.

But the Lord supported me.

- 19 The Lord loves me,
so he rescued me.

He took me to a safe place.

- 20 I was innocent,
so the Lord rescued me.

I did nothing wrong,
so he took me back to a safe place.

- 21 I have followed the Lord.

I have not done bad things to my God.

- 22 I remember all the Lord's laws and
commands.

- 23 I keep myself pure and innocent before
him.

- 24 I am innocent,
so the Lord rescues me.

- 25 Lord, you are faithful to faithful people.
And you are good to good people.

- 26 Lord, you are good and pure to people
that are good and pure.

But, you can trick mean and tricky
people.

- 27 Lord, you help humble people.

But you make proud people become not
important.

- 28 Lord, you light my lamp.

My God, you make my darkness
become light.

- 29 With your help, Lord, I can run with the
troops.*

destruction Literally, "the place people don't return from,"
or "the grave."

palace A large house built for a king. Here this means God's
temple.

arrows That is, "lightning."

mouth Or "bostrils."

my troubles Literally, "the great waters."

troops Soldiers in the army.

- With your help, I can climb over the enemy's walls.
- ³⁰ God's ways are pure and good.
The Lord's words are true.
He protects people that trust him.
- ³¹ The Lord is the only real God.
There is no Rock*
except our God.
- ³² God gives me strength.
He makes my life pure.
- ³³ God makes my feet fast like a deer.*
He makes me steady and keeps me from
falling on high rocky places.
- ³⁴ The Lord teaches me how to fight in
battle.
He gives strength to my arms so I can
pull the string of a bronze bow.
- ³⁵ Lord, protect me with your shield.
Support me with your right arm.
Give me your great power.
- ³⁶ God, you make my legs and ankles strong
so I can march fast to the battle.
- ³⁷ Then I can chase my enemies and catch
them.
I will let none of them escape.
- ³⁸ I will defeat my enemies.
None of them will be left standing.
All of my enemies will fall at my feet.
- ³⁹ God, give me strength in battle.
Make all of my enemies fall in front of
me.
- ⁴⁰ Lord, help me defeat my enemies.*
Make me stronger than the people that
hate me.
- ⁴¹ My enemies will call for help,
but no person will come to help them.
Even if they call to the Lord,
he will not answer them.
- ⁴² I will grind my enemies into dust.
They will be like dust the wind blows
away.
I will crush them into dust.

- ⁴³ Save me from the people that fight
against me.
Make me the leader of those nations.
Make me the master of people I don't
even know.
- ⁴⁴ Then those people will listen and obey
my commands.
People from other nations will be afraid
of me.
- ⁴⁵ Those foreign people will bow down
because they are afraid of me.
They will come from their hiding places
shaking from fear.
- ⁴⁶ The Lord is alive!
I praise my Rock.*
My God saves me.
So lift him high with praise!
- ⁴⁷ God gave me victory against my enemies.
God helped me defeat those people.
- ⁴⁸ Lord, you rescued me from my enemies.
You saved me from cruel men.
You made me important.
- ⁴⁹ So I will praise the Lord to all people.
I will sing songs about your name.
- ⁵⁰ The Lord gave great victories to the king
that he chose!
He was very kind to his chosen* king!

Psalms 19

To the director.* A song of David.*

- ¹ The heavens tell about God's glory.
And the skies show the good things
God's hands have made.
- ² Each new day tells more of the story.
And each night reveals more and more
about God's power.
- ³ You can't really hear any speech or
words.
They don't make any sound we can
hear.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

deer Literally, "hind."

help ... enemies Literally, "put my hands on the necks of my enemies."

chosen Or "anointed." A special oil was poured on the heads of kings, prophets, and priests to show they were chosen by God.

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

- 4 But their "voice" goes all through the world.
Their "words" go to the ends of the earth.
- The sky is like a home for the sun.
- 5 The sun comes out like a happy bridegroom from his bedroom.
The sun begins its path across the sky like an athlete eager to run his race.
- 6 The sun starts at one end of the sky, and it runs all the way to the other end.
Nothing can hide from its heat.
The Lord's teachings are like that.
- 7 The Lord's teachings are perfect.
They give strength to God's people.
The Lord's Agreement* can be trusted.
It gives wisdom to people that are not wise.
- 8 The Lord's laws are right.
They make people happy.
The Lord's commands are good.
They show people the right way to live.
- 9 Worshiping the Lord is like a light that will shine bright forever.
The Lord's judgments are good and fair.
They are completely right.
- 10 We should want the Lord's teachings more than the best gold.
They are sweeter than the best honey that comes straight from the honeycomb.
- 11 The Lord's teachings make your servant very bright.
People that follow your laws will get good gifts.
- 12 No person can see all his own mistakes.
So don't let me do secret sins.
- 13 Lord, stop me from doing sins that I want to do.
Don't let those sins rule me.
If you help me,
then I can be pure and free from my

sins.

- 14 I hope my words and thoughts please you.
Lord, you are my Rock.*
You are the One who saves me.

Psalm 20

To the director.* A song of David.*

- 1 May the Lord answer your call for help when you have troubles.
May the God of Jacob make your name important.
- 2 May God send you help from his Holy Place.
May he support you from Zion.*
- 3 May God remember all the gifts you offered.
May he accept all your sacrifices.*
- SELAH*
- 4 May God give you the things that you really want.
May he make all your plans happen.
- 5 May we be very happy when God helps you.
May we praise God's name.
May the Lord give you all that you ask for!
- 6 Now I know the Lord helps the king he chose.
God was in his holy heaven,
and he answered his chosen king.
God used his mighty power to save that king.
- 7 Some people trust their chariots.*

Rock Sometimes this means a large rock where people hide from the heat of the sun, and sometimes it means a fort where people run for safety from their enemies.

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Agreement This probably means the Law of Moses, the commands and agreement God made with the people of Israel.

- And other people trust their soldiers.
But we remember the Lord our God.
- 8 Those other people were defeated—they died in battle.
But we won!
We stand as winners!
- 9 Why? Because the Lord saved his chosen king!
God's chosen king called for help.
And God answered!

Psalm 21

To the director.* A song of David.*

- 1 Lord, your strength makes the king happy.
He is so very happy when you save him.
- 2 You gave the king the things he wanted.
The king asked for some things.
And, Lord, you gave the king the things he asked for.

SELAH*

- 3 Lord, you truly gave many blessings to the king.
You put the gold crown on his head.
- 4 He asked you for life.
And you gave it to him!
God, you gave the king life forever and ever.
- 5 The king has great glory because you saved him.
You gave him honor and praise.
- 6 God, you truly gave the king blessings forever.
When the king sees your face,
he is very happy.
- 7 The king truly trusts the Lord.
God Most-High will not disappoint him.
- 8 God, you will show all your enemies that you are strong.
Your power will defeat the people that hate you.

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

- 9 A fire in a hot oven can burn up many things.
Lord, when you are with the king,
he becomes hot like that oven.
His anger burns like a hot fire,
and he destroys his enemies.
- 10 The families of God's enemies will be destroyed.
They will be gone from the earth.
- 11 Why? Because those people made bad plans against you, Lord.
They planned to do bad things but they didn't succeed.
- 12 But you, Lord, made those people your slaves.
You tied them together with ropes.
You put ropes around their necks.
You made them fall on their faces like slaves.
- 13 Praise the Lord
and praise his power.
Let's sing and play songs about the Lord's greatness!

Psalm 22

To the director.* To the tune, "The Hind of Dawn" A song of David.*

- 1 My God, my God!
Why did you leave me?
You are too far away to save me!
You are too far away to hear my cries for help!
- 2 My God, I called to you during the day.
But you did not answer me.
And I continued calling you in the night.
- 3 God, you are the Holy One.
You sit as King.
The praises of Israel are your throne.*
- 4 Our ancestors* trusted you.

The ... Dawn This is probably the name of the tune for this song. But it might refer to a type of instrument.

throne The chair a king or queen sits on.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Yes, they trusted you, God,
and you saved them.

- ⁵ Our ancestors* called to you for help,
God,
and they escaped.
They trusted you,
and they were not disappointed!

- ⁶ So, am I a worm and not a man?
Should people be ashamed of me?
Do the people hate me?*

- ⁷ Everyone that looks at me makes fun of
me.
They shake their heads and stick out
their tongues at me.

- ⁸ They tell me:
"You should ask the Lord to help you.
Maybe he will save you.
If he likes you so much,
then surely he will rescue you!"

- ⁹ God, the truth is, that you really are the
One I depend on.
You have taken care of me
since the day I was born.
You assured and comforted me
while I was still at my mother's
breasts.

- ¹⁰ You have been my God
since the day I was born.
I was put in your care
as soon as I came out of my mother's
body.

- ¹¹ So, God, don't leave me!
Trouble is near.
And there is no person to help me.

- ¹² People are all around me.
They are like powerful bulls all around
me.

- ¹³ They are like lions tearing at an animal
and roaring.
Their mouths are wide open.

- ¹⁴ My strength is gone,

like water poured out on the ground.
My bones have separated.

- My courage is gone!*
- ¹⁵ My mouth* is like a dry piece of broken
pottery.

My tongue is sticking to the top of my
mouth.

You have put me in the "dust of death."

- ¹⁶ The "dogs" are all around me.
That pack*
of evil people has trapped me.

Like a lion, they have pierced, my
hands and my feet.*

- ¹⁷ I can see my bones!
The people are staring at me!
They keep looking at me!*

- ¹⁸ Those people are dividing my clothes
among themselves.
They are throwing lots* for my robe.

- ¹⁹ Lord, don't leave me!
You are my strength!
Hurry and help me!

- ²⁰ Lord, save my life from the sword.
Save my precious life from those dogs.

- ²¹ Rescue me from the lion's mouth.
Protect me from the bulls' horns.*

- ²² Lord, I will tell my brothers about you.
I will praise you in the great assembly
(of your people).

- ²³ Praise the Lord,
all you people that worship him.
Descendants* of Israel,

My courage is gone! Literally, "My heart is melted in
me like wax."

mouth Or, "strength."

pack A group of dogs. Dogs travel in packs when they want
to attack and kill an animal for food.

Like a lion ... feet The ancient Greek translation has,
"They pierced my hands and my feet." In Hebrew the word
for "like a lion" is like the word meaning, "they pierced."

They keep looking at me! This phrase often means
"to look at someone with plans to hurt him."

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for
making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Protect me ... horns Or, "You hurt me more than the
bulls' horns." Or "You have answered me from the bulls'
horns." This might mean that this person learned God's
answer when he looked at the people around him.

Descendants A person's children and all of their future
families.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Do the people hate me? Or, "Am I one of the people
you hate?"

show honor to the Lord.
Fear and respect the Lord
all you people of Israel.

- ²⁴ Why? Because the Lord helps poor
people that have troubles.
The Lord is not ashamed of those poor
people.
The Lord doesn't hate them.
If people call to the Lord for help,
he will not hide from them.

- ²⁵ Lord, my praise in the great assembly
comes from you.
In front of all these worshippers,
I will do the things I promised to do.

- ²⁶ Poor people will eat and be satisfied.
You people that come looking for God,
praise him!
May your hearts be happy* forever!
²⁷ May all the people in faraway countries,
turn back to the Lord.
Remember him!

- ²⁸ May all the people in all the foreign
countries
worship the Lord.
Why? Because the Lord is the King.
He rules all nations.

- ²⁹ All the powerful people on earth will
worship the Lord.
In the past, those powerful people
destroyed other people,
But they will bow down before him.
Every person that dies will bow down to
the Lord.
Every dead person will bow down to
him.

- ³⁰ The people that will live in the future will
serve the Lord.
They will be his forever.

- ³¹ People that are not yet born
will come and tell about God's
goodness.
Those people will tell about the good
things God truly did.*

be happy Literally, "live."

Verses 30-31 These verses are hard to understand in the
Hebrew.

Psalm 23

A song of David.*

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd.
I will always have everything I need.*
² He lets me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me by calm pools of water.
³ He gives new strength to my soul
for the good of his name.
He leads me on paths of goodness,*
to show he is truly good.
⁴ Even when I walk through death's dark
valley,
I will not be afraid,*
because you are with me, Lord.
Your rod and staff*
comfort me.
⁵ Lord, you prepared my table in front of
my enemies.
You poured oil on my head.*
My cup is full and spilling over.
⁶ Goodness and mercy will be with me the
rest of my life.
And I will sit in the Lord's temple for a
long, long time.*

Psalm 24

A song of David.*

- ¹ The earth and everything on it belong to
the Lord.
The world and all its people belong to
him.
² The Lord built the earth on the water.
He built it over the rivers.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

I will ... need Literally, "I will lack nothing."

paths of goodness This means both "good paths" and
"paths where there is goodness."

Even ... afraid Or, "Even if I walk through a very dark
valley, I will not be afraid of anything bad happening."

rod and staff The walking sticks a shepherd uses to guide
and protect his sheep.

poured ... head This can mean that God gave much
wealth to this person, or that God chose him to be someone
special, like a king, a priest, or a prophet.

sit ... time Or "I will go again and again to the Lord's
temple for a long, long time."

- 1 Who can go up the Lord's mountain?
 Who can stand in the Lord's holy temple?
 2 Who can worship there?
 People that have not done evil things,
 People that have pure (*minds*).
 People that have not used my name* to
 make lies sound like the truth,
 And people that have not lied and made
 false promises.
 Only those people can worship there.
 3 Good people ask the Lord to do good
 things for other people.
 Those good people ask for goodness
 from God their Savior.
 4 Those good people try to follow God.
 They go to the God of Jacob for help.
 SELAH!
 5 Gates, lift your heads!
 Open, ancient doors!
 And the glorious King will come in.
 6 Who is this glorious King?
 The Lord is that King.
 He is the powerful soldier.
 The Lord is that King.
 He is the War Hero.
 7 Gates, lift your heads!
 Open, ancient doors!
 And the glorious King will come in.
 8 Who is that glorious King?
 The Lord All-powerful is that King.
 He is that glorious King!
 9 Lord, I give myself to you.*
 10 My God, I trust you,
 and I will not be disappointed.
 My enemies will not laugh at me.
 11 No person that trusts you will be
 disappointed.
 But traitors* will be disappointed.
 They will get nothing.
 12 Lord, help me learn your ways.
 Teach me your ways.
 13 Guide me and teach me your truths.
 You are my God, my Savior.
 I trust you every day.
 14 Remember to be kind to me, Lord.
 Show me the tender love you always
 had.
 15 Don't remember the sins and bad things I
 did when I was young.
 For your good name, Lord,
 remember me in love.
 16 The Lord is truly good.
 He teaches sinners the right way to live.
 17 He teaches humble people his ways.
 He leads them with fairness.
 18 All the Lord's ways are kind and true
 for the people that follow his
 Agreement and promises.*
 19 Lord, I have done many, many wrong
 things.
 But, to show your goodness,
 you forgave me for everything I did.
 20 If a person chooses to follow the Lord,
 then God will show that person the best
 way to live.
 21 That person will enjoy good things.
 And that person's children will keep the
 land God promised to give him.
 22 The Lord tells his secrets to his followers.
 He teaches his Agreement* to his
 followers.

Psalm 25

To David.*

Lord's mountain Zion, the mountain the temple was built on.

my name Literally, "my soul."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

To David This might mean, "David's song," or "Dedicated to David."

I give myself to you Literally, "I lift my soul to you."

traitors People that turn against their country, friends, or family and do bad things to them.

Agreement and promises This probably is the Law of Moses, the Agreement that God made with the people of Israel.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ¹⁵ My eyes are always looking to the Lord
for help.
He always frees me from my troubles.*
- ¹⁶ Lord, I am hurt and lonely.
Turn to me and show me mercy.
- ¹⁷ Free me from my troubles.
Help me solve my problems.
- ¹⁸ Lord, look at my trials and troubles.
Forgive me for all the sins I have done.
- ¹⁹ Look at all the enemies I have.
My enemies hate me and want to hurt
me.
- ²⁰ God, protect me and save me.
I trust you, so don't disappoint me.
- ²¹ God, you are truly good.
I trust you, so protect me.
- ²² God, save the people of Israel from all
their enemies.

Psalm 26

To David.*

- ¹ Lord, judge me.
Prove that I have lived a pure life.
I never stopped trusting the Lord.
- ² Lord, try me and test me.
Look closely into my heart and mind.
- ³ I always see your tender love.
I live by your truths.
- ⁴ I am not one of those worthless people.
- ⁵ I hate those evil gangs.
I don't join those gangs of crooks.
- ⁶ Lord, I wash my hands.*
I come to your altar.*
- ⁷ Lord, I sing songs of praise to you.
I sing about the wonderful things you
have done.
- ⁸ Lord, I love your temple.*

He always ... troubles Literally, "He removes my feet from the net."

To David This might mean, "David's song," or "Dedicated" to David."

I wash my hands People washed their hands as a way to prepare themselves to worship God. This showed they were pure.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

I love your glorious tent*

- ⁹ Lord, don't group me with those sinners.
Don't kill me when you kill those
murderers.
- ¹⁰ Those people might cheat.
Those people might take money to do
bad things.
- ¹¹ But I am innocent.
So, God, be kind to me and save me.
- ¹² I have continued living right.
Lord, I praise you when your followers
meet together.

Psalm 27

To David.*

- ¹ Lord, you are my Light and my Savior.
I should not be afraid of anyone!
The Lord is my life's place of safety.
So I will not be afraid of any person.
- ² Evil people might attack me.
They might try to destroy my body.
My enemies might try to attack and
destroy me.
- ³ But even if an army is all around me,
I will not be afraid.
Even if people attack me in a war,
I will not be afraid.
Why? Because I trust the Lord.
- ⁴ There is only one thing I want to ask the
Lord to give me.
This is what I ask:
Let me sit in the Lord's temple all my
life.
Let me visit his palace.*
Let me see the Lord's beauty.
- ⁵ The Lord will protect me when I am in
danger.
He will hide me in his tent.*
He will take me up to his place of
safety.
- ⁶ My enemies have surrounded me.

tent The temple in Jerusalem, or the Holy Tent where the people worshiped God before the temple was built.

palace A large house built for a king. Here this means God's temple.

But now the Lord will help me defeat them!

Then I will offer sacrifices* in his tent.*
I will give the sacrifices with shouts of joy.

I will sing and play songs to honor the Lord.

- ⁷ Lord, hear my voice.
Answer me.
Be kind to me.
- ⁸ Lord, I want to talk with you.
I want to speak to you from my heart.
Lord, I come before you to speak with you.
- ⁹ Lord, don't turn away from me!
Don't be angry and turn away from your servant.
Help me!
Don't push me away!
Don't leave me!
My God, you are my Savior.
- ¹⁰ My mother and my father left me.
But the Lord took me and made me his.
- ¹¹ I have enemies, Lord.
So teach me your ways.
Teach me to do the right things.
- ¹² My enemies have attacked me.
They have told lies about me.
They have told lies to hurt me.
- ¹³ I truly believe that I will see the Lord's goodness before I die.*
- ¹⁴ Wait for the Lord's help!
Be strong and brave,
and wait for the Lord's help!

Psalm 28

A song of David.*

- ¹ Lord, you are my Rock.*
I am calling to you for help.
Don't close your ears to my prayers.
If you don't answer my calls for help,
then I will be just like dead people in the grave.
- ² Lord,, I raise my arms and pray toward your Most Holy Place.*
Hear me when I call to you.
Show mercy to me.
- ³ Lord, don't think that I am like the bad people.
Don't include me with the evil people that do bad things.
Those people greet their neighbors with the word "Shalom."*
But in their hearts (*minds*),
they are thinking evil things against their neighbors.
- ⁴ Lord, those people do bad things to other people.
So make bad things happen to them.
Punish those bad people the way they should be punished.
- ⁵ Bad people don't understand the good things the Lord does.
They don't see the good things God does.
No, they don't understand.
They only destroy the good that God does.
- ⁶ Praise the Lord.
He heard my prayer for mercy.
- ⁷ The Lord is my strength.
He is my shield.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

tent The temple in Jerusalem, or the Holy Tent where the people worshiped God before the temple was built.

before I die Literally, "in the land of the living."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song or that this song was dedicated to him.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Most Holy Place The most important part of the temple or the Holy Tent. In this room was the Box of the Agreement and the Cherub angels. These were like a throne where God sat as king of Israel.

Shalom This word means "peace." It is like a prayer asking God to give peace to the people you meet.

I trusted him.
 And he helped me.
 I am very happy!
 And I sing songs of praise to him.
 * The Lord is powerful.
 And he gives power and victory to his
 chosen one.*
 * God, save your people.
 Bless the people that belong to you!
 Lead them and show honor to them*
 forever!

Psalm 29

A song of David.*

- 1 Sons of God,*
 praise the Lord!
 Praise his glory and power.
- 2 Praise the Lord and show honor to his
 name!
 Worship him in your special clothes.*
- 3 The Lord raises his voice at the sea.
 The voice of the glorious God
 sounds like thunder over the great
 ocean.
- 4 The Lord's voice shows his power.
 His voice shows his glory.
- 5 The Lord's voice breaks great cedar trees
 into little pieces.
 The Lord breaks the great cedar trees of
 Lebanon.
- 6 The Lord causes the mountains of
 Lebanon to shake.
 They look like a young calf dancing.
 Sirion* shakes.
 It looks like a young goat jumping.
- 7 The Lord's voice strikes with flashes of

lightning.

- * The Lord's voice causes the desert to
 shake.
 Kadesh desert* shakes at the Lord's
 voice.
- 9 The Lord's voice makes the deer* afraid.
 He destroys the forests.
 In his palace* the people sing about
 his glory.
- 10 The Lord controlled the flood.
 And the Lord will always be the king in
 control.
- 11 May the Lord protect his people.
 May the Lord bless his people with
 peace.

Psalm 30

One of David's songs. This song was for the
 dedication of the temple.*

- 1 Lord, you lifted me up out of my troubles.
 You did not let my enemies defeat me
 and, laugh at me.
 So I will show honor to you.
- 2 Lord, my God, I prayed to you.
 And you healed me.
- 3 You lifted me out of the grave.
 You let me live.
 I did not have to stay with the dead
 people lying in the pit.*
- 4 God's followers, sing praises to the Lord!
 Praise his holy name!*
- 5 God was angry, so the decision was
 "death."
 But he showed his love, and gave me
 "life."
 At night, I lay crying.
 The next morning, I was happy and
 singing!

chosen one Or, "Anointed one." This might be any person
 that God has chosen in some special way, but it usually refers
 to his special king.

show honor to them Or, "forgive them." Literally, "lift
 them up."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
 song or that this song was dedicated to him.

Sons of God Or, "sons of gods." This might mean the
 priests, or it might mean God's angels.

special clothes The special clothes that people wore when
 they went to the temple to worship God.

Sirion Or, "Mount Hermon."

Kadesh desert A desert in Syria. This might also mean
 "the holy desert."

deer Or, "oak trees."

palace A large house built for a king. Here this means God's
 temple.

One ... temple Or, "A psalm. The song for the dedication
 of the house. Dedicated to David."

pit Or, "world of the dead people."

name Literally, "memory," "memorial."

- 6 Now I can say this,
 and I know for sure it is true:
 "I will never be defeated!"
- 7 Lord, you were kind to me.
 You let me stand on your holy
 mountain* again.
 For a time, you turned away from me.
 And I was very scared.
- 8 God, I turned and prayed to you.
 I asked you to show mercy to me.
- 9 I said,
 "God, what good is it if I die and go
 down into the grave?
 Dead people just lie in the dirt!
 They don't praise you!
 They don't tell about your goodness
 that continues forever.
- 10 Lord, hear my prayer and be kind to me!
 Lord, help me!"
- 11 I prayed and you helped me!
 You changed my crying into dancing.
 You took away my clothes of sadness.
 And you wrapped me in happiness.
- 12 Lord, I will praise you forever.
 I will do this so there will never be
 silence.
 There will always be someone to
 praise you.

Psalm 31

To the director.* A song of David.*

- 1 Lord, I depend on you.
 Don't disappoint me.
 Be kind to me and save me.
- 2 God, listen to me.
 Come quickly and save me.
 Be my Rock.*
 Be my place of safety.
 Be my fortress.*

- Protect me!
 3 God, you are my Rock.*
 So, for the good of your name,
 lead me and guide me.
- 4 My enemies have put a trap in front of
 me.
 Save me from their trap.
 You are my place of safety.
- 5 Lord, you are the God we can trust.
 I put my life* in your hands.
 Save me!
- 6 I hate people that worship false gods.
 I trust only in the Lord.
- 7 God, your kindness makes me very
 happy.
 You have seen my troubles.
 You know about the troubles I have.
- 8 You will not let my enemies take me.
 You will free me from their traps.
- 9 Lord, I have many troubles.
 So be kind to me.
 I am so upset that my eyes are hurting.
 My throat and stomach are aching.
- 10 My life is ending in sadness.
 My years are passing away in sighing.*
 My troubles are taking away my strength.
 My strength is leaving me.*
- 11 My enemies hate me.
 And all my neighbors hate me, too.
 All my relatives see me in the street and
 are afraid.
 They avoid me.
- 12 I am like some lost tool.
 The people have completely forgotten
 me.
- 13 I hear the terrible things people say
 about me.
 Those people turned against me.
 They plan to kill me.
- 14 Lord, I trust you.
 You are my God.
- 15 My life is in your hands.

holy mountain Mount Zion, where the temple was.

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song or that this song was dedicated to him.

Rock A name for God. It shows that he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

life Literally, "spirit."

sighing Breathing hard from sadness.

My strength is leaving me. Literally, "My bones are wasting away."

Save me from my enemies.

Save me from the people that are chasing me.*

- ¹⁶ God, please welcome your servant with kindness.

Save me!

- ¹⁷ Lord, I prayed to you.
So I will not be disappointed.
Bad people will be disappointed.
They will go to the grave in silence.

- ¹⁸ Those bad people brag and tell lies about good people.
Those bad people are very proud.
But their lying lips will be silent.

- ¹⁹ God, you have hidden away many wonderful things for your followers.
You do good things in front of everyone for the people that trust you.

- ²⁰ Bad people join together to hurt good people.
Those bad people try to start fights.
But you hide those good people and protect them.
You protect good people in your shelter.

- ²¹ Bless the Lord!
He has shown his wonderful love for me in this city.
He showed me his love in this safe place.

- ²² I was afraid, and I said,
"I am not in a place where God can see me."
But I prayed to you, God,
and you heard my loud prayers for help.

- ²³ God's followers, you should love the Lord!
The Lord protects people that are loyal to him.
But the Lord punishes people that brag.
God gives them the punishment they should get.

- ²⁴ All you people that wait for the Lord's help,
be strong and brave!

chasing me Or, "persecuting me," "hurting me."

Psalms 32

One of David's poems.*

- ¹ Blessed (*happy*) is the person whose sins have been forgiven.

Blessed (*happy*) is the person whose sins have been erased.

- ² Blessed (*happy*) is the person that the Lord does not say is guilty.
Blessed (*happy*) is the person that does not try to hide secret sins.

- ³ God, I prayed to you again and again,
but I did not talk about my secret sins.
Every time I prayed, I only became weaker.

- ⁴ God, you made life harder and harder on me day and night.
I became like a dry, dry land in the hot summer.

SELAH*

- ⁵ But then I decided to confess all of my sins to the Lord.
So Lord, I told you about my sins.
I did not hide any of my guilt.
And you forgave me for my sins!

SELAH*

- ⁶ For this reason, God, all your followers should pray to you.
Your followers should pray even when troubles come like a great flood.

- ⁷ God, you are a hiding place for me.
You protect me from my troubles.
You surround me and protect me.
So I sing songs about the way you saved me.

SELAH*

- ⁸ The Lord says,
"I will teach you and guide you the way you should go.
I will protect you and be your guide.
So don't be stupid like a horse

One ... poems Or, "A maskil of David." We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

or a donkey.

Those animals must be led with bits and reins.*

Those animals will not come near* you unless you use bits and reins.

- ¹⁰ Many pains will come to bad people.
But love will surround people that trust the Lord.
- ¹¹ Good people, rejoice and be very happy in the Lord.
All you people with pure hearts, rejoice!

Psalm 33

- ¹ Rejoice in the Lord, good people!
Good honest people, praise him!
- ² Play the lyre* and praise the Lord!
Play to the Lord on the ten-stringed harp.
- ³ Sing a new song* to him!
Play the happy tune beautifully!
- ⁴ God's word is true!
You can depend on everything he does!
- ⁵ God loves goodness and fairness.
The Lord has filled the earth with his love.
- ⁶ The Lord spoke the command and the world was made.
The breath from God's mouth created everything on earth.
- ⁷ God gathered the water in the sea into one place.
He made the ocean stay in its place.
- ⁸ Every person on earth should fear and respect the Lord.
All the people living on this world should fear him.

bits and reins A "bit" is a metal bar that fits in the mouth of an animal and helps the rider control it. "Reins" are the ropes tied to the bit and held by the rider.

come near In Hebrew, these words also mean "to come and worship at the altar." This shows God is also talking about the people coming to worship him.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

new song Whenever God did some new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it. So this shows God has done some new thing for his people.

- ⁹ Why? Because God only has to give a command,
and that thing happens!
And if he gives the command for something to stop,
then that thing will stop!*
- ¹⁰ The Lord can make all the people's advice worthless.
He can ruin all their plans.
- ¹¹ But the Lord's advice is good forever.
His plans are good for generation after generation.
- ¹² Blessed (happy) are the people whose God is the Lord.
God chose them to be his own people.
- ¹³ The Lord looked down from heaven.
He saw all the people.
- ¹⁴ From his high throne* he looked down at all the people living on earth.
- ¹⁵ God created every person's mind.
And he understands what every person is thinking.
- ¹⁶ A king is not saved by his own great power.
A strong soldier is not saved by his own great strength.
- ¹⁷ Horses don't really bring victory in war.
Their strength can't really help you escape!
- ¹⁸ The Lord watches and cares for the people that follow him.
His great love protects the people that worship him.
- ¹⁹ God is the One that saves those people from death.
He gives those people strength when they are hungry.
- ²⁰ So we will wait for the Lord.
He is our help and shield.
- ²¹ God makes me happy.
I truly trust his holy name.
- ²² Lord, we truly worship you!
So show your great love for us.

And if he gives ... stop Or, "He gives the command, and it stands!" The word "stand" can mean "stand forever" or "come to a standstill," "stop."

throne The chair a king or queen sits on.

Psalm 34

David's ¹song₁ from the time David acted crazy so Abimelech would send him away. In this way, David left him.

- ¹ * I will always bless the Lord.
His praise is always on my lips.
- ² Humble people, listen and be happy.
My soul brags about the Lord.
- ³ Tell about the Lord's greatness with me.
Let's honor his name.
- ⁴ I went to God for help.
And he listened.
He saved me from all the things I fear.
- ⁵ Look to God for help.
You will be accepted.
Don't be ashamed.*
- ⁶ This poor man called to the Lord for help.
And the Lord heard me.
He saved me from all my troubles.
- ⁷ The Lord's angel camps around the people that follow him.
The Lord's angel protects those people and gives them strength.
- ⁸ Taste and learn how good the Lord is.
The soldier that depends on the Lord will be truly blessed (happy).
- ⁹ The Lord's holy people should worship him.
There is no other place of safety for the Lord's followers.
- ¹⁰ "Powerful" people will become weak and hungry.
But the people that go to God for help, will have every good thing.
- ¹¹ Children, listen to me,
and I will teach you how to serve the Lord.
- ¹² If a person loves life,
and if a person wants to live a good, long life,
- ¹³ then that person must not say bad things.
That person must not tell lies.

Psalm 34 In Hebrew, each verse in this Psalm begins with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

You ... ashamed Literally, "Look at him and shine. Don't let your face be pale."

- ¹⁴ Stop doing bad things.
Do good things.
Work for peace.
Run after peace until you catch it.
- ¹⁵ The Lord protects good people.
He hears their prayers.
- ¹⁶ But the Lord is against people that do bad things.
He wants other people to forget those bad people completely!
- ¹⁷ Pray, and the Lord will hear you.
He will save you from all your troubles.
- ¹⁸ The Lord is close to people that are not proud.
He will save people that have crushed spirits.
- ¹⁹ Good people might have many problems.
But the Lord will save those good people from every one of their problems.
- ²⁰ The Lord will protect all their bones.
Not one bone will be broken.
- ²¹ But troubles will kill evil people.
Bad people hate good people,
but those bad people will be destroyed.
- ²² Lord, save the soul of each of your servants.
Don't let the people that depend on you be destroyed.

Psalm 35

To David.*

- ¹ Lord, fight my battles.*
Fight my wars!
- ² Lord, pick up the shield and buckler.*
Get up, and help me.
- ³ Take a spear and javelin*
and fight against the people that are chasing me.

To David This might mean "David's ¹song₁" or "Dedicated to David."

battles The Hebrew word probably refers to legal battles in the courts.

buckler A shield that was large enough to protect the whole body.

javelin A weapon like a spear.

- Lord, tell my soul,
 "I will save you."
- 4 Some people are trying to kill me.
 Make those people be disappointed and
 ashamed.
 Make them turn and run away.
 Those people are planning to hurt me.
 Embarrass them.
- 5 Make those people be like chaff* blown
 by the wind.*
 Let them be chased by the Lord's angel.
- 6 Lord, let their road be dark and slippery.
 Let the Lord's angel chase them.
- 7 I did nothing wrong,
 but those people tried to trap me and kill
 me.
 I did nothing wrong,
 but they tried to trap me.
- 8 So, Lord, let those people fall into their
 own traps.
 Let them stumble into their own nets.
 Let some unknown danger catch them.
- 9 Then I will rejoice in the Lord.
 I will be happy when he saves me.
- 10 With my whole self I will say,
 "Lord, there is no one like you.
 Lord, you save a poor person from
 people that are stronger.
 You take things from strong people,
 and you give those things to the poor,
 helpless person."
- 11 A group of witnesses*
 are planning to hurt me.
 Those people will ask me questions.
 And I don't know what they are
 talking about.
- 12 I have done only good things.
 But those people will do only bad things
 to me.
 Lord, give me the good things, that
 I should get.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds
 of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let
 the wind blow the useless chaff away.

wind This may be a word play because the Hebrew word also
 means "Spirit."

witnesses People that tell about things they have seen or
 heard. Here, these people were probably telling lies.

- 13 When those people were sick,
 I was sad for them.
 I showed my sadness by not eating
 food.
 Is this what I get for praying for those
 people?
- 14 I wore clothes of sadness for those
 people.
 I treated those people like my friends,
 or even like brothers.
 I was sad like a man crying because his
 mother had died.
 I wore black clothes to show my
 sadness for those people.
 I walked with my head bowed in
 sadness.
- 15 But when I made a mistake,*
 those people laughed at me.
 Those people were not really friends.
 They gathered around and attacked me.
 (I did not even know those people.)
- 16 They used bad language and made fun of
 me.
 Those people showed they were angry
 at me by grinding their teeth.
- 17 My Master, how long will you watch
 these bad things happen?
 Those people are trying to destroy me.
 Lord, save my life.
 Save my dear life from those bad
 people.
 They are like lions.
- 18 Lord, I will praise you in the great
 assembly.
 I will praise you when I am with the
 powerful people.
- 19 My lying enemies will not continue
 laughing.
 Surely my enemies will be punished for
 their secret plans.*
- 20 My enemies are not really making plans
 for peace.
 They are secretly making plans to do
 bad things

made a mistake Literally, "stumbled."

Surely ... plans Literally, "Will my hairs freely wink
 their eyes?"

against the peaceful people in this country.

- ²¹ My enemies are saying bad things about me.

They tell lies and say,

"Aha! We know what you are doing!"

- ²² Lord, surely you see what is really happening.

So don't keep quiet.

Don't leave me.

- ²³ Lord, wake up!

Get up!

My God and my Lord, fight for me,
and bring me justice.

- ²⁴ Lord my God, judge me with your fairness.

Don't let those people laugh at me.

- ²⁵ Don't let those people say,

"Aha! We got what we wanted!"

Lord, don't let them say,

"We destroyed him!"

- ²⁶ Make all my enemies be disappointed and embarrassed together.

Those people were happy when bad things happened to me!

Those people thought they were better than me!

So let those people be filled with shame.

- ²⁷ People that love goodness,

you should be happy!

Always say these things:

"The Lord will make his servant great.

And his servant is the person that loves peace."

Psalm 36

To the director.* To the servant of the Lord. To David.

- ¹ A bad person does a very bad thing when he says to himself,
"I will not fear and respect God."

- ² That person lies to himself.

That person does not see his own faults.

So he does not ask for forgiveness.

- ³ His words are only worthless lies.

He does not become wise or learn to do good.

- ⁴ At night, he plans worthless things.

He gets up, and does nothing good.

He does not refuse to do any bad thing.

- ⁵ Lord, your loving kindness is higher than the skies.

Your loyalty is higher than the clouds.

- ⁶ Lord, your goodness is higher than the "mountains of the gods."*

Your fairness is deeper than the deepest ocean.

Lord, you protect man and animals.

- ⁷ Nothing is more precious than your loving kindness.

People and angels*

come to you for protection.

- ⁸ They get new strength from the good things in your house, Lord.

You let them drink from your wonderful river.

- ⁹ Lord, the fountain of life flows from you!

Your light lets us see light.

- ¹⁰ Lord, continue to love those people that truly know you.

Let your goodness be for those people that are true to you.*

- ¹¹ Lord, don't let me be trapped by proud people.

Don't let me be caught by evil people.

- ¹² Put this on their grave markers:;

"Here fell the wicked people.

They were crushed.

They will never stand up again."

mountains ... gods Or, "highest mountains."

angels Or, "gods," or "powerful people."

true to you Or, "honest hearted."

Psalm 37

To David.*

- 1 Don't* get upset at evil people.
Don't be jealous of people that do bad things.
- 2 Grass and green plants soon become brown and die.
And evil people are just like that.
- 3 If you trust the Lord and do good things,
you will live and enjoy the many things the land gives.
- 4 Enjoy serving the Lord,
and he will give you what you want.
- 5 Depend on the Lord.
Trust him.
And he will do what must be done.
- 6 Let your goodness and fairness
shine like the sun at noon.
- 7 Trust the Lord,
and wait for his help.
Don't be upset when bad people succeed.
Don't be upset when bad people make evil plans
and their plans are successful.
- 8 Don't be angry!
Don't get mad!
Don't be so upset that you want to do evil also!
- 9 Why? Because evil people will be destroyed.
But people that call to the Lord for help
will get the earth.
- 10 In a short time there will be no more evil people.
You can look for those people,
but they will all be gone!
- 11 Humble people will get the earth.
And they will enjoy peace.
- 12 Evil people plan bad things against good people.
Those evil people show they are angry
- by grinding their teeth at good people.
- 13 But our Master laughs at those evil people.
He sees the things that will happen to them.
- 14 Bad people get their swords and aim their bows.
They want to kill poor, helpless people.
They want to kill good, honest people.
- 15 But their bows will break.
And their swords will go into their own hearts.
- 16 A few good people are better
than a large crowd of evil people.
- 17 Why? Because the evil people will be destroyed.
But the Lord cares for good people.
- 18 The Lord protects pure people all of their life.
Their reward will continue forever.
- 19 When trouble comes,
good people will not be destroyed.
When times of hunger come,
good people will have plenty to eat.
- 20 But evil people are the Lord's enemies,
and those evil people will be destroyed.
Their valleys will become dry and burn.
They will be completely destroyed.
- 21 An evil man quickly borrows money,
and he never pays it back.
But a good man gladly gives to other people.
- 22 If a good person blesses people,
then those people will receive the land God promised.
But if he asks for bad things to happen to people,
then those people will be destroyed.
- 23 The Lord helps a soldier walk carefully.
The Lord keeps the soldier from falling.
- 24 If the soldier runs and attacks his enemy,
then the Lord holds the soldier's hand,
and keeps him from falling.
- 25 I have been young, and now I am old.
And I have never seen God leave good people without help.
I have never seen good people's children begging for food.

To David This might mean, "David's song," or "Dedicated to David."

Don't The first word in each verse of this song starts with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

- ²⁶ A good man always gives freely to other people.
And a good man's children are a blessing.
- ²⁷ If you turn away from doing bad things,
and if you do good things,
then you will live forever.
- ²⁸ The Lord loves fairness.
He will not leave his followers
without help.
The Lord will always protect his
followers,
but he will destroy wicked people.
- ²⁹ Good people will receive the land
(God promised).
They will live on it forever.
- ³⁰ A good person gives good advice.
His decisions are fair to every person.
- ³¹ The Lord's teaching are in the good
person's heart (*mind*).
He does not quit living the right way.
- ³² But bad people look for ways to hurt
good people.
And bad people try to kill good people.
- ³³ The Lord will not let bad people hurt
good people.
He will not let good people be
judged guilty.
- ³⁴ Wait for the Lord's help.
Follow the Lord.
Wicked people will be destroyed.
But the Lord will make you important,
and you will receive the land (God
promised).
- ³⁵ I have seen powerful wicked people.
Their power grew like a tree.
- ³⁶ But then they were gone.
I looked for them,
but I could not find them.
- ³⁷ Be good and honest,
because that brings peace.
- ³⁸ But people that break the law
will all be destroyed.
- ³⁹ The Lord saves good people.
When good people have troubles,
the Lord is their strength.
- ⁴⁰ The Lord helps good people

and saves them.
Good people come to the Lord for help,
and the Lord saves them from bad
people.

Psalms 38

A song of David* for the day of
remembrance.*

- 1 Lord, don't be angry when you criticize
me.
Don't be angry when you discipline me.
- 2 Lord, you have hurt me.
Your arrows went deep into me.
- 3 You punished me, and my whole body is
sore.
I sinned, and you punished me.
So all my bones hurt.
- 4 I am guilty of doing bad things.
And that guilt is like a heavy weight on
my shoulders.
- 5 I was foolish.
And now I have sores that stink and are
infected.
- 6 I am bent and bowed.
I am depressed all day long.
- 7 I have a fever,
and my whole body hurts.
- 8 I am completely weak.
I am in pain,
so I moan and groan.
- 9 Lord, you heard my groaning.
My sighs are not hidden from you.
- 10 I have a fever.
My strength is gone,
and my sight is almost gone.
- 11 Because of my sickness,
my friends and neighbors will not come
to see me,
and my family will not come near me.
- 12 My enemies say bad things about me.
They are spreading lies and rumors.*

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

for the day of remembrance The ancient Greek
translation has "for the Sabbath."

rumors News that people are not sure is true. People don't
know who started telling this news, and they don't know if it
is true, but they still tell other people about it. Sometimes
people start rumors to cause trouble.

- They talk about me all the time.
¹³ But I am like a deaf person
 that cannot hear.
 I am like a mute person
 that cannot speak—
¹⁴ I am like a person that cannot hear
 the things people are saying about
 him.
 I cannot argue and prove that my
 enemies are wrong.
¹⁵ So, Lord, you must defend me.
 My God and Master, tell my enemies
 the truth.
¹⁶ If I say anything,
 then my enemies will laugh at me.
 They will see I am sick,
 and they will say that I am being
 punished for doing wrong.
¹⁷ I know I am guilty of doing wrong things.
 I cannot forget my pain.
¹⁸ Lord, I told you about the bad things I
 did.
 I am sad about my sins.
¹⁹ My enemies are alive and healthy.
 And they have told many, many lies.
²⁰ My enemies do bad things to me,
 and I did only good things to them.
 I tried to do only good things,
 but those people turned against me.
²¹ Lord, don't leave me!
 My God, stay close to me!
²² Quickly come and help me!
 My God, save me!

Psalm 39

To the director. * To Jeduthun. * A song of
 David. *

- ¹ I said,
 "I will be careful about the things I say.
 I will not let my tongue cause me to sin.
² I will keep my mouth closed *

when I am near wicked people."
 I refused to speak.
 I did not say anything.
 But I was really upset.

- ³ I was very angry.
 And the more I thought about it,
 the more angry I became.
 So I said something.
⁴ Lord, tell me, what is going to happen
 to me?
 Tell me, how long will I live?
 Let me know how short my life really is.
⁵ Lord, you gave me only a short life.*
 My life is nothing to you.
 Every person's life is only like a cloud.
 No person lives forever! *
 SELAH. *
⁶ The life we live is only a false image.
 All our troubles are for no reason.
 We continue collecting things,
 but we don't know who will get
 those things.

- ⁷ So Master, what hope do I have?
 You are my hope!
⁸ Lord, you will save me from the bad
 things I have done.
 You will not let me be treated like a
 foolish person.
⁹ I will not open my mouth.
 I will not say anything.
 Lord, you did what should be done.
¹⁰ God, quit punishing me.
 You have punished me enough.
¹¹ Lord, you punish people for doing wrong.
 That is how you teach people the right
 way to live.

Our bodies become old and wear out,
 like cloth that a moth eats.
 Our lives are like a small cloud
 that quickly disappears.

To the director Or, "performer."

To Jeduthun Or, "To the director, Jeduthun." This is
 probably one of the temple musicians. See 1 Chron. 9:16;
 16:38-41.

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this
 song or that this song was dedicated to him.

keep my mouth closed Literally, "I will guard my
 mouth with a muzzle."

short life Literally, "my life is only a handbreadth."

No person lives forever Literally, "No one stands" or
 "No one survives."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
 probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
 music should be louder here.

SELAH.*

- ¹² Lord, hear my prayer!
Listen to the words I cry to you!
Look at my tears!
I am only a traveler passing through this
life with you.
Like all my ancestors,*
I live here for only a short time.*
- ¹³ Lord, don't look at me!
Let me be happy before I die.
In a short time I will be gone!

Psalm 40

To the director.* A song of David.*

- ¹ I called to the Lord,
and he heard me.
He heard my cries.
- ² The Lord lifted me out from the pit of
destruction.*
He lifted me from that muddy place.*
He picked me up and put me on a rock.
He made my feet steady.
- ³ The Lord put a new song* in my mouth,
a song of praise to my God.
Many people will see the things that
happened to me,
and they will worship God.
They will trust the Lord.
- ⁴ If a person trusts the Lord,

that person will be truly happy.
If a person does not turn to idols and false
gods for help,
that person will be truly happy.

⁵ Lord, our God, you have done many
wonderful things!
You have wonderful plans for us!
No person is like you, Lord!
I will tell again and again about the things
you have done.
There are too many things to count.

⁶ Lord, you made me understand this:*
You did not really want sacrifices* and
gifts of grain.
You did not really want burnt offerings
and sin offerings.

- ⁷ So I said,
"Look, I am coming."
This was written about me in the book.
- ⁸ My God, I want to do what you want.
I have studied your teachings.
- ⁹ I will tell the good news about goodness
to the great assembly.
Lord, you know that I will not keep my
mouth shut.
- ¹⁰ Lord, I will tell about the good things you
did—
I will not keep those good things a
secret in my heart.
Lord, I will tell how you are true and
loyal to people.
I will tell how you save people.
I will not hide your kindness and loyalty
from the people in the assembly.
- ¹¹ So Lord, don't hide your mercy from me!
Let your kindness and loyalty protect
me.
- ¹² Evil people have gathered around me.
They are too many to count!
My sins have caught me,
and I can't escape them.
I have more sins than hair on my head.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

I live here ... time Literally, "I am a settler, like all my fathers."

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song or that this song was dedicated to him.

pit of destruction Another name for "Sheol," the place of death.

muddy place In many ancient stories, Sheol, the place of death, is a dark place with mud all around. This is because dead people are usually buried in holes in the ground.

new song Whenever God did some new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it. So this shows God has done some new thing for his people.

Lord ... this Literally, "You have dug my ears." The ancient Greek translation has "You created a body for me."

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

- I have lost my courage.
 13 Run to me, Lord!
 Save me!
 Quickly, come save me!
 14 Those evil people are trying to kill me.
 Lord, make those people ashamed and
 disappointed.
 Those people want to hurt me.
 Let them run away in shame!
 15 Those bad people make fun of me.
 Let them be too embarrassed to speak!
 16 But let the people that look for you be
 happy.
 Always let those people say,
 "Praise the Lord!"
 Those people love being saved by you.
 17 Master, I am only a poor, helpless man.
 Help me.
 Save me.
 My God, come quickly!

Psalm 41

To the director.* A song of David.*

- 1 A person that helps poor people will get
 many blessings.
 When trouble comes,
 the Lord will save that person.
 2 The Lord will protect that person and
 save his life.
 That person will have many blessings
 on earth.
 God will not let that person's enemies
 destroy him.
 3 When that person is sick and in bed,
 the Lord will give him strength.
 That person may be sick in bed,
 but the Lord will make him well!
 4 I said,
 "Lord, be kind to me.
 I sinned against you,
 but forgive me and make me well."*

- 5 My enemies say bad things about me.
 They are saying,
 "When will he die and be forgotten?"
 6 Some people come and visit me,
 but they don't say what they are really
 thinking.
 Those people just come to get some news
 about me,
 and then they go and spread their
 rumors.*
 7 My enemies say bad things about me in
 secret.
 They are planning bad things against
 me.
 8 They say,
 "He did something wrong,
 so he should be sick.
 I hope he never gets well."
 9 My best friend ate with me.
 I trusted him.
 But now even my best friend has
 turned against me.
 10 So Lord, please be kind to me.
 Let me get up, and I will pay them back.
 11 Lord, if you don't let my enemies do bad
 things to me,
 then I will know that you have accepted
 me.
 12 If I become healthy,
 and if you let me stand close to you
 forever,
 then I will know that you support me.
 13 Bless the Lord, God of Israel!
 He always was
 and he always will be.
 Amen and
 Amen!

director Or, "performer."

A song of David This might mean that David wrote this song, or that this song was dedicated to him.

forgive ... well This Hebrew word means both, "heal" and "forgive."

rumors News that people are not sure is true. People don't know who started telling this news, and they don't know if it is true, but they still tell other people about it. Sometimes people start rumors to cause trouble.

BOOK 2

Psalm 42

To the director.* A maskil* from the Korah family.

- ¹ A thirsty deer wants to drink water from cool streams.
In the same way, God, my soul is thirsty for you.
- ² My soul is thirsty for the Living God.*
When can I come to meet with him?
- ³ My tears have been my food and water day and night!
The whole time, my enemy said,
"Where is your God?"
- ⁴ So let me remember all these things.
Let me pour out my soul.
I remember, walking and leading the crowd to God's temple.
I remember, singing happy songs of praise
with many people celebrating the holiday.
- ⁵ Why am I so sad?
Why am I so upset?
I should wait for God's help.
I will get the chance to praise him yet.
He will save me!
- ⁶ My God, I remember you
in the Jordan Valley,
and on the Hermon mountains,
and on the mountain of Mizar.
But still I am very sad.
- ⁷ Troubles have come to me again and again,
like waves coming in from the sea.
I hear the sounds of the crashing ocean waves.
Lord, your waves are crashing all around me.

director Or, "performer."

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

Living God This is a word play. The Hebrew words for fresh water is "living water."

Your waves have covered me!

- ⁸ If the Lord would show his true love every day,
then at night I could sing his songs.
I could pray to my Living God.
- ⁹ I speak to God, my Rock.*
I say, "Lord, why did you forget me?
Why did you not show me how to escape my enemies?"
- ¹⁰ My enemies tried to kill me.
They show they hate me when they say,
"Where is your God?"
- ¹¹ Why am I so sad?
Why am I so upset?
I should wait for God's help.
I will get the chance to praise him yet.
He will save me!

Psalm 43

- ¹ God listen to my case against the people that don't follow you.
Argue my case for me,
and decide who is right.
Those people tell lies.
Those people are crooked.
God, save me from those people.
- ² God, you are my place of safety!
Why did you leave me?
Why did you not show me how to escape my enemies?
- ³ God, let your light and truth shine on me.
Your light and truth will guide me.
Lead me to your holy mountain.
Lead me to your home.
- ⁴ I will come to God's altar.
I will come to God;
he makes me happy.
God, my God, I will praise you with a harp.
- ⁵ Why am I so sad?
Why am I so upset?
I should wait for God's help.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

I will get the chance to praise God yet.
He will save me!

Psalm 44

To the director. * A maskil* from the Korah family.

- ¹ God, we have heard about you.
Our fathers told us about the things you did in their days.
They told us about the things you did long ago.
 - ² God, with your great power you took this land from other people,
and you gave it to us.
You crushed those foreign people.
You forced them to leave this land.
 - ³ It was not our father's swords that took the land.
It was not their strong arms that made them winners.
It was because you were with our fathers.
God, your great power saved our fathers.
Why? Because you loved them!
 - ⁴ My God, you are my king.
Your commands led Jacob's people to victory.
 - ⁵ My God, with your help,
we pushed back our enemies.
With your name,
we walked on our enemies.
 - ⁶ I don't trust my bow and arrows.
My sword can't save me.
 - ⁷ God, you saved us from Egypt.
You made our enemies ashamed.
 - ⁸ We will praise God every day!
We will praise your name forever!
- SELAH*
- ⁹ But, God, you left us.
You embarrassed us.

- You did not come with us into battle.
- ¹⁰ You let our enemies push us back.
Our enemies took our wealth.
- ¹¹ You gave us away like sheep to be eaten as food.
You scattered us among the nations.
- ¹² God, you sold your people for nothing.
You did not even argue over the price.
- ¹³ You made us a joke to our neighbors.
Our neighbors laugh at us
and make fun of us.
- ¹⁴ We are one of the funny stories people tell.
Even people without a nation of their own
laugh at us and shake their heads.
- ¹⁵ I am covered with shame.
All day long I see my shame.
- ¹⁶ My enemy embarrassed me.
My enemy is trying to get even by making fun of me.
- ¹⁷ God, we have not forgotten you.
Yet you do all those things to us.
We did not lie when we signed our Agreement* with you!
- ¹⁸ God, we have not turned away from you.
We have not stopped following you.
- ¹⁹ But, God, you crushed us in this place where jackals* live.
You covered us in this place that is as dark as death.
- ²⁰ Did we forget the name of our God?
Did we pray to foreign gods?
No! ²⁰ Surely, God knows these things.
He knows even our deepest secrets.
- ²¹ God, we are being killed for you every day!
We are like sheep that are being led away to be killed.
- ²² Get up, my Master!
Why are you sleeping?

director Or, "performer."

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

jackal(s) A wild animal, like a dog. Jackals live only where no people are.

- Get up! Don't leave us forever!
 24 God, why are you hiding from us?
 Have you forgotten our pain and troubles?
 25 We have been pushed down into the dirt.
 We are lying with our belly in the dust.*
 26 God, get up and help us!
 For goodness' sake, save us!

Psalm 45

To the director.* To the tune of "Shoshanim."
 A maskil* of the Korah family. A love song.

- 1 Beautiful words fill my mind while I
 write these things for the king.
 Words come from my tongue like words
 come from a skilled writer's pen.
 2 You are more handsome than anyone!
 You are a very good speaker.
 So God will bless you forever!
 3 Put your sword on.
 Put on your glorious uniform.
 4 You look wonderful!
 Go and win the fight for goodness and
 fairness.
 Use your powerful right arm to do
 amazing things.
 5 Your arrows are ready.
 You will defeat many people.
 You will be the king over your
 enemies.
 6 God,* your throne continues forever!
 Goodness is your royal scepter.*
 7 You love goodness and you hate evil.
 So God, your God, chose you to be king
 over your friends.*

- 8 Your clothes smell like the sweet spices
 myrrh, aloes, and cassia.
 From palaces covered with ivory,
 comes music to make you happy.
 9 Kings' daughters are among your
 honored women.
 Your bride* stands at your right side,
 wearing a crown made of gold from
 Ophir.
 10 Listen to me, daughter.
 Forget your people and your father's
 family.
 11 The king loves your beauty.
 He will be your new husband.*
 You will honor him.
 12 People from the city of Tyre will bring
 gifts to you.
 Wealthy people will want to meet with
 you.
 13 The princess is like a beautiful jewel
 in an expensive and beautiful gold
 setting.
 14 She wears her beautiful clothes,
 and she is brought to the king.
 Her bridesmaids behind her are also
 brought before the king.
 15 They come filled with happiness.
 Filled with happiness they enter the
 king's palace.
 16 "King," your sons will rule after you.
 You will make them rulers throughout
 the land.
 17 I will make your name famous forever.
 People will praise you forever and ever!

We are lying ... in the dust This shows the people
 were being treated like slaves that must bow down to their
 masters.

director Or, "performer."

To the ... Shoshanim Or, "On the Shoshanim."

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word
 "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of
 instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

God This might be a song to God, as king. Or here the writer
 might be using the word "God" as a title for the king.

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to
 show they were rulers.

chose ... friends Literally, "poured the sweet oil on you
 over your friends." This was the special oil stored in the
 temple and used to anoint kings, priests, and prophets.

Psalm 46

To the director.* To the sons of Korah. By the
 Alamoth.* A song.

- 1 God is our storehouse of strength.
 In him, we can always find help in
 times of trouble.
bride Or, "queen."
husband Or, "master."
Alamoth This is probably a musical word. It may mean "like
 a flute" or "high-pitched."

- ¹ So we are not afraid when the earth
quakes
and the mountains fall into the sea.
² We are not afraid when the seas become
rough and dark,
and the earth and mountains shake.
SELAH*
³ There is a river,
and its streams bring happiness to God's
city,
to the holy city of God Most High.
⁴ God is in that city,
so it will never be destroyed.
God will help before sunrise.
⁵ The nations will shake with fear,
those kingdoms will fall
when the Lord shouts,
and the earth crumbles.
⁶ The Lord All-Powerful is with us.
The God of Jacob is our place of safety.
SELAH*
⁷ Look, see the powerful things the Lord
does.
Those things make the Lord famous on
earth.
⁸ The Lord can stop wars anywhere on
earth.
He can break the soldiers' bows and
shatter their spears.
He can burn the chariots with fire.
⁹ God says,
"Be calm and learn that I am God!
I will be praised among the nations,
glorified on earth!"
¹⁰ The Lord All-Powerful is with us.
The God of Jacob is our place of safety.
SELAH*

Psalm 47

To the director.* To the sons of Korah. A song.

- ¹ Clap your hands, all you people.
Shout with joy to God!
² The Lord Most High is awesome.
He is the Great King over all the earth.
³ The Lord commanded,
and we defeated
and conquered the nations.
⁴ God chose our land for us.
He chose the wonderful land for Jacob.
Jacob is the one he loved.
⁵ The Lord God got up
at the sound of the trumpet and war
horn.
⁶ Sing praises to God.
Sing praises.
Sing praises to our King.
Sing praises.
⁷ God is the king of the whole world.
Sing songs of praise.
⁸ God sits on his holy throne.
God rules all the nations.
⁹ The leaders of the nations meet together
with God's people,
God's people are Abraham's
descendants.*
All those people belong to God.
God is the Shield and Protector of all
nations.
He is the most wonderful God!

Psalm 48

A song. A song of the sons of Korah.

- ¹ The Lord is great.
He is worthy of praise in the city of our
God,
his holy city.
² God's holy city is a beautiful city,
the happiest city on earth.
Mount Zion is the highest, holiest
mountain,

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

director Or, "performer."

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

it is the city of the Great King.

- ³ Here in the palaces in that city,
God is called the Fortress.
- ⁴ One time, some kings met together
(They planned to attack this city).
They all marched forward together.
- ⁵ Those kings looked,
they were amazed,
they panicked,
and they all ran away!
- ⁶ Fear grabbed those kings.
They were like a woman with labor
pains.
- ⁷ A strong east wind wrecked their cargo
ships.
- ⁸ Yes, we have heard the story about those
kings,
but we also saw it happen.
We saw it in the city of the Lord
All-Powerful,
in the city of our God.
God will make that city strong forever!
SELAH*
- ⁹ God, in your temple we think carefully
about your loving kindness.
- ¹⁰ God, you are famous.
People praise you everywhere on earth.
Every person knows how good you
are.
- ¹¹ Mount Zion is happy.
God, the towns of Judah rejoice because
you make good decisions.
- ¹² Walk around Zion.
Look at the city.
Count the towers.
- ¹³ See the tall walls.
Admire Zion's palaces.
Then you can tell the next generation
about it.
- ¹⁴ God really will be our God forever and
ever!
He will lead us forever
and he will never die!

Psalms 49

To the director. * A song of the sons of Korah.

- ¹ Listen to this all you nations.
Listen to this all you people living on
earth.
- ² Every person, poor and rich alike, should
listen.
- ³ I will tell you some very wise and
intelligent things.
- ⁴ I listened to the stories,
and now, with my harp,
I will sing those stories to you.
- ⁵ There is no reason for me to be afraid of
danger,
no reason for me to fear the traps of
people trying to trap me.
- ⁶ People that trust their own strength and
wealth
are fools.
- ⁷ No human friend will save you.
You can't pay God to make him change
what will happen.
- ⁸ No person will ever get enough money to
buy his own life.
- ⁹ No person will ever get enough money to
buy the right to live forever,
and save his own body from rotting in
his grave.
- ¹⁰ Look, wise people die the same as fools
and stupid people,
and all their wealth goes to another
person.
- ¹¹ The grave will be everyone's new home
forever and ever,
And it does not matter how much land
they own.
- ¹² Wealthy people are no different than
foolish people,
All people die, just like animals.
- ¹³ And the really foolish thing about people
is that they let their appetites decide
what they should do.
SELAH*
- ¹⁴ All people are just like sheep.
The grave will be their pen.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

director Or, "performer."

Death will be their shepherd.
Their bodies will decay and rot away
in the grave.

- ¹⁵ But God will pay the price and save my
life.

He will save me from the power of the
grave!

SELAH*

- ¹⁶ Don't be afraid of people
just because they are rich.

Don't be afraid of people
just because they have big, beautiful
houses.

- ¹⁷ Those people will not take anything with
them when they die.
They will not take any of those
beautiful things with them.

- ¹⁸ People should praise God while they live.
People should praise God while he does
good things for them.

- ¹⁹ The time will come for those people to go
to their ancestors.*
And they will never again see the light
of day.

- ²⁰ Wealthy people are no different than
foolish people.
All people die, just like animals.

Psalm 50

One of Asaph's songs.

- ¹ The Lord, the God of gods has spoken.
He calls all people on earth,
from the rising to the setting sun.
² God is beautiful shining from Zion!
³ Our God is coming,
and he will not keep quiet.
Fire burns in front of him.
There is a great storm around him.
⁴ Our God calls to the sky above and to the
earth
to judge his people.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
music should be louder here.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

- ⁵ "My followers, gather around me.

Come my worshipers,
we made an agreement with each
other."

- ⁶ God is the judge,
and the skies tell about his goodness.

SELAH*

- ⁷ God says,
"My people, listen to me!
People of Israel, I will show my
evidence against you.

I am God, your God.

- ⁸ I am not complaining about your
sacrifices.

You people of Israel bring me your
burnt offerings all the time.

You give them to me every day.

- ⁹ I have not come to get bulls from your
house.

I have not come to get goats from your
stalls.

- ¹⁰ I don't need those animals.
I already own all the animals in the
forest.

I already own all the animals on
thousands of mountains.

- ¹¹ I know every bird on the highest
mountain.

Every moving thing in the hills are
mine.

- ¹² I am not hungry!

If I were hungry,

I would not have to ask you for food.

I own the world and everything in it.

- ¹³ I don't eat meat from bulls.

I don't drink blood from goats."

- ¹⁴ The sacrifice God really wants is your
praise.

Your promises to serve him
are the fellowship offerings that God
Most High really wants.

- ¹⁵ "People of Israel, pray to me when you
have troubles!

I will help you.

And then you can honor me."

- ¹⁶ God says to wicked people,
"You people talk about my laws.

- You talk about my Agreement.
 17 So why do you hate it when I correct you?
 Why do you ignore the things I say?
 18 You see a thief,
 and you run to join him.
 You jump into bed with people doing
 the sin of adultery.
 19 You people say bad things and tell lies.
 20 You constantly say bad things about
 other people,
 even your own brother.
 21 You do these bad things,
 and you think I should be quiet.
 You don't say anything about all these
 bad things,
 and you think I should be quiet too.
 Well, I will not!
 I will make it plain and criticize you to
 your face!
 22 You people have forgotten God.
 So you better understand before I tear
 you apart!
 If that happens,
 no person can save you!
 23 If a person lets his thanks and praise be
 his sacrifices,
 then he will really be honoring me.
 If a person changes his life,
 then I will show him God's power
 to save."

Psalms 51

To the director.* One of David's songs. This song is about the time that Nathan the prophet went to David after David's sin with Bathsheba.

- 1 God, be merciful to me,
 because of your great loving kindness,
 because of your great mercy,
 erase all my sins.
 2 God, scrub away my guilt.
 Wash away my sins,
 Make me clean again!
 3 I know I sinned.
 I always see those sins.

- 4 I did the things you say are wrong.
 God, you are the One I sinned against.
 I confess these things so people will
 know
 I am wrong,
 and you are right
 and your decisions are fair.
 5 I was born in sin,
 and in sin my mother conceived me.
 6 God, you want us to be loyal and secure,
 so teach me the secrets of true wisdom.
 7 Use the hyssop plant and do the
 ceremony to make me pure.
 Wash me until I am whiter than snow!
 8 Make me happy!
 Tell me how to be happy again.
 Let the bones you crushed be happy
 again!
 9 Don't look at my sins!
 Erase them all!
 10 God, create a pure heart in me!
 Make my spirit strong again!
 11 Don't push me away!
 And don't take your Holy Spirit away
 from me!
 12 Bring me the joy that comes from being
 saved by you!
 Keep my spirit steady and ready to obey
 you.
 13 I will teach sinners your way of living,
 and they will come back to you.
 14 God, don't let me be guilty of murder.
 My God, you are my Savior.
 Let me sing about how good you are!
 15 My Master, let me open my mouth and
 sing your praises!
 16 You don't want sacrifices.
 I don't need to give sacrifices that you
 don't even want!
 17 God, my sacrifice to you is my broken
 spirit.
 God, you will not turn away a crushed
 and broken heart.
 18 God, be good and kind to Zion.*

Build the walls of Jerusalem.

- ¹⁹ Then you will enjoy the good sacrifices
and whole burnt offerings.
And people will again offer bulls on
your altar.

Psalm 52

To the director.* One of David's maskils.* At
the time Doeg the Edomite went to Saul and
told him, "David is in Ahimelech's house."

- ¹ Big man, why do you brag about the bad
things you do?
You are a disgrace to God.
All day you plan to do crooked things.
- ² Your tongue is as dangerous as a sharp
razor.
Why? Because your tongue is speaking
lies!
- ³ You love evil more than goodness.
You love lying more than telling the
truth.
- SELAH*
- ⁴ You and your lying tongue love to hurt
people.
- ⁵ So God will ruin you forever!
He will grab you and pull you from
your home.*
He will kill you, and you will have no
descendants.*
- ⁶ Good people will see this,
and they will learn to fear and respect
God.
They will laugh at you and say,
- ⁷ "Look what happened to the man that
did not depend on God.
That man trusted his wealth and lies to
help him."

director Or, "performer."

maskils We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word
"maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of
instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
music should be louder here.

home This means the body. This is a poetic way of saying
God will kill this person.

descendants A person's children and all their future
families.

- ¹ But in God's temple,
I am like a green olive tree.
I trust God's love forever and ever.
- ² God, I praise you forever for the things
you have done.
With your other followers,
I will trust your good name.

Psalm 53

To the director.* On the mahalath.* One of
David's maskils.*

- ¹ Only a foolish person* thinks there is no
God.
People like that are corrupt, evil,
malicious,
and they don't do anything good.
- ² There really is a God in heaven looking at
us.
God is looking to see if there are any
wise people;
And the wise people are looking for
God!
- ³ But every person has turned away from
God.
Every person is bad.
No person does anything good.
No, not one person!
- ⁴ God says,
"Surely those evil people know the
truth!
But they don't pray to me.
Those evil people are as ready to
destroy my people
as they are to eat their food."
- ⁵ But those evil people will be scared,
like they have never been scared before!
Those evil people are Israel's enemies.
God has rejected those evil people.
So God's people will defeat them,
and God will scatter those evil peoples'
bones.

malalath This is probably a musical word. It might be the
name of a tune, or it might mean to dance and shout.

foolish person Here this means a person that does not
follow God and his teachings.

- ⁶ People of Israel, who will give the victory to Zion?
 „Yes, God will help them win.„ God will bring his people back from exile.*
 Jacob will rejoice.
 Israel will be very happy.

Psalm 54

To the director.* With instruments. One of David's maskils.* At the time the Ziphites went to Saul and told him, "We think David is hiding among our people."

- ¹ God, use your authority and save me.
 Use your power to set me free.
² God, listen to my prayer.
 Listen to the things I say.
³ Strangers have turned against me.
 Powerful men are trying to kill me.
 God, those men don't even think about you.
 SELAH.*
⁴ Look, my God will help me.
 My Master will support me.
⁵ My God will punish the people that turned against me.
 God will be true to me,
 and he will destroy those people.
⁶ God, I will give freewill offerings to you.
 Lord, I will praise your good name.
⁷ But I ask you to save me from all my troubles.
 Let me see my enemies defeated.

exile Being forced to leave one's home country.

director Or, "performer."

Maskil(s) We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

Psalm 55

To the director.* With instruments. One of David's maskils.*

- ¹ God, hear my prayer.
 Please don't turn away from me.
² God, please listen to me and answer me.
 Let me tell you my complaints.
³ My enemy said bad things to me.
 That wicked man yelled at me.
 My enemies were angry and attacked me.
 They brought troubles crashing down on top of me.
⁴ My heart is pounding inside me.
 I am scared to death.
⁵ I am scared and shaking.
 I am terrified.
⁶ Oh, I wish I had wings like a dove.
 I would fly away and find a place to rest.
⁷ I would go far, far away into the desert.
 SELAH*
⁸ I will run away.
 I will escape.
 I will run away from this storm of trouble.
⁹ My Master, stop their lies.
 I see too much violence and fighting in this city.
¹⁰ Troubles are all around me, day and night, in every part of town.
 There are terrible things happening in this town.
¹¹ There is too much crime in the streets.
 People are lying and cheating everywhere.
¹² If it were an enemy insulting me,
 I could bear it.
 If it were my enemies attacking me,
 I could hide.
¹³ But it is you, my companion,
 my colleague, my friend.
 „You are giving me troubles.„
¹⁴ We shared our secrets together.

We worshiped together in God's temple.*

- ¹⁵ I hope my enemies die before their time.
I hope they are buried alive!
Why? Because they plan such terrible things in their homes.
- ¹⁶ I will call to God for help.
And the Lord will answer me.
- ¹⁷ Evening, morning, and noon I will tell God my complaints.
And he will listen to me!
- ¹⁸ I have many enemies.
But God will save me
and bring me back safely
from every battle.
- ¹⁹ God will hear me.
The Eternal King will help me.
- SELAH***
- ²⁰ My enemies will not change their lives.
They don't fear and respect God.
- ²¹ My enemies attack their own friends.
They don't do the things they agree to do.
- ²² My enemies are really smooth talkers;
they talk about peace,
but they are really planning wars.
Their words are as slick as oil,
but those words cut like a knife.
- ²³ Give your worries to the Lord,
and he will care for you.
The Lord will never let good people be defeated.
- ²⁴ God, send those murderers and liars to their grave,
before their life is half finished!
As for me, I will trust in you.

Psalm 56

To the director.* To the tune "The Dove in the Distant Oak." One of David's *miktams*.* At the time the Philistines captured him in Gath.

- ¹ God, be merciful to me because people have attacked me.
They have been chasing me and fighting me day and night.
- ² My enemies have attacked me all day.
There are too many fighters to count.
- ³ When I am afraid,
I trust you.
- ⁴ I trust God,
so I am not afraid.
People can't hurt me!
I praise God for his promise to me.
- ⁵ My enemies are always twisting my words.
And they are always making plans against me.
- ⁶ They hide together and watch my every move,
hoping for some way to kill me.
- ⁷ God, don't let them escape.
Punish them for the bad things they do.
- ⁸ You know I am very upset.
You know how much I have cried.
Surely you have kept an account of all my tears.
- ⁹ So, defeat my enemies when I call to you for help.
I know you can do it;
you are God!
- ¹⁰ I praise God for his promise.
I praise the Lord for his promise to me.
- ¹¹ I trust God,
so I am not afraid.
People can't hurt me!
- ¹² God, I made special promises to you.
And I will do what I promised.
I will give you my thank offering.
- ¹³ Why? Because you saved me from death.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

director Or, "performer."

miktam(s) The exact meaning of "miktam" is not clear, but it might mean "a well-arranged song."

You kept me from being defeated.
So I will worship God in the light
that only living people can see.

Psalm 57

To the director.* "Don't Destroy." One of
David's miktams.* At the time he escaped from
Saul in the cave.

- ¹ God, be merciful to me.
Be kind because my soul trusts you.
I have come to you for protection,
while the trouble passes.
- ² I pray to God Most High for help.
And God takes care of me completely!
- ³ From heaven he helps me and saves me.
He defeats the people that bother me.
SELAH*
God shows his true love to me.
- ⁴ My life is in danger.
My enemies are all around me and they
are like man-eating lions,
with teeth as sharp as spears and arrows,
and tongues as sharp as a sword.
- ⁵ God is more exalted than the heavens.
His glory covers the earth.
- ⁶ My enemies set a trap for me.
They are trying to trap me.
They have dug a deep pit for me to fall
into.
SELAH*
- ⁷ But God will keep me safe.
He will keep me brave.
I will sing praises to him.
- ⁸ Wake up, my soul!
Harps and lyres,* begin your music!
Let's wake the Dawn.
- ⁹ My Master, I praise you to everyone.
I sing songs of praise about you to every
nation.

director Or, "performer."

miktam(s) The exact meaning of "miktam" is not clear, but
it might mean "a well-arranged song."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
music should be louder here.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

- ¹⁰ Your true love is higher than the highest
clouds in the sky!
- ¹¹ God is more exalted than the heavens.
His glory covers the earth.

Psalm 58

To the director.* "Don't Destroy." One of
David's miktams.*

- ¹ You judges are not being fair in your
decisions.
You are not judging people fairly.
- ² No, you only think of evil things you can
do.
You do violent crimes in this country.
- ³ Those evil men started doing wrong as
soon as they were born.
They have been liars from birth.
- ⁴ They are as dangerous as snakes.
And, like cobras that can't hear,
those evil people refuse to listen to the
truth.
- ⁵ Cobras can't hear the music or songs of
snake charmers.
And those evil people are like that.
- ⁶ Lord, those people are like lions.
So Lord, break their teeth.
- ⁷ May those people disappear like water
draining away.
May they be crushed like weeds on a
path.
- ⁸ May they be like snails melting away as
they move.
May they be like a baby that was born
dead
and never saw the light of day.
- ⁹ May they be destroyed quickly,
like thorns that burn too fast to heat the
pot on the fire.
- ¹⁰ A good man will be happy
when he sees people punished for the
bad things they did to him.
He will wash his feet in the blood of
those wicked men.
- ¹¹ When that happens, people will say,
"Good people really are rewarded.
There really is a God that judges the
world!"

Psalm 59

To the director.* "Don't Destroy." One of David's miktams.* From the time that Saul sent people to watch David's house to try to kill him.

- ¹ God, save me from my enemies.
Help me be the winner against the
people that have come to fight me.
 - ² Save me from those people that
do bad things.
Save me from those murderers.
 - ³ Look, strong men are waiting for me.
They are waiting to kill me.
And it is not because I sinned or
committed some crime.
 - ⁴ They are chasing me,
and I did nothing wrong.
Lord, come and see for yourself!
 - ⁵ You are the Lord God All-Powerful, the
God of Israel!
Get up and punish those people.
Don't show any mercy to those evil
traitors.
- SELAH*
- ⁶ Those evil men come into town in the
evening,
and they are like dogs growling,
and roaming through town.
 - ⁷ Listen to their threats and insults.
They say such cruel things,
and they don't care who hears them.
 - ⁸ Lord, laugh at them.
Make fun of all those people.
 - ⁹ God you are my strength, I am waiting
for you.
God, you are my place of safety high in
the mountains.
 - ¹⁰ God loves me, and he will help me win.
He will help me defeat my enemies.
 - ¹¹ Don't just kill them, God,
or my people might forget.
My Master and Protector,

scatter them and defeat them with your
strength.

- ¹² Those evil people curse and tell lies.
Punish them for the things they said.
Let their pride trap them.
 - ¹³ Destroy them in your anger.
Destroy them completely!
Then people will know that God rules
Jacob's people and the whole world!
- SELAH*
- ¹⁴ Then if those evil men come into town in
the evening,
like dogs growling, and roaming
through town,
 - ¹⁵ then they will go looking for something
to eat,
and they will find no food and no
place to sleep.
 - ¹⁶ And I will sing songs of praise to you.
In the mornings, I will rejoice in your
love.
Why? Because you are my place of
safety,
high in the mountains.
And I can run to you when troubles
come.
 - ¹⁷ I will sing my songs of praise to you.
Why? Because you are my place of safety
high in the mountains.
You are the God who loves me!

Psalm 60

To the director.* To the tune "Lily of the Agreement." A miktam* of David's. For teaching. When David fought Aram Naharaim* and Aram Zobah,* and when Joab came back and defeated 12,000 Edomite soldiers at Salt Valley.

- ¹ God, you left us.
You defeated us.
You were angry at us.
Please come back to us.

director Or, "performer."

miktam(s) The exact meaning of "miktam" is not clear, but it might mean "a well-arranged song."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

Aram Naharaim Or, "the Arameans of Northwest Mesopotamia."

Aram Zobah Or, "the Arameans of central Syria."

- ¹ You caused the earth to shake and split open.
Our world is falling apart;
please fix it.
- ² You have given your people many troubles.
We are staggering and falling like drunk people.
- ⁴ You have warned the people that worship you.
Now they can escape the enemy.
- SELAH*
- ⁵ Use your great power and save us!
Answer my prayer and save the people you love!
- ⁶ God speaks from his temple.
"I will win and be happy about the victory.
And I will share this land with my people.
I will divide Shechem and Succoth Valley.
- ⁷ Gilead and Manasseh will be mine.
Ephraim will be my helmet.
Judah will be my royal scepter.* I will make Moab like a bowl for washing my feet.
Edom will be like a slave that carries my sandals.
I will defeat the Philistine people."
- ⁹ Who will bring me to the strong, protected city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
- ¹⁰ God, only you can help me do these things.
But you left us!
God will not go with us and our armies!
- ¹¹ God, help us out of this tight spot.
People can't help us!
- ¹² But we can win with God's help!
God can defeat our enemies!

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to show they were rulers.

Psalms 61

To the director.* With stringed instruments. One of David's songs.

- ¹ God, hear my prayer song.
Listen to my prayer.
- ² Wherever I am, however weak,
I will call to you for help!
Carry me to the place of safety far above.
- ³ You are my place of safety!
You are the strong tower protecting me from my enemies.
- ⁴ I will live in your Tent* forever.
I will hide where you can protect me.
- SELAH*
- ⁵ God, you heard what I promised to give you.
But everything your worshipers have comes from you.
- ⁶ Give the king a long life.
Let him live forever!
- ⁷ Let him live with God forever!
Protect him with your true love.
- ⁸ And I will praise your name forever.
Every day, I will do the things I promised.

Psalms 62

To the director.* To Jeduthun. One of David's songs.

- ¹ I wait patiently for God to save me.
- ² God is my fortress.*
God saves me.
God is my place of safety high on the mountain.
Not even great armies can defeat me.
- ³ How long will you attack me?
I am like a leaning wall,
a fence ready to fall.
- ⁴ Those people are planning to destroy me.
They tell lies about me.

director Or, "performer."

Tent The temple in Jerusalem, or the Holy Tent where the people worshiped God before the temple was built.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

In public, they say good things about me,
but they secretly curse me.

SELAH*

⁵ I wait patiently for God to save me.

God is my only hope.

⁶ God is my fortress.*

God saves me.

God is my place of safety high on the
mountain.

⁷ My glory and victory comes from God.

He is my strong fortress.

God is my place of safety.

⁸ People, trust God all the time!

Tell God about all your problems.

God is our place of safety.

SELAH*

⁹ People can't really help.

You can't trust them to really help.

Compared to God,
they are like nothing,
like a gentle puff of air!

¹⁰ Don't trust the power to take things by
force.

Don't think you will gain anything by
stealing.

And if you become rich,
don't trust your riches to help you.

¹¹ God says there is one thing you can really
depend on:

Strength comes from God!

¹² My Master, your love is real.

You reward or punish a person
for the things he does.

Psalm 63

One of David's songs. From the time he was in
the desert of Judah.

¹ God, you are my God.

And I want you so much.

My soul and my body thirst for you,
like a dry, weary land with no water.

² Yes, I have seen you in your temple.

I have seen your strength and glory.

³ Your love is better than life.

My lips praise you.

⁴ Yes, I will praise you in my life.

In your name, I will lift my arms and
pray to you.

⁵ I will be satisfied
as though I had eaten the best foods.

And my mouth will praise you.

⁶ I will remember you while lying on my
bed.

I will remember you in the middle of
the night.

⁷ You really have helped me!

I am happy that you protected me!

⁸ My soul clings to you.

And you hold my hand.

⁹ Some people are trying to kill me.
But they will be destroyed.

They will go down to their graves.

¹⁰ They will be killed with swords.

Wild dogs will eat their dead bodies.

¹¹ But the king will be happy with his God.

All the people that promised to obey
him will praise him.

Why? Because he defeated all those liars.

Psalm 64

To the director.* One of David's songs.

¹ God, listen to me.

I am afraid of my enemies.

I am afraid for my life.

² Protect me from the secret plans of my
enemies.

Hide me from those wicked people.

³ They have told many bad lies about me.

Their tongues have been like sharp
swords,

their bitter words like arrows.

⁴ They hide, and then shoot their arrows at
a simple, honest man.

And before he knows it, he is wounded.

⁵ They do bad things to defeat him.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
music should be louder here.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for
protection.

director Or, "performer."

They tell lies and set their traps.
And they are sure no person will catch them.

- ⁶ People can be very tricky.
It is very hard to understand what people are thinking.
- ⁷ But God can shoot his "arrows" too!
And before they know it, the evil people are wounded.
- ⁸ Evil people plan to do bad things to other people.
But God can ruin their plans,
and make those bad things happen to themselves.
- Then everyone that sees them will shake their heads in amazement.
- ⁹ People will see the things that God has done.
They will tell other people about those things.
Then everyone will learn more about God.
They will learn to fear and respect him.
- ¹⁰ Good people should be happy in the Lord.
They should trust him.
Praise the Lord, all of you good people.

Psalm 65

To the director.* One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ God on Zion,* I praise you.
I give you the things I promised.
- ² We tell about the things you have done.
And you hear our prayers.
You hear the prayers of every person that comes to you.
- ³ When our sins become too heavy for us to bear,
you take away those sins.
- ⁴ God, you chose your people.
You chose us to come to your temple and worship you.
And we are very happy!

We have all the wonderful things in your temple,
your holy palace.

- ⁵ God, you save us.
Good people pray to you,
and you answer their prayers.
You do amazing things for them.
People all around the world trust you.
- ⁶ God used his great power and made the mountains.
- ⁷ God made the rough seas calm.
And God made all the many people in the world.
- ⁸ Every person on earth fears the powerful things God does.
God, in every place that you cause the sun to rise and set,
people praise you.
- ⁹ You take care of the land.
You water it and you make it grow things.
God, you fill the streams with water and make the crops grow.
This is how you do it:
- ¹⁰ You cause rain to fall on the plowed fields.
You soak the fields with water.
You make the ground soft with rain,
and then you make the young plants grow.
- ¹¹ You start the new year with a good harvest.*
And you load the wagons with many crops.
- ¹² The desert and hills are covered with grass.
- ¹³ The pastures are covered with sheep.
The valleys are filled with grain.
Everyone is singing and shouting with happiness.

director Or, "performer."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

start ... harvest In ancient Israel there were apparently two calendars. The calendar for religious holidays began in the spring, at barley harvest. The other calendar started in the fall, when they gathered other crops.

Psalm 66

To the director.* A song of praise.

- ¹ Everything on earth,
shout with joy to God!
- ² Praise his glorious name!
Honor him with songs of praise!
- ³ Tell God how wonderful his works are!
God, your power is very great!
Your enemies bow down.
They are afraid of you!
- ⁴ May the whole world worship you.
May everyone sing praises to your
name.
- SELAH*
- ⁵ Look at the amazing things God has
done!
Those things amaze us.
- ⁶ God made the sea become dry land.*
And his happy people walked across the
river.*
- ⁷ God rules the world with his great power.
God watches people everywhere.
No person can rebel against him.
- SELAH*
- ⁸ People, praise our God.
Sing loud songs of praise to him.
- ⁹ God gave us life.
And God protects us.
- ¹⁰ God tested us.
God tested us like people test silver
with fire.
- ¹¹ God, you let us be trapped.
You put heavy burdens on us.
- ¹² You let our enemies walk on us.
You dragged us through fire and water.
But you brought us to a safe place.
- ¹³⁻¹⁴ So I will bring sacrifices* to your temple.

director Or, "performer."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

sea ... land This was with Moses at the Red Sea. See Ex.14.

walked ... river This was with Joshua at the Jordan River. See Joshua 3:14-17.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

When I was in trouble,
I asked you for help.
And I made many promises to you.
Now, I am giving you the things I
promised.

- ¹⁵ I am giving you sin offerings.
I am giving you incense* with the rams.
I am giving you bulls and goats.
- SELAH*
- ¹⁶ All of you people worshiping God,
come and I will tell you what God did
for me.
- ¹⁷ I prayed to him.
I praised him.
- ¹⁸ My heart was pure,
so my Master listened to me.
- ¹⁹ God listened to me.
God heard my prayer.
- ²⁰ Praise God!
God did not turn away from me—
he listened to my prayer.
God showed his love to me!

Psalm 67

To the director.* With instruments. A song of
praise.

- ¹ God, show mercy to me and bless me.
Please accept us!
- SELAH*
- ² Let every person on earth learn about
you, (God).
Let every nation learn how you save
people.
- ³ May people praise you, God!
May all people praise you.
- ⁴ May all nations rejoice and be happy!
Why? Because you judge people fairly.
And you rule over every nation.
- ⁵ May people praise you, God!
May all people praise you.
- ⁶ God, our God, bless us.
Let our land give us a great harvest.
- ⁷ May God bless us.
And may everyone on earth fear and
respect God.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make
sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Psalm 68

To the director.* One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ God, get up and scatter your enemies.
May all of his enemies run from him.
- ² May your enemies be scattered,
like smoke blown away by the wind.
May your enemies be destroyed,
like wax melting in a fire.
- ³ But good people are happy.
Good people have a happy time together
with God.
Good people enjoy themselves and are
very happy!
- ⁴ Sing to God.
Sing praises to his name.
Prepare the way for God.
He rides his chariot* over the desert.
His name is Yah.*
Praise his name!
- ⁵ In his holy temple,
God is like a father to orphans.*
God takes care of widows.*
- ⁶ God gives lonely people a home.
God takes his people out of prison.
They are very happy.
But people that turn against God,
will stay in their hot prison.
- ⁷ God, you led your people out of Egypt.
You marched across the desert.
SELAH*
- ⁸ And the ground shook.
God, the God of Israel came to
Mount Sinai,
and the sky melted.
- ⁹ God, you sent the rain,
and you made the weak, old land strong
again.

director Or, "performer."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Yah This is a Hebrew name for God.

orphan(s) Children whose parents have died.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

- ¹⁰ Your animals came back to that land.
God, you gave many good things to the
poor people there.
- ¹¹ God gave the command.
And many people went to tell the good
news:
- ¹² "The armies of powerful kings are
running away!
The women at home will divide the
things the soldiers bring from war.
The people that stayed at home will
share in the wealth.
- ¹³ They will get the dove wings covered
with silver.
They will get the wings sparkling
with gold."
- ¹⁴ On Mount Zalmon, God scattered the
enemy kings.
They were like falling snow.
- ¹⁵ Mount Bashan is a great mountain.
Mount Bashan has many peaks.
- ¹⁶ Mount Bashan, why do you look down on
Mount Zion?
God loves that mountain (Zion).
The Lord chose to live there forever.
- ¹⁷ The Lord comes to Holy Mount Zion,
And behind him are millions of his
chariots.*
- ¹⁸ Go up to heights!
Lead the parade of captives!
Receive the gifts that people are
giving you!
Even people that fought against you,
are bringing gifts to the temple of the
Lord God.
- ¹⁹ Praise the Lord!
Every day he helps us with the loads we
must carry.
God saves us!
- SELAH*
- ²⁰ He is our God.
He is the God that saves us.
The Lord our God saves us from death.
- ²¹ God will show that he defeated his
enemies.
God will punish the people that fought

- against him.*
 12 My Master said,
 "I will bring the enemy back from
 Bashan,
 I will bring the enemy from the sea,
 13 so you can walk in their blood,
 so your dogs can lick up their blood."
 14 People see God leading the victory
 parade.
 People see my Holy God, my King,
 leading the victory parade.
 15 Singers come marching in front.
 Musicians come marching behind.
 And in the middle, the young girls are
 playing tambourines.
 16 Praise God in the great assembly!
 Praise the Lord, people of Israel!
 27 There is little Benjamin, leading them.
 And there is the great family of Judah.
 And there are the leaders of Zebulun
 and Naphtali.
 28 God, show us your power!
 God, show us the power you used for us
 in the past.
 29 Kings will bring their wealth to you,
 to your palace in Jerusalem.
 30 Use your stick to make those animals do
 what you want.
 Make the "bulls" and "cows" in those
 nations obey you.
 You defeated those nations in war.
 Now make them bring silver to you.
 31 Make them bring wealth from Egypt.
 God, make the Ethiopians bring their
 wealth to you.
 32 Kings on earth, sing to God!
 Sing songs of praise to our Master!
 SELAH*
 33 Sing to God!
 He rides his chariot through the ancient

- skies.
 Listen to his powerful voice!
 34 God is more powerful than any of your
 gods.
 The God of Israel makes his people
 strong.
 35 God is wonderful in his temple.
 The God of Israel gives his people
 strength and power.
 Praise God!

Psalm 69

To the director.* To the tune "The Lilies." One
 of David's songs.

- 1 God, save me from all my troubles!
 The water has risen to my mouth.
 2 There is nothing to stand on.
 I am sinking down, down into the
 mud.
 I am in deep water.
 And the waves are crashing around
 me.
 I am about to drown.
 3 I am getting weak from calling for help.
 My throat is hurting.
 I have waited and looked for help
 from you
 until my eyes are hurting.
 4 I have more enemies than the hair on
 my head.
 They hate me for no reason.
 They try hard to destroy me.
 My enemies tell lies about me.
 They lied and said I stole things.
 And then they forced me to pay for
 things I did not steal.
 5 God, you know I did nothing wrong.
 I can't hide my sins from you.
 6 My Master, Lord All-Powerful, don't let
 your followers be ashamed of me.
 God of Israel, don't let your worshipers
 be embarrassed because of me.
 7 My face is covered with shame.
 I carry this shame for you.
 8 My brothers treat me like a stranger.

God will show ... him Literally, "God will smash the
 heads of his enemies. He will smash the hairy skull walking in
 guilt."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
 probably means that the singers should pause here or that the
 music should be louder here.

director Or, "performer."

My mother's sons treat me like a
foreigner.

- ⁹ My strong feelings* for your temple are
destroying me.

I get the insults from people that make
fun of you.

- ¹⁰ I cry and fast,*
and they make fun of me for it.

- ¹¹ I wear rough cloth to show my sadness,
and people tell jokes about me.

- ¹² They talk about me in public places.
And the beer drinkers make up songs
about me.

- ¹³ As for me, this is my prayer to you Lord:
I want you to accept me!

God, I want you to answer me with
love.

I know I can trust you to save.

- ¹⁴ Pull me from the mud.
Don't let me sink down into the mud.
Save me from the people that hate me.
Save me from this deep water.

- ¹⁵ Don't let the waves drown me.
Don't let the deep hole swallow me.
Don't let the grave close its mouth
on me.

- ¹⁶ Lord, your love is good.
Answer me with all your love.
With all your kindness,
turn to help me! "Don't turn away from
your servant.

I am in trouble!
Hurry, help me!

- ¹⁸ Come save my soul.
Rescue me from my enemies.

- ¹⁹ You know my shame.
You know my enemies embarrassed me.
You saw them do those things to me.

- ²⁰ The shame has crushed me!
I am about to die from shame.

I waited for sympathy,
but none could be found.

I waited for some person to comfort me,

but no person came.

- ²¹ They gave me poison, not food.
They gave me vinegar, not wine.

- ²² May the food and drink on their tables
poison them.

- ²³ May they become blind and their backs
bent over.

- ²⁴ May they feel all your anger at them.

- ²⁵ May their families and homes be
completely destroyed.

- ²⁶ Punish them, and they will run away.
Then they will have pains and wounds
to talk about.

- ²⁷ Punish them for the bad things they did.
Don't show them how good you can be.

- ²⁸ Erase their names from the Book of Life.
Don't write their names in the book
with the names of the good people.

- ²⁹ I am sad and hurting.
God, lift me up.
Save me!

- ³⁰ I will praise God's name in song,
I will praise him with a song of thanks.

- ³¹ This will make God happy!
This will be better than killing a bull
and offering the whole animal as a
sacrifice.

- ³² Poor people, you have come to worship
God.
Poor people, you will be happy to know
these things.

- ³³ The Lord listens to poor, helpless people.
The Lord still likes people in prison.

- ³⁴ Heaven and earth,
sea and everything in it,
praise the Lord!

- ³⁵ The Lord will save Zion*!
The Lord will build the cities of Judah
again.

The people that own the land will live
there again!

strong feelings The Hebrew word means strong feelings
like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer and
worship to God.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

- ³⁶ The descendants* of his servants will get that land.
And the people that love his name will live there.

Psalm 70

To the director.* One of David's songs. To help people remember.

- ¹ God, save me!
God, hurry and help me!
² People are trying to kill me.
Disappoint them!
Humiliate them!
People want to do bad things to me.
I hope they fail and feel the shame.
³ People made fun of me.
I hope they are defeated and feel the shame.
⁴ I hope that all the people who worship you
are very, very happy.
I hope that the people who love being saved by you
will always be able to praise you.
⁵ I am a poor, helpless man.
God, hurry! Come and save me!
God, you are the only one who can rescue me.
Don't be too late!

Psalm 71

- ¹ Lord, I trust you,
so I will never be disappointed.
² In your goodness, you will save me.
You will rescue me.
Listen to me.
Save me.
³ Be my fortress,* the home I can run to for safety.
Give the command to save me.

- Because you are my Rock,*
my place of safety.
⁴ My God, save me from wicked people.
Save me from cruel, evil people.
⁵ My Master, you are my hope.
I have trusted you since I was a young boy.
⁶ I have depended on you from before I was born.
I have trusted you from the day I was born.
I have always prayed to you.
⁷ I have been an example to other people.
Why? Because you are my source of strength.
⁸ I am always singing about the wonderful things you do.
⁹ So don't throw me away just because I am old.
Don't leave me as I lose my strength.
¹⁰ My enemies really have made plans against me.
Those people really have met together,
and they planned to kill me.
¹¹ My enemies say,
"God has left him.
Go get him,
No person will help him."
¹² God, don't leave me!
God, hurry! Come save me!
¹³ Defeat my enemies!
Destroy them completely!
They are trying to hurt me.
I hope they feel the shame and disgrace.
¹⁴ Then I will always trust you.
And I will praise you more and more.
¹⁵ I will tell people how good you are.
I will tell people about the times you saved me.
There have been too many times to count.
¹⁶ I will tell about your greatness, Lord my Master.
I will talk about only you and your

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

director Or, "performer."

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

goodness.

- ¹⁷ God, you have taught me since I was a young boy.
And to this day I have continued telling others about the wonderful things you do!
- ¹⁸ Now I am old and my hair is gray.
But I know that you won't leave me, God.
I will tell each new generation about your power and greatness.
- ¹⁹ God, your goodness reaches far above the skies.
God, there is no god like you.
You have done wonderful things.
- ²⁰ You let me see many troubles and bad times.
But you saved me from every one of them and kept me alive.
No matter how deep I sank,
you lifted me out of my troubles.
- ²¹ Help me do greater things than before.
Continue to comfort me.
- ²² And I will praise you with the harp.
My God, I will sing that you can be trusted.
With my lyre,* I will play songs for the Holy One of Israel.
- ²³ You saved my soul.
My soul will be happy.
And I will sing songs of praise with my lips.
- ²⁴ My tongue will sing about your goodness all the time.
And the people that want to kill me,
will be defeated and disgraced.

Psalm 72

To Solomon.*

- ¹ God, help the king make wise decisions like you.
And help the king's son learn about your goodness.

- ² Help the king judge your people fairly.
Help him do what is right for your poor people.
- ³ Let there be peace and justice throughout the land.
- ⁴ Let the king be fair to the poor people.
Let him help the helpless.
Let him punish the people that hurt them.
- ⁵ I hope people fear and respect the king as long as the sun shines
and as long as there is a moon in the sky.
I hope people fear and respect him forever.
- ⁶ Help the king be like rain falling on the fields.
Help him be like showers falling on the land.
- ⁷ Let goodness blossom while he is king.
Let peace continue as long as the moon.
- ⁸ Let his kingdom grow from sea to sea,
from the River*
to the faraway places on earth.*
- ⁹ Let the people living in the desert bow down to him.
And let all his enemies bow before him with their faces in the dirt.
- ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish* and the faraway lands bring gifts to him.
May the kings of Sheba and Seba bring their payment* to him.
- ¹¹ May all kings bow down to our king.
May all nations serve him.
- ¹² Our king helps the helpless.
Our king helps poor, helpless people.
- ¹³ Poor, helpless people depend on him.
The king keeps them alive.
- ¹⁴ The king saves them from cruel people that try to hurt them.

River Probably the Euphrates River.

faraway ... earth This usually means the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain.
Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

payment Or, "tribute," the money and gifts a country paid to the country that defeated it.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

To Solomon This might mean this song was written by Solomon or dedicated to him or that it is from some special collection of songs.

The lives of those poor people are very important to the king.

- ¹⁵ Long live the king!
And let him receive gold from Sheba.
Always pray for the king.
Bless him every day.
- ¹⁶ May the fields grow plenty of grain.
May the hills be covered with crops.
May the fields be as fertile as those in Lebanon.
And may the cities be filled with people like fields covered with grass.
- ¹⁷ May the king be famous forever.
May people remember his name as long as the sun shines.
May all the people be blessed because of him.
And may they all bless him.
- ¹⁸ Praise the Lord God, the God of Israel!
God is the only One to do such amazing things.
- ¹⁹ Praise his glorious name forever!
Let his glory fill the whole world!
Amen,* and Amen!
- ²⁰ This ends the prayers of David, son of Jesse.

BOOK 3

Psalm 73

Asaph's song of praise.

- ¹ God is truly good to Israel.
God is good to people that have pure hearts.
- ² I almost slipped and began to sin.
- ³ I saw that wicked people were successful
I became jealous of those proud people.
- ⁴ Those people are healthy.
They don't have to struggle to survive.*
- ⁵ Those proud people don't suffer like we do.

They don't have troubles like other people.

- ⁶ So they are very proud and hateful people.
This is as clear to see as the jewels and beautiful clothes they wear.
- ⁷ If those people like something they see,
they go and take it.
They do the things they want to do.
- ⁸ They say cruel and evil things about other people.
They are proud and stubborn and plan ways to take advantage of other people.
- ⁹ Those proud people think they are gods!
They think they are the rulers of earth.
- ¹⁰ So even God's people turn to those evil people,
and believe the things they say.*
- ¹¹ Those evil people say,
"God does not know the things we are doing!
God Most-High does not know!"
- ¹² Those proud people are wicked, but they are rich.
And they are always becoming richer.
- ¹³ So why should I continue to make my heart pure?
Why should I always make my hands clean?
- ¹⁴ God, I suffer all day long.
And you punish me every morning.
- ¹⁵ I wanted to say these things to other people.
But, God, I knew I would be turning against your people.
- ¹⁶ I tried to understand these things in my mind.
But it was all too hard for me to understand
- ¹⁷ until I went to your temple.*
I went to God's temple, and then I understood.

Amen A Hebrew word meaning "truly," "indeed." It is used to show that a person agrees with what has been said.

They ... survive Literally, "They have no bonds to their death."

So even ... say This verse is hard to understand in the Hebrew.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

- ¹⁸ God, you really have put those people in a dangerous situation.
It is so easy for them to fall and be destroyed.
- ¹⁹ Trouble can come suddenly,
and then those proud people are ruined.
Terrible things can happen to them,
and then they are finished.
- ²⁰ Lord, those people will be like a dream that
we forget when we wake up.
You will make those people disappear
like the monsters in our dreams.
- ¹¹⁻²² I was very stupid.
I thought about the rich and wicked people,
and I became upset.
God, I was angry at you, and upset.
And I acted like a stupid, ignorant animal.
- ²³ I have everything I need!,
I am with you always.
God, you hold my hand.
- ²⁴ God, you lead me and give me good advice.
And later, you will take me to be with you in Glory.
- ²⁵ God, I have you in heaven.
And when I am with you,
what on earth can I want?
- ²⁶ Maybe my mind*
and my body will be destroyed,
but I have the Rock* I love.
I have God forever!
- ²⁷ God, people that leave you will be lost.
You will destroy the people that are not faithful to you.
- ²⁸ But I am close to God.
God is good to me.
My Master cares for me.
The Lord is my place of safety.
God, I will tell about all the things you have done.

mind Literally, "heart."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Psalm 74

A maskil* of Asaph.

- ¹ God, did you leave us forever?
Are you still angry at your people?
- ² Remember the people you bought long ago.
You saved us.
We belong to you.
You lived on Mount Zion.*
- ³ God, come and walk through these very old ruins.
Come back to the Holy Place that the enemy destroyed.
- ⁴ The enemy shouted their war cries in the temple.
They put their flags in the temple to show they won the war.
- ⁵ The enemy soldiers were like people cutting weeds with a hoe.
- ⁶ These enemy soldiers used their axes and hatchets,
and cut the carved, wooden panels in your temple, God.
- ⁷ God, those soldiers burned your Holy Place.
They pulled your temple down to the ground.
And the temple was built to honor your name!
- ⁸ The enemy decided to crush us completely.
They burned every holy place* in the country.
- ⁹ We could not see any of our own signs.*
There are no more prophets.
No person knows what to do.
- ¹⁰ God, how much longer will the enemy make fun of us?

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

holy place Or, "El meeting place." This means every place where people went to meet with God.

signs These were probably signal fires that people burned as a way of passing messages from one town to the next. In war, this was a way people showed other towns that the enemy had not yet destroyed their own town.

- Will you let the enemy insult your name forever?
- ¹¹ God, why did you punish us so hard?
You used your great power and completely destroyed us!
- ¹² God, you have been our King for a long time.
You helped us win many battles in this country.
- ¹³ God, you used your great power,
to split open the Red Sea.
- ¹⁴ You defeated the great sea monsters!
You smashed the heads of Leviathan,*
and left his body for the animals to eat.
- ¹⁵ You made the springs and underground water
break open and flood the world.
And you made the rivers become dry.
- ¹⁶ God, you control the day,
and you control the night.
You made the moon and the sun.
- ¹⁷ You set all the limits for everything on earth.
And you created summer and winter.
- ¹⁸ God, remember these things.
And remember that the enemy has insulted you!
Those foolish people hate your name!
- ¹⁹ God, don't let those "wild animals" take your "dove"!
Don't forget your poor people forever.
- ²⁰ Remember the Agreement* we made with each other.
There is violence in every dark place in this land.
- ²¹ God, your people were treated badly.
Don't let them be hurt any more.
Your poor, helpless people praise you.

great ... Leviathan These were creatures from ancient stories. People believed that these creatures kept the world from being a safe, orderly place. When it says that God destroyed these creatures, it means God showed he really controlled every part of the world, even the animals in the deepest ocean.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ²² God, get up and fight!
Remember, those foolish people always insulted you!
- ²³ Don't forget the bad things your enemies said about you every day!
Don't forget the way they roar as they fight against you all the time.

Psalm 75

To the director.* "Don't Destroy," one of Asaph's songs of praise.

- ¹ We praise you, God!
We praise your name.
We tell about the amazing things you do.
- ² God says,
"I choose the time for judgment.
I will judge fairly.
- ³ The earth and everything on it may be shaking
and ready to fall,
but I make it steady."
- SELAH*
- ⁴ "Some people are very proud.
They think they are powerful and important.
But I tell those people,
'Don't brag!
'Don't be so proud!'"
- ⁶ No man on earth can make himself really important.
- ⁷ God is the judge.
And God decides which person will be important.
God raises one person to an important position,
and he brings another person down to a low position.
- ⁸ "God is ready to punish evil people.
The Lord has a cup filled with wine mixed with spices.

director Or, "performer."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

He pours this wine (*punishment*),
and wicked people drink it to the last
drop.

- ⁹ I will always tell people about these things.
I will sing praise to the God of Israel.
¹⁰ I will take power away from wicked people,
and I will give power to good people.

Psalms 76

To the director.* With instruments. One of
Asaph's songs of praise.

- ¹ People in Judah know God.
Israel knows that God's name is truly
great.
² God's temple is in Salem.*
God's house is on Mount Zion.
³ In that place, God shattered the bows
and arrows, shields, swords, and other
weapons of war.
SELAH*
⁴ God, you are glorious as you return from
the hills
where you defeated your enemies.
⁵ Those soldiers thought they were strong.
But now they lie dead in the fields.
Their bodies are stripped of all they
owned.
None of those strong soldiers could
defend themselves.
⁶ The God of Jacob yelled at those soldiers,
and that army with chariots and horses
fell dead.
⁷ God, you are awesome!
No person can stand against you when
you are angry.
⁸ The Lord stood as judge and announced
his decision.
God saved the humble people of the

land.
From heaven he gave the decision.
And the whole earth became silent and
afraid.

- ⁹ God, people praise you when you punish
evil people.
You show your anger,
and the survivors* become stronger.
¹⁰ People will make promises to God.
And they will give the Lord the things
they promised.
People from every place will bring gifts
to the God they fear.
¹¹ God defeats great leaders.
All the kings on earth fear him.

Psalms 77

To the director.* To Jeduthun. One of Asaph's
songs.

- ¹ I call loudly to God for help.
I pray to you, God.
Listen to me.
² My Master, I come to you when I have
trouble.
I reached out for you all night long.
My soul refused to be comforted.
³ I think about God,
and I try to talk to him and tell him how
I feel.
But I can't.
⁴ You would not let me sleep.
I tried to say something,
but I was too upset.
⁵ I kept thinking about the past.
I kept thinking about things that
happened long ago.
⁶ At night, I try to think about my songs.
I talk with myself and try to understand.
⁷ I wonder, "Has our Master left us
forever?
Will he ever want us again?
⁸ Is God's love gone forever?
Will he ever speak to us again?"

director Or, "performer."

Salem Another name for Jerusalem. This name means,
"Peace."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause or that the music
should be louder here.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this
means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of
Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

- * Has God forgotten what mercy is?
Has his compassion been changed to
anger?"
- SELAH*
- 10 Then I thought,
"The thing that really bothers me is this:
'Has God Most-High lost his
power?'"
- 11 Remember the powerful things
the Lord did.
God, I remember the amazing things
you did long ago.
- 12 I thought about all the things you have
done.
I thought about those things.
- 13 God, your ways are holy.
God, no one is great like you are.
- 14 You are the God that did amazing things.
You showed people your great power.
- 15 You used your power and saved your
people.
You saved Jacob and Joseph's
descendants.*
- SELAH*
- 16 God, the water saw you,
and became afraid.
The deep water shook because of fear.
- 17 The thick clouds dropped their water.
Loud thunder could be heard in the high
clouds.
Then your lightning arrows flashed
through those clouds.
- 18 There were loud claps of thunder.
Lightning lit up the world.
The earth shook and trembled.
- 19 God, you walk through the deep waters,
you crossed the deep sea,
but you left no footprints.
- 20 In the same way,, you used Moses and
Aaron
to lead your people like sheep.

Psalm 78

One of Asaph's maskils.*

- 1 My people, listen to my teachings.
Listen to the things I say.
- 2 I will tell you this story.
I will tell you this old story.
- 3 We heard the story, and we know it well.
Our fathers told this story.
- 4 And we will not forget the story.
Our people will be telling the story to
the last generation.
We will all praise the Lord,
and tell about the amazing things he did.
- 5 The Lord made an Agreement with
Jacob.*
God gave the Law to Israel.
And God gave commands to our
ancestors.*
He told our ancestors to teach the Law
to their descendants.*
- 6 This is the way the people will know
about the Law,
even to the last generation.
New generations will be born,
they will grow to become adults,
and they will tell the story to their
children.
- 7 So all those people will trust God.
They will not forget the powerful things
God did.
They will carefully guard and obey
God's commands.
- 8 If the people teach their children God's
commands,
then the children will not be like their
ancestors.
Their ancestors turned against God.
They refused to obey him.
Those people were stubborn.
They were not loyal to God's Spirit.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause here or that the music should be louder here.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

maskil(s) We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

- ⁹ The men from the Ephraim family group
had their weapons,
but they ran away from the battle.
- ¹⁰ They did not keep their Agreement with
the Lord.
They refused to obey God's teachings.
- ¹¹ Those people from Ephraim forgot the
great things God did.
They forgot the amazing things he
showed them.
- ¹² In Egypt, at Zoan, God showed their
fathers his great power.
- ¹³ God split the Red Sea and led the people
across.
The water stood like a solid wall on
both sides of them.
- ¹⁴ Every day God led those people with the
tall cloud.
And every night God led them with the
light from the tall column of fire.
- ¹⁵ God split the rock in the desert.
He gave those people water from deep
in the ground.
- ¹⁶ God brought the water streaming from the
rock.
It was like a river!
- ¹⁷ But the people continued to sin against
God.
They turned against God Most-High
even in the desert.
- ¹⁸ Then those people decided to test God.
They asked God for food, just to satisfy
their appetites.
- ¹⁹ They talked against God.
They said, "Can God give us food in the
desert?"
- ²⁰ God hit the rock and a flood of water
came out.
Surely he can give us some bread and
meat!"
- ²¹ The Lord heard what those people said.
God was very angry at Jacob.*
God was very angry at Israel.
- ²² Why? Because the people did not trust
him.

- They did not believe God could save
them.
- ²³⁻²⁴ But then God opened the clouds above,
and caused manna* to rain down on
them for food.
It was like doors in the sky opened,
and grain poured from a storehouse in
the sky.
- ²⁵ People ate the food of angels.
God sent plenty of food to satisfy those
people.
- ²⁶⁻²⁷ Then God made a strong wind blow from
the east,
and quail* fell onto them like rain.
God's great power made the wind blow
from Teman,
and the blue sky became dark because
there were so many birds.
- ²⁸ The birds fell right in the middle of camp,
all around those people's tents.
- ²⁹ They had plenty to eat,
but they let their appetites make them
sin.
- ³⁰ They did not control their appetites,
so they ate the quail before draining the
blood from these birds.
- ³¹ God became very angry at those people,
and he killed many of them.
God caused many of the healthy
young people to die.
- ³² But the people still sinned again!
They did not depend on the amazing
things God could do.
- ³³ So God ended their worthless lives with
some disaster.
- ³⁴ Whenever God killed some of them,
the others would turn back to him.
They would come running back to
God.
- ³⁵ Those people would remember that God
was their Rock.*
They would remember that God
Most-High saved them.

manna The special food God sent to the people of Israel
while they wandered through the desert for 40 years.

quail A kind of bird.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a
strong place of safety.

- ³⁶ They said they loved him,^a but those people were not serious. They lied.
- ³⁷ Their hearts were not really with God. They were not faithful to the Agreement.*
- ³⁸ But God was merciful. He forgave them for their sins. And he did not destroy them. Many times God controlled his anger. God did not let himself become too angry.
- ³⁹ God remembered they were only people. People are like a wind that blows, and then it is gone.
- ⁴⁰ Oh, those people caused God so many troubles in the desert! They made him so sad!
- ⁴¹ Again and again those people tested God's patience. They really brought much pain to the Holy One of Israel.
- ⁴² Those people forgot about God's power. They forgot about the many times God saved them from the enemy.
- ⁴³ They forgot the miracles in Egypt. They forgot the miracles in the fields of Zoan.
- ⁴⁴ God turned the rivers to blood! The Egyptians could not drink the water.
- ⁴⁵ God sent swarms of flies that bit the people of Egypt. God sent the frogs that ruined the Egyptians' lives.
- ⁴⁶ God gave their crops to the grasshoppers, and their other plants to the locusts.
- ⁴⁷ God used hail to destroy the Egyptian peoples' vines. And he used sleet to destroy their trees.
- ⁴⁸ God killed their animals with hail, and their cattle with lightning.
- ⁴⁹ God showed the Egyptian people his fierce anger.

- He sent his destroying angels to be against them.
- ⁵⁰ God found a way to show his anger. He did not let any of those people live. He let all the animals die with a deadly disease.
- ⁵¹ God killed all the firstborn* sons in Egypt. He killed every firstborn son in the family group of Ham.*
- ⁵² Then God led Israel like a shepherd. He led his people like sheep into the desert.
- ⁵³ He guided his people safely. God's people had nothing to be afraid of. God drowned their enemies in the Red Sea.
- ⁵⁴ God led his people to his holy land, to the mountain he took with his own power.
- ⁵⁵ God forced the other nations to leave that land. And God gave his people their share of the land. So the family groups of Israel lived in their own houses.
- ⁵⁶ But the people of Israel still tested God Most-High and made him very sad. Those people did not obey God's commands.
- ⁵⁷ The people of Israel turned away from God. They turned against him the same as their fathers did. They were as bad as a twisted bow.*
- ⁵⁸ The people of Israel built high places* and made God angry. They built statues of gods and made God very jealous.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

Ham The Egyptians were Ham's descendants. See Gen. 10:6-10.

twisted bow It is very hard to shoot arrows accurately with a bow that is twisted wrong.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ⁵⁹ God heard this and became very angry.
And God rejected Israel completely!
- ⁶⁰ God abandoned the Holy Tent at Shiloh.*
This was the tent where God lived
among the people.
- ⁶¹ Then God let other nations force his
people to become prisoners.
Enemies took God's "beautiful jewel."
- ⁶² God showed his anger against his people,
Israel.
He let them be killed in war.
- ⁶³ The young men were burned to death,
and the girls they were supposed to
marry sang no wedding songs.
- ⁶⁴ The priests were killed,
but the widows did not cry for them.
- ⁶⁵ Finally, our Master got up like a man
waking from his sleep,
like a soldier after drinking too much
wine.
- ⁶⁶ And God forced his enemy back and
defeated them.
God defeated his enemies and disgraced
them forever.
- ⁶⁷ But God rejected Joseph's family.
God did not choose Ephraim's family.
- ⁶⁸ No, God chose Judah's family group.
And God chose Zion, the mountain he
loves.
- ⁶⁹ And God built his holy temple high on
that mountain.
Just like the earth, God built his holy
temple to last forever.
- ⁷⁰ Then God chose David to be his special
servant.
David was guarding the sheep pens,
But God took him away from that job.
- ⁷¹ God took David away from caring for
sheep,
and God gave David the job of caring
for his people, the people of Jacob,*
the people of Israel, God's
property.

- ⁷² And David led the people of Israel
with a pure heart.
He led them very wisely.

Psalms 79

One of Asaph's songs of praise.

- ¹ God, some people have come to fight
your people.
Those people ruined your holy temple.
They left Jerusalem in ruins.
- ² The enemy left the bodies of your
servants for the wild birds to eat.
They left the bodies of your followers
for wild animals to eat.
- ³ God, the enemy killed your people until
the blood flowed like water.
No person is left to bury the dead
bodies.
- ⁴ Our neighboring countries insulted us.
All the people around us laugh at us and
make fun of us.
- ⁵ God, will you be angry at us forever?
Will your strong feelings* continue to
burn like a fire?
- ⁶ God, turn your anger against the nations
that don't know you.
Turn your anger against nations that
don't worship your name.
- ⁷ Why? Because those nations destroyed
Jacob.*
They destroyed Jacob's country.
- ⁸ God, please don't punish us for the sins
of our ancestors.*
Hurry, show us your mercy!
We need you so much!
- ⁹ Our God and Savior, help us!
Help us so you will give glory to your
own name.
Save us.
Erase our sins for the good of your
name.
- ¹⁰ Don't let other nations say to us,

"Where is your God?

Can't he help you?"

God, punish those people
so we can see it.

Punish them for killing your servants.

¹¹ Please listen to the prisoners' groan!

God, use your great power
and save these people that were
chosen to die.

¹² God, punish the people around us seven
times for the things they did to us.

Punish those people for the times they
insulted you.

¹³ We are your people.

We are the sheep in your flock.

We will praise you forever.

Forever and ever, we will praise you,
God.

Psalm 80

To the director.* To the tune "Lilies of the
Agreement." One of Asaph's songs of praise.

¹ Shepherd of Israel, listen to me.

You lead Joseph's sheep (*people*).

You sit as king on the Cherub angels.*

Let us see you.

² Shepherd of Israel, show your greatness

to Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.

Come and save us.

³ God, accept us again.

Accept us.

Save us.

⁴ Lord God All-Powerful,

will you be angry at us forever?

When will you listen to our prayers.

⁵ You have given tears as food to your
people.

You have given your people bowls
filled with their tears.

That was their water to drink.

⁶ You let us become something for our
neighbors to fight about.

Our enemies laugh at us.

⁷ God All-Powerful, accept us again.

Accept us.

Save us.

⁸ In the past, you treated us like a very
important plant.

You brought your "vine" out from
Egypt.

You forced other people to leave this
land,

and you planted your "vine."

⁹ You made the ground ready to grow the
"vine."

You helped its roots to grow strong.

And soon, the "vine" spread
throughout the land.

¹⁰ It shaded the mountains.

Its leaves shaded even the giant
cedar trees.

¹¹ Its vines spread to the Mediterranean
Sea.

Its shoots spread to the Euphrates River.

¹² God, why did you pull down the walls
that protect your "vine"?

Now every person that passes by picks
its grapes.

¹³ Wild pigs come and walk on your "vine."

Wild animals come and eat the leaves.

¹⁴ God All-Powerful, come back.

Look down from heaven at your "vine."
Protect it.

¹⁵ God, look at the "vine" you planted with
your own hands.

Look at the young plant*

you raised.

¹⁶ Your "vine" was burned in the fire
like dry dung.

You were angry at it,
and you destroyed it.

¹⁷ God, reach out to the son that stood by
your right side.

Reach out to the son you raised.

¹⁸ He will not leave you again.

Let him live,
and he will worship your name.

¹⁹ Lord God All-Powerful, come back to us.

director Or, "performer."

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these
angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

young plant Literally, "son."

Accept us.
Save us.

Psalm 81

To the director.* On the Gittith.* One of Asaph's songs.

- ¹ Be happy and sing to God our strength.
Shout with happiness to the God of Israel.
 - ² Begin the music.
Play the tambourines.
Play the pleasing sounds from the harps and lyres.*
 - ³ Blow the ram's horn
at the time of the new moon,*
Blow the ram's horn
at the time of the full moon.
That is when our holiday begins.
 - ⁴ That is a law for the people of Israel.
God gave that command to Jacob.*
 - ⁵ God made this Agreement with Joseph*
at the time God took him away from Egypt.
In Egypt we heard the language we
did not understand.
 - ⁶ God says,
"I took the load from your shoulder.
I let you drop the worker's basket.
 - ⁷ You people called for help when you
were in trouble,
and I made you free.
I was hidden in the storm clouds,
and I answered you.
I tested you by the water at Meribah.**
- SELAH*

director Or, "performer."

Gittith This might be a type of instrument, or it might mean a performer in the temple orchestra, possibly Obed-edom from Gath.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

new moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month.

There were special meetings on these days to worship God.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Joseph Here this means Joseph's family, the people of Israel.
Meribah See Ex. 17:1-7.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

- * "My people, listen to me,
and I will give you my Agreement.*
Israel, you must please listen to me!
- ⁹ Don't worship any of the false gods the
foreign people worship.
- ¹⁰ I, the Lord, am your God.
I am the God that brought you out from
Egypt.
Israel, open your mouth, and I will feed
you.
- ¹¹ But my people did not listen to me.
Israel did not obey me.
- ¹² So I let them do the things they wanted to
do.
Israel did anything they wanted to do.
- ¹³ If my people will really listen to me,
and if Israel will live the way I want
them to live,
- ¹⁴ then I would defeat Israel's enemies.
I would punish the people that give
Israel troubles.
- ¹⁵ The Lord's enemies shake because they
are afraid.
They would be punished forever.
- ¹⁶ And God would give the best wheat to his
people.
The Rock* would give honey to his
people until they were satisfied.

Psalm 82

One of Asaph's songs of praise.

- ¹ God stands in the assembly of the gods.*
God is the judge.
- ² God says,
"How long will you people judge things
unfairly?
How long will you let wicked people go
free without punishment?"

Agreement Literally, "testimony." This was the proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

assembly ... gods Other nations thought their false gods met together to decide what to do with the people on earth. But here, this probably means the time when the leaders of Israel met together. Many times leaders and kings were called "gods."

SELAH*

- ³ "Defend the orphans* and the poor people.
Protect the rights of poor people that are not treated fairly.
- ⁴ Help the poor and helpless people.
Save those people from evil people.
- ⁵ "The people of Israel don't know what is happening.
They don't understand!
They don't know what they are doing,
and their world is falling down around them!"
- ⁶ I said to you leaders, "You are gods.
You are sons of God Most-High.
- ⁷ But you will die the same as all people must die.
You will die the same as all the other leaders."
- ⁸ Get up, God! You be the judge!
God, you be the leader over all nations!

Psalms 83

One of Asaph's songs of praise.

- ¹ God, don't keep quiet!
Don't close your ears!
Please say something, God.
- ² God, your enemies make plans against you.
Your enemies will soon attack.
- ³ They make secret plans against your people.
Your enemies are discussing plans against the people you love.
- ⁴ The enemies are saying,
"Come, let us destroy those people completely.
Then no person will ever remember the name 'Israel' again."
- ⁵ God, all those people joined together to fight against you

and against the Agreement* you made with us.

- ⁶ Those enemies joined together to fight us:
Edom, the Ishmaelite people, Moab and Hagar's descendants,*
Byblos, Ammon, the Amalekite people,
the Philistine people,
and the people living in Tyre.
All those people joined together to fight us.
- ⁸ And the Assyrian army joined Lot's descendants,*
and they all became really strong.

SELAH*

- ⁹ God, defeat the enemy like you defeated Midian,
like you defeated Sisera and Jabin near the Kishon River.
- ¹⁰ You defeated them at En-Dor.
And their bodies rotted on the ground.
- ¹¹ God, defeat the enemy's leaders.
Do to them the things you did to Oreb and Zeeb.
Do to them the things you did to Zebah and Zalmunna.
- ¹² God, those people wanted to force us to leave your land!
- ¹³ Make those people become like a tumbleweed* blown by the wind.
Scatter those people like the wind scatters straw.
- ¹⁴ Destroy the enemy like a fire destroys a forest,
like a wild fire that burns the hills.
- ¹⁵ God, chase those people away, like dust being blown by a storm.
Shake them and blow them away, like a tornado.
- ¹⁶ God, make those people learn that they are really weak,

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

orphan(s) Children whose parents are dead. Often these children have no one to care for them.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

tumbleweed A large weed with short roots. When a strong wind blows, the dry weed is pulled loose and blown away.

then they will want to worship your name!

- ¹⁷ God, make those people afraid and ashamed forever.

Disgrace them and destroy them.

- ¹⁸ Then those people will know you are God.

They will know your name is Yahweh.

They will know that you, God

Most-High,

are the God of the whole world!

Psalm 84

To the director.* On the Gittith.* One of the songs of praise from the sons of Korah.

- ¹ Lord All-Powerful, your temple* is truly lovely.

- ² Lord, I am tired of waiting.

I want to be there in your temple.

Every part of me wants to be with the Living God.

- ³ Lord All-Powerful, my King, my God, even sparrows and swallows have homes.

Those birds make their nests near your altar.

And there they have their babies.

- ⁴ People living at your temple are very happy.

They always praise you.

SELAH*

- ⁵ People that let you be their source of strength are very happy.

They let you lead them.*

- ⁶ Those happy people travel through Baca Valley, that God makes like a spring,

the fall rains forming pools of water.*

- ⁷ The people travel from town to town, on their way to Zion, where they will meet with God.

- ⁸ Lord God All-Powerful, listen to my prayer.

God of Jacob,* listen to me.

SELAH*

- ⁹ God, protect our protector.*

Be kind to your chosen king.*

- ¹⁰ God, I would rather stay one day in your temple

than a thousand days in another place.

I would rather stand near the gate of my God's house

than live where wicked people live.

- ¹¹ The Lord is our protector and glorious king.*

God blesses us with kindness and glory.

The Lord gives every good thing to people that follow and obey him.

- ¹² Lord All-Powerful, people that trust you are truly happy!

Psalm 85

To the director.* A song of praise from the sons of Korah.

- ¹ Lord, be kind to your country.

Jacob's people are prisoners in a foreign country.

Bring the prisoners back to their country.

- ² Lord, forgive your people!

Erase their sins!

SELAH*

- ³ Lord, stop being angry.

Don't be mad.

- ⁴ Our God and Savior, stop being angry at us,

director Or, "performer."

Gittith This might be a type of instrument, or it might mean a performer in the temple orchestra, possibly Obed-edom from Gath.

temple Or, "dwellings."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

They ... them Literally, "They have a highway in their hearts." This might mean the people traveling to Jerusalem for the holiday.

the ... water Or "The Teacher gives blessings." This might be a different way to say that God is our teacher and that he gives us many blessings.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

protector Literally, "shield." This probably means the king.

This might also be "God, our Shield, look!"

chosen king Literally, "anointed person."

protector ... king Literally, "sun and shield."

and accept us again.

- ³ Will you be angry at us forever?
- ⁴ Please, make us live again!
Make your people happy.
- ⁷ Lord, show us that you love us.
Save us.
- ⁸ I hear what God says.
The Lord says there will be peace for
his people.
His followers will have peace,
if they don't go back to their foolish
way of living.
- ⁹ God will soon save his followers.
We will soon live with honor in our
country.
- ¹⁰ God's true love will meet his followers.
Goodness and peace will greet them
with a kiss.
- ¹¹ People on earth will be loyal to God,
And God in heaven will be good to
them.*
- ¹² The Lord will give us many good things.
And the ground will grow many good
crops.
- ¹³ Goodness will go in front of God,
and prepare the way for him.

Psalm 86

David's prayer.

- ¹ I am a poor, helpless man.
Lord, please listen to me and answer my
prayer.
- ² Lord, I am your follower,
please protect me!
I am your servant.
You are my God.
I trust you.
So save me.
- ³ My Master, be kind to me.
I have been praying to you all day.
- ⁴ Master, I put my life in your hands.
Make me happy, I am your servant.
- ⁵ Master, you are good and merciful.
You truly love your people that call to
you for help.

- ⁶ Lord, hear my prayer.
Listen to my prayer for mercy.
- ⁷ Lord, I am praying to you in my time of
trouble.
I know you will answer me!
- ⁸ There is none like you, God.
No person can do the things you have
done.
- ⁹ Master, you made every person.
I hope all those people come and
worship you.
I hope they all honor your name.
- ¹⁰ God, you are great!
You do amazing things!
You, and you only, are God!
- ¹¹ Lord, teach me your ways,
and I will live and obey your truths.
Help me make worshiping your name
the most important thing in my life.
- ¹² God my Master, I praise you with all my
whole heart.
I will honor your name forever!
- ¹³ God, you have such great love for me.
You save me from the place of death
below.
- ¹⁴ Proud men are attacking me, God.
A gang of cruel men are trying to kill
me.
And those men don't respect you.
- ¹⁵ And you, Master, are a kind and merciful
God.
You are patient, loyal, and full of love.
- ¹⁶ God, show that you hear me and be kind
to me.
Give strength to me,
I am your slave.
Save me,
I am your servant.
- ¹⁷ God, do something to prove that you will
help me.
Then my enemies will be disappointed.
Why? Because Lord, that will show that
you have been kind to me and
helped me.

Psalm 87

A song of praise from the sons of Korah.

- ¹ God built his temple on the holy hills of Jerusalem.
 - ² The Lord loves Zion's gates more than any other place in Israel.
 - ³ City of God, people say wonderful things about you.
- SELAH*
- ⁴ God's people now live in many places in the world.
But God is their king and he knows about each person.
Some of God's people live in Egypt* and Babylon.
But God keeps a list about all his people.
And the list shows that some of his people were born in Philistia, Tyre, and even Ethiopia.
 - ⁵ God knows each and every person born on Zion.
God Most-High built that city.
 - ⁶ God keeps a list about all his people.
God knows where each person was born.
- SELAH*
- ⁷ God's people go to Jerusalem to celebrate special holidays.
God's people sing and dance and are very happy.
They say,
"All good things come from Jerusalem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

Egypt Literally, "Rahah." This name means the "Dragon." It became a popular name for Egypt.

Psalm 88

A song of praise from the sons of Korah. To the director.* About a painful sickness. A maskil* from Heman the Ezrahite.

- ¹ Lord God, you are my Savior.
I have been praying to you day and night.
 - ² Please pay attention to my prayers.
Listen to my prayers for mercy.
 - ³ I am fed up with all my troubles!
I am ready to die.
 - ⁴ I am like a person that is about to be buried.
I have no strength.
 - ⁵ I was left alone to die.
I am like a dead body lying in the grave.
Those dead people have been taken from you,
and people forget all about them.
 - ⁶ Lord, you put me in the tomb underground.
You put me in that dark place.
 - ⁷ You were angry at me,
and you punished me.
- SELAH*
- ⁸ My friends have left me.
They all avoid me like a person no person wants to touch.
I am locked in the house and I can't go out.
 - ⁹ My eyes hurt from crying about all my suffering.
Lord, I pray to you constantly!
I lift my arms in prayer to you.
 - ¹⁰ Lord, do you do miracles for dead people? No!
Do ghosts rise up and praise you? No!
- SELAH*
- ¹¹ Dead people in their graves can't talk about your love.
Dead people in the world of the dead can't talk about your loyalty.
 - ¹² Dead people lying in darkness

director Or, "performer."

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

can't see the amazing things you do.
Dead people in the World of the
Forgotten
can't talk about your goodness.

- ¹³ Lord, I am asking you to help me!
Early each morning I pray to you.
¹⁴ Lord, why have you abandoned me?
Why do you refuse to listen to me?
¹⁵ Since I was young, I was weak and sick.
I have suffered your anger, I am
helpless.
¹⁶ Lord, you were angry at me,
and the punishment is killing me.
¹⁷ The aches and pains are always with me.
I feel like I am drowning in my aches
and pains.
¹⁸ And Lord, you forced all my friends and
loved ones to leave me.
Only darkness has stayed with me.

Psalm 89

A maskil* from Ethan the Ezrahite.

- ¹ I will sing forever about the Lord's love.
I will sing about his loyalty forever and
ever!
² Lord, I truly believe your love lasts
forever.
Your loyalty continues like the skies!
³ God said,
"I made an agreement with my chosen
king.
I made a promise to my servant,
David:
⁴ David, I will make your family continue
forever.
I will make your kingdom continue
forever and ever."

SELAH*

- ⁵ The heavens praise the amazing things
you do, Lord.

The assembly of holy ones sing about
your loyalty.

- ⁶ No person in heaven can oppose the Lord.
None of the "gods" can compare to the
Lord.
⁷ When the holy ones meet together,
it is the Lord they all fear and respect.
The Lord is more awesome than any of
them.
⁸ Lord God All-Powerful, none is as
powerful as you.
We can trust you completely.
⁹ You proudly rule the sea.
You can make its angry waves become
calm.
¹⁰ God, you defeated Rahab.*
By your great power, you defeated your
enemy.
¹¹ Everything in heaven and earth belong to
you, God.
You made the world and everything in
it.
¹² You created everything north and south.
Mount Tabor and Mount Hermon sing
praises to your name.
¹³ God, you have the power!
Your power is great!
The victory is yours!
¹⁴ Your kingdom is built on truth and
justice.
Love and faithfulness are servants
before your throne.
¹⁵ God, your loyal followers are truly happy.
They live in the light of your kindness.
¹⁶ Your name always makes them happy.
They praise your goodness.
¹⁷ You are their amazing strength.
Their power comes from you.
¹⁸ Lord, you are our Protector.
The Holy One of Israel is our King.
¹⁹ So, you spoke to your true followers in a
vision.
You said,
"I helped a famous soldier.

maskil We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

Rahab A sea monster. Some ancient stories say the sea monster was an enemy of God.

- I chose a young man from among the people,
And I made that young man important.
- ²⁰ I found my servant David.
And I anointed* him with my special oil.
- ²¹ I supported David with my right arm.
And with my power, I made him strong.
- ²² The enemy could not defeat the chosen king.
Wicked people could not defeat him.
- ²³ I finished his enemies.
I defeated the people that hated the chosen king.
- ²⁴ I will always love and support my chosen king.
I will always make him strong.
- ²⁵ I put my chosen king in charge of the sea.
He will control the rivers.
- ²⁶ He will say to me,
'You are my father.
You are my God, my Rock,* my Savior.'
- ²⁷ And I will make him my firstborn* son.
He will be the great king on earth.
- ²⁸ My love will protect the chosen king forever.
My agreement with him will never end.
- ²⁹ His family will continue forever.
His kingdom will continue as long as the heavens.
- ³⁰ If his descendants* quit following my law,
and if they quit obeying my commands,
then I will punish them.
- ³¹ If the chosen king's descendants* break my laws and ignore my commands,
³² then I will punish them very hard.
- ³³ But I will never take my love away from those people.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on things or people to show that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

- I will always be loyal to them.
- ³⁴ I will not break my agreement with David.
I will not change our agreement.
- ³⁵ By my holiness, I made a special promise to David.
And I would not lie to David!
- ³⁶ David's family will continue forever.
His kingdom will continue as long as the sun.
- ³⁷ It will continue forever, like the moon.
The skies are the proof that the agreement is true,
and that proof can be trusted."
- SELAH***
- ³⁸ But God, you became angry at your chosen king,*
and you left him all alone.
- ³⁹ You rejected your agreement.
You threw the king's crown into the dirt.
- ⁴⁰ You pulled down the walls of the king's city.
You destroyed all his fortresses.
- ⁴¹ The king's neighbors laugh at him.
And people passing by steal things from him.
- ⁴² You made all the king's enemies happy.
You let his enemies win the war.
- ⁴³ God, you helped them defend themselves.
You did not help your king win the battle.
- ⁴⁴ You threw his holy throne down to the ground.
- ⁴⁵ You cut his life short.
You shamed him.
- SELAH***
- ⁴⁶ Lord, will you hide from us forever?
Will your anger burn like a fire forever?
- ⁴⁷ Remember how short my life is:
You created us to live a short life, and then die.
- ⁴⁸ No person will live and never die.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

chosen king Literally, "anointed person."

No person will escape the grave.

SELAH*

- " God, where is the love you showed in the past?

You promised David that you would be loyal to his family.

- ⁴⁰⁻⁵¹ Master, please remember how people insulted your servants.

I had to listen to all those insults from your enemies, Lord.

Those people insulted your chosen king!

- ³² Bless the Lord forever!
Amen and amen!*

BOOK 4

Psalm 90

The prayer of Moses, the man of God.*

- ¹ Master, you have been our home forever and ever.
² Before there were mountains, or land, or the world, you were God.
God, you were always God, and you will always be God!
³ You bring people into this world. And you change them into dust again.
⁴ To you, a thousand years is only like yesterday—like last night.
⁵ You sweep us away.
Our life is like a dream, and in the morning, we are gone.
We are like grass.
⁶ In the morning the grass grows, and in the evening it is dry and dying.
⁷ God, we are destroyed when you become angry.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

Amen and amen A Hebrew word meaning "truly," "indeed." It is used to show that a person agrees with what has been said.

man of God Another name for a prophet.

Your anger scares us!

- ⁸ You know about all our sins.
God, you see every one of our secret sins.
⁹ Your anger can end our life.
Our lives fade away like a whisper.
¹⁰ We live, maybe 70 years.
And if we are strong, maybe 80 years.
Our lives are filled with hard work and pain.
Then suddenly, our lives are finished!
And we fly away.
¹¹ No person really knows the full power of your anger, God.
¹² Teach us how short our lives really are, so we can become wise.
¹³ Lord, always come back to us.
Be kind to your servants.
¹⁴ Fill us with your love every morning.
Let us be happy and enjoy our lives.
¹⁵ You gave us much sadness and troubles in our lives.
Now make us happy.
¹⁶ Let your servants see the wonderful things you can do for them.
¹⁷ Our God and Master, be kind to us.
Give us success in everything we do.

Psalm 91

- ¹ You can go to God Most-High to hide.
You can go to the God All-Powerful for protection.
² I say to the Lord,
"You are my place of safety, my fortress.
My God, I trust you."
³ God will save you from all hidden dangers.
God will save you from all dangerous diseases.
⁴ You can go to God for protection, and he will protect you like a bird that spreads its wings over its babies.
God will be like a shield and a wall protecting you.
⁵ You will have nothing to fear at night,

and you will not be afraid of enemy arrows during the day.

- ⁶ You will not be afraid of diseases that come in the dark,
or terrible sicknesses that come at noon.

- ⁷ You will defeat 1,000 enemies.
Your own right hand will defeat 10,000 enemy soldiers.

And your enemies will not even touch you!

- ⁸ Just look, and you will see that those wicked people are punished!

- ⁹ Why? Because you trust the Lord.
You made God Most-High your safe place.

- ¹⁰ Nothing bad will happen to you.
There will be no diseases in your home.

- ¹¹ Why? Because God's angels will watch over you.

They will protect you anywhere you go.

- ¹² God's angels will lift you up with their hands,
so that you will not hit your foot on a rock.

- ¹³ You will have power to walk on lions and poisonous snakes.

- ¹⁴ The Lord says,
"If a person trusts me, I will save him.
I will protect my followers that worship my name.

- ¹⁵ My followers will call to me for help,
and I will answer them.

I will be with them when they have trouble.

I will rescue them and honor them.

- ¹⁶ I will give my followers a long life.
And I will save them."

Psalm 92

A song of praise for the Sabbath.*

- ¹ It is good to praise the Lord.
It is good to praise your name, God Most-High.
² It is good to sing about your love in the

morning,
and about your faithfulness at night.

- ³ God, it is good to play for you,
on ten-stringed instruments and harps.
It is good to play music for you on the lyre.*

- ⁴ Lord, you make us truly happy with the things you did.
We gladly sing about the things you did.

- ⁵ Lord, you did great things.
Your thoughts are too hard for us to understand.

- ⁶ Compared to you, people are like stupid animals.
We are like fools that can't understand anything.

- ⁷ Wicked people live and die like weeds.
And all the worthless things they do will be destroyed forever.

- ⁸ But Lord, you will be honored forever.

- ⁹ Lord, all your enemies will be destroyed.
All those people that do bad things will be destroyed.

- ¹⁰ But you will make me strong.
I will be like a strong ram with its strong horns.

- ¹¹ You chose me for my special work;
you poured your refreshing oil over me.

- ¹² I see my enemies around me.
They are like huge bulls ready to attack me.

I hear what they are saying about me.

- ¹³ But a good man is like a growing palm tree.

A good man will be like a great cedar tree of Lebanon.

- ¹⁴ Good people are strong like trees planted in the Lord's temple.
They will grow strong in the temple yard of our God.

- ¹⁵ They will continue growing fruit even when they are old.

They will be like healthy green trees.

- ¹⁶ I say the Lord is good.
My Rock* never changes.

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Sabbath Saturday, a special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

Psalm 93

- 1 The Lord is King.
He is clothed in majesty and strength.
So the world will not be destroyed.
- 2 God, you and your kingdom have
continued forever.
- 3 Lord, the sound of the rivers is very loud.
The crashing waves are very loud.
- 4 The crashing waves of the sea are loud
and powerful.
But the Lord above is even more
powerful.
- 5 Lord, your laws will continue forever.
Your holy temple will stand for a long
time.

Psalm 94

- 1 Lord, you are a God that punishes people.
You are a God that comes and brings
punishment to people.
- 2 You are the judge of the whole earth.
Give proud people the punishment they
should get.
- 3 Lord, how long will wicked people have
their fun?
How much longer, Lord?
- 4 How much longer will those criminals
brag about the bad things they did?
- 5 Lord, those people hurt your people.
They made your people suffer.
- 6 Those bad people kill widows and visitors
living in our country.
They murder children that have no
parents.
- 7 And they say the Lord does not see them
doing those bad things!
They say the God of Israel does not
understand the things that are
happening.
- 8 You bad people are foolish. When will
you learn your lesson?
You evil people are so stupid!
You must try to understand.
- 9 God made our ears,
so surely he has ears too, and can hear
the things that are happening!

- God made our eyes,
so surely he has eyes too, and can see
the things that are happening!
- 10 God will discipline those people.
God will teach people the things they
should do.
- 11 God knows the things people are
thinking.
And God knows people are only like a
puff of wind.
- 12 The man that the Lord disciplines will be
very happy.
God will teach that person the right way
of living.
- 13 God, you will help that person stay calm
when trouble comes.
You will help him stay calm until the
evil people are put in their grave.
- 14 The Lord will not leave his people.
He will not leave his people without
help.
- 15 Justice will return, bringing fairness.
And then the people will be good,
honest people.
- 16 No person helped me fight against the
evil people.
No person stood with me to fight
against the people that do bad things.
- 17 And if the Lord had not helped me,
I would have been silenced!
- 18 I know I was ready to fall,
but the Lord supported his follower.
- 19 I was very worried and upset.
But Lord, you comforted me and made
me happy!
- 20 God, you don't help crooked judges.
Those bad judges use the law to make
life hard for the people.
- 21 Those judges attack good people.
They say that innocent people are guilty
and kill them.
- 22 But the Lord is my safe place high on the
mountain.
God my Rock* is my safe place!

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

- ¹³ God will punish those evil judges for the bad things they did.
 God will destroy them because they sinned.
 The Lord our God will destroy those evil judges.

Psalm 95

- ¹ Come, let us praise the Lord!
 Let us shout praises to the Rock* that saves us.
- ² Let us sing songs of thanks to the Lord.
 Let us sing happy songs of praise to him.
- ³ Why? Because the Lord is a great God!
 He is the Great King ruling over all the other "gods."
- ⁴ The deepest caves and the highest mountains belong to the Lord.
- ⁵ The ocean is his—he created it.
 God made the dry land with his own hands.
- ⁶ Come, let us bow down and worship him!
 Let us praise the God that made us!
- ⁷ He is our God,
 and we are his people.
 We are his sheep today—if we listen to his voice.
- ⁸ God says,
 "Don't be stubborn,
 like you were at Meribah,*
 like you were at Massah* in the desert.
- ⁹ Your ancestors* tested me.
 They tested me,
 but then they saw what I could do!
- ¹⁰ I was patient with those people
 for 40 years.
 And I know that they are not faithful.
 Those people refused to follow my teachings.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

Meribah, Massah See Ex. 17:1-7.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

- ¹¹ So I was angry, and I promised they would not enter my land of rest.

Psalm 96

- ¹ Sing a new song about the new things the Lord has done!
 Let the whole world sing to the Lord.
- ² Sing to the Lord!
 Bless his name!
 Tell the good news!
 Tell about him saving us every day!
- ³ Tell other people that God is truly wonderful.
 Tell people everywhere about the amazing things God does.
- ⁴ The Lord is great and worthy of praise.
 He is more awesome than any of the "gods."
- ⁵ All of the "gods" in other nations are only statues.
 But the Lord made the heavens.
- ⁶ There is a beautiful glory shining in front of him.
 There is strength and beauty in God's holy temple.
- ⁷ Families and nations,
 sing songs of praise and glory to the Lord.
- ⁸ Praise the Lord's name.
 Get your offerings,
 and go to the temple.
- ⁹ Worship the Lord in his beautiful temple.
 Worship the Lord, every person on earth.
- ¹⁰ Announce to the nations that the Lord is King!
 So the world will not be destroyed.
 The Lord will rule the people fairly.
- ¹¹ Be happy, heavens!
 Rejoice, earth!
 Sea and everything in it,
 shout with joy!
- ¹² Fields and everything growing on them,
 be happy!
 Trees in the forest, sing and be happy!
- ¹³ Be happy because the Lord is coming.

The Lord is coming to rule* the world.
He will rule the world with justice and
fairness.

Psalm 97

- ¹ The Lord rules, and the earth is happy.
All the faraway lands are happy.
- ² Thick dark clouds surround the Lord.
Goodness and justice make his kingdom
strong.
- ³ A fire goes in front of the Lord and
destroys his enemies.
- ⁴ His lightning flashes in the sky.
The people see it and are afraid.
- ⁵ The mountains melt in front of the Lord
like wax.
They melt in front of the Master of the
earth.
- ⁶ Skies, tell about his goodness!
Let every person see God's glory!
- ⁷ People worship their idols.
They brag about their "gods."
But those people will be embarrassed.
Their "gods" will bow down and
worship the Lord.
- ⁸ Zion,* listen and be happy!
Cities of Judah, be happy!
Why? Because the Lord makes wise
decisions.
- ⁹ Lord Most-High, you really are the ruler
of the earth.
You are much better than the other
"gods."
- ¹⁰ People that love the Lord hate evil.
So God saves his followers.
God saves his followers from evil
people.
- ¹¹ Light and happiness shine on good
people.
- ¹² Good people, be happy in the Lord!
Honor his holy name!

rule Or "judge."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Psalm 98

A song of praise.

- ¹ Sing a new song to the Lord
because he has done new and amazing
things!
- ² His holy right arm has again brought him
victory.
- ³ The Lord showed the nations his power to
save.
The Lord showed them his goodness.
- ⁴ His followers remembered God's loyalty
to the people of Israel.
The people in faraway lands saw our
God's power to save.
- ⁵ Every person on earth, shout with joy to
the Lord.
Quickly, start singing songs of praise!
- ⁶ Harps, praise the Lord.
Music from the harps, praise him.
- ⁷ Blow the pipes and horns,
and shout for joy to the Lord our King!
- ⁸ Let the sea, and the earth, and everything
in them sing loudly.
- ⁹ Rivers, clap your hands!
All together now, mountains sing out!
- ¹⁰ Sing before the Lord because he is
coming to rule* the world.
He will rule the world fairly.
He will rule the people with goodness.

Psalm 99

- ¹ The Lord is King.
So let the nations shake with fear.
God sits as King above the Cherub
angels.*
So let the world shake with fear.
- ² The Lord in Zion* is great!
He is the great leader over all people.
- ³ Let all the people praise your name.
God's name is awesome.
God is holy.
- ⁴ The Powerful King loves justice.
God, you made goodness.
You brought goodness and fairness to
Jacob (Israel).

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these
angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

- ⁵ Praise the Lord our God,
and worship his holy footstool.*
- ⁶ Moses and Aaron were some of
God's priests.
And Samuel was one of God's
worshippers.
They prayed to God,
and God answered them.
- ⁷ God spoke from the tall cloud.
They obeyed his commands.
And God gave them the Law.
- ⁸ Lord our God, you answered their
prayers.
You showed them that you are a
forgiving God,
and that you punish people for the bad
things they do.
- ⁹ Praise the Lord our God.
Bow down toward his holy mountain
and worship him.
The Lord our God is truly holy!

Psalm 100

A song of thanks.

- ¹ Earth, sing to the Lord!
- ² Be happy while you serve the Lord!
Come before the Lord with happy
songs!
- ³ Know that the Lord is God.
He made us,
and we are his people,
we are his sheep.
- ⁴ Come into the Lord's city with songs of
thanks.
Come into his temple with songs of
praise.
Honor him and bless his name.
- ⁵ The Lord is good!
His love is forever.
His loyalty continues forever and
ever!

Psalm 101

A psalm of David's.

- ¹ I will sing about love and fairness.
Lord, I will sing to you.
- ² I will carefully live a pure life.
I will live a pure life in my house.
Lord, when will you come to me?
- ³ I will not have any idols*
in front of me.
I hate people turning against you like
that.
I will not do that!
- ⁴ I will be honest.
I will not do evil things.
- ⁵ If any person secretly says bad things
about his neighbor,
I will stop that person.
I will not allow people to be proud and
think they are better than other people.
- ⁶ I will look in all the country for people
that can be trusted.
And I will let only those people work
for me.
Only people that live pure lives can be
my servants.
- ⁷ I will not let liars live in my house.
I will not let liars stay near me.
- ⁸ I will always destroy bad people living in
this country.
I will force the evil people to leave the
Lord's city.

Psalm 102

A prayer of a person that is suffering. This is
for when he feels weak and wants to tell his
complaints to the Lord.

- ¹ Lord, hear my prayer.
Listen to my cry for help.
- ² Lord, don't turn away from me when I
have troubles.
Listen to me.
When I cry for help, quickly answer me.
- ³ My life is passing away the same as
smoke passes away.

footstool This probably means the temple.

idols Or "terrible."

- My life is like a fire slowly burning out.
 4 My strength is gone—I am like dry, dying grass.
 Because of my troubles, I am not hungry.
 5 Because of my sadness, I am losing weight.*
 6 I am lonely like an owl living in the desert.
 I am alone like an owl living in old ruined buildings.
 7 I can't sleep.
 I am like a lonely bird on a roof.
 8 My enemies always insult me.
 And the people that make fun of me use my name when they curse me.
 9 My great sadness is my only food.
 My tears fall into my drinks.
 10 Why? Because you are angry at me, Lord.
 You lifted me up,
 And then you threw me away.
 11 My life is almost finished,
 the same as long shadows at the end of the day.
 I am like dry and dying grass.
 12 But Lord, you will live forever!
 Your name will continue forever and ever!
 13 You will rise and comfort Zion.*
 The time is coming when you will be kind to Zion.
 14 Your servants love her (*Jerusalem's*) stones.
 They like that city.
 15 People will worship the Lord's name.
 All the kings on earth will honor you, God.
 16 Why? Because the Lord will build Zion again.
 People will again see her (*Jerusalem's*) glory.
 17 God will answer the prayers of the people he left alive.

- God will listen to their prayers.
 18 Write these things for a future generation to read.
 And in the future, those people will praise the Lord.
 19 The Lord will look down from his Holy Place above.
 The Lord will look down at the earth from heaven.
 20 And he will hear the prisoner's prayers.
 He will free the people that were condemned to die.
 21 Then people in Zion will tell about the Lord.
 They will praise the Lord's name in Jerusalem.
 22 This will happen when the Lord brings his people together again.
 This will happen when kings serve the Lord.
 23 My strength failed me.
 My life is cut short.
 24 So I said,
 "Don't let me die while I am still young.
 God, you will live forever and ever!"
 25 Long ago, you made the world.
 You made the sky with your own hands!
 26 The world and sky will end,
 but you will live forever!
 They will wear out like clothes.
 And, like clothes, you will change them.
 They will all be changed.
 27 But you God, never change.
 You will live forever!
 28 We are your servants, today,
 And in the future, our descendants* will live here.
 And their descendants will worship you here.

I am losing weight Literally, "my bones stick to my skin."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Psalms 103

To David.

- 1 My soul, praise the Lord!
Every part of me, praise his holy name!
- 2 My soul, praise the Lord!
And don't forget that he is truly kind.
- 3 God forgives us for all the sins we do.
He heals all our sicknesses.
- 4 God saves our life from the grave.
And he gives us love and compassion.
- 5 God gives us plenty of good things.
He makes us young again, like a young eagle.
- 6 The Lord is fair.
God brings justice to people that have
been hurt by other people.
- 7 God taught his laws to Moses.
God showed the powerful things he
does for Israel.
- 8 The Lord is compassionate and merciful.
God is patient and full of love.
- 9 The Lord does not always criticize.
The Lord does not stay angry at us
forever.
- 10 We sinned against God.
But God did not give us the punishment
we should get.
- 11 The sky is high above the earth.
And that is how great God's love is for
his followers.
- 12 The east is far away from the west.
And that is how far God has taken our
sins away from us.
- 13 A father is kind to his children.
In the same way, the Lord is kind to his
followers.
- 14 God knows all about us.
God knows we are made from dust.
- 15 God knows our lives are short.
He knows our lives are like grass.
- 16 God knows we are like a little wildflower.
The flower grows quickly.
And then the hot wind blows, and the
flower dies.
And soon, you can't even see where
the flower was growing.

- 17 But the Lord's love is forever.
God loves his followers forever and
ever.
And God is good to his children's
children.
- 18 God is good to people that obey his
Agreement.*
God is good to people that obey his
commands.
- 19 God's throne is in heaven.
And he rules over everything.
- 20 Angels, praise the Lord!
You angels are the powerful soldiers
that obey God's commands.
You listen to God and obey his
commands.
- 21 Praise the Lord, all his armies.*
You are his servants.
You do the things that God wants.
- 22 The Lord made everything in every place.
God rules everything in every place.
And all those things should praise the
Lord!
My soul, praise the Lord!

Psalms 104

- 1 My soul, praise the Lord!
Lord, my God, you are very great!
You are clothed with glory and honor.
- 2 You wear light like a person wears a
robe.
You spread the skies like a curtain.
- 3 God, you built your home above them.*
You use the thick clouds like a chariot,
and ride across the sky on the wings of
the wind.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

armies This word can mean, "armies," "angels," or the "stars and planets." This word is part of the name translated, "Lord All-Powerful." It shows God is in control of all the powers in the universe.

above them Literally, "on the water above." This is like the picture of the world in Genesis 1. There, the sky was like a bowl turned upside down on the earth. And there was water below the bowl and water above it.

- ⁴ God, you made your angels like the wind,*
and your servants* like fire.
- ⁵ God, you built the earth on its foundations,
so it will never be destroyed.
- ⁶ You covered the earth with water like a blanket.
The water covered the mountains.
- ⁷ But you gave the command,
and the water rushed away.
God, you shouted at the water,
and the water rushed away.
- ⁸ The waters flowed down from the mountains,
and into the valleys,
and then to the places you made for them.
- ⁹ You set the limits for the seas.
And the water will never again rise to cover the earth.
- ¹⁰ God, you cause water to flow from springs and into the streams.
The water runs down through the mountain streams.
- ¹¹ The streams give water to all the wild animals.
Even the wild donkeys come to drink there.
- ¹² Wild birds come to live by the water pools.
And they sing from the branches of nearby trees.
- ¹³ God sends rain down onto the mountains.
The things God made give the earth everything it needs.
- ¹⁴ God, you make grass grow to feed the animals.
You give us the plants we work to grow.
Those plants are the food we get from the earth.
- ¹⁵ God, you give us the wine that makes us happy.
You give us the oil to make our skin soft.*
You give us food to make us strong.
- ¹⁶ The Lord's trees
are the great cedars of Lebanon.
Those great trees have plenty of water to make them grow.
- ¹⁷ Birds make their nests in those trees.
Large storks live in the fir trees.
- ¹⁸ The high mountains are home for the wild goats.
And the large rocks are hiding places for badgers.
- ¹⁹ God, you gave us the moon to use like a calendar,
so we could know when the holidays are.
And the sun always knows where to set.
- ²⁰ You made the darkness,
and at night,
the wild animals come out and roam around.
- ²¹ Lions roar while they attack,
it seems like they are asking God for the food he gives them.
- ²² And when the sun rises,
the animals go back to their homes and rest.
- ²³ Then people go out to do their work.
They work until evening.
- ²⁴ Lord, you did many wonderful things.
The earth is full of your things.
You show your wisdom in everything you do.
- ²⁵ Look at the ocean.
It is so big!
Many different things live in the ocean.
Some of those things are large and some are small.
Those things that live in the ocean are too many to count.

God ... wind Or "You made your messengers spirits."
angels ... servants This probably is talking about the two kinds of angels, the Cherub angels and the Seraph angels. The name Seraph is like a Hebrew word meaning, "fire."

to make ... soft Literally, "make our face shine." This can also mean, "make us happy."

- ¹⁶ Ships travel over the ocean.
And Leviathan,*
the sea creature you made,
plays there in the sea.
- ¹⁷ Lord, all of these things depend on you,
God.
You give them food at the right time.
- ¹⁸ God, you give all the living things the
food they eat.
You open your hands, filled with good
food,
and they eat until they are full.
- ²⁹ And when you turn away from them,
they become frightened.
Their spirits leave them and they grow
weak and die.
And their bodies become dust again.
- ³⁰ So give them part of your Spirit, Lord,
and they will be healthy again!
Make the land like new again!
- ³¹ May the Lord's glory continue forever!
May the Lord enjoy the things he made.
- ³² The Lord can just look at the earth,
and it will shake,
and smoke will rise from the mountains.
- ³³ All my life I will sing to the Lord.
I will sing praises to the Lord while I
live.
- ³⁴ I hope the things I said will make him
happy.
I am happy with the Lord.
- ³⁵ May sin disappear from the earth.
May wicked people be gone forever.
My soul, praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 105

- ¹ Thank the Lord.
Worship his name.
Tell the nations about the wonderful
things he does.

Leviathan This might mean any large sea animal, like a whale. But it probably means "the sea monster," the "dragon," "Rahab." This creature represents the great power of the ocean, the power that God controls.

- ² Sing to the Lord.
Sing praises to him.
Tell about all the amazing things he
does.
- ³ Be proud of the Lord's holy name.
Be happy, all you people that worship
the Lord.
- ⁴ Go to the Lord for strength.
Always go to him for help.
- ⁵ Remember the amazing things the Lord
does.
Remember his miracles and wise
decisions.
- ⁶ You are descendants* of God's servant
Abraham.
You are descendants of Jacob, the man
God chose.
- ⁷ The Lord is our God.
The Lord rules the whole world.*
- ⁸ Remember God's Agreement* forever.
Remember his commands for
1,000 generations!
- ⁹ God made an Agreement with Abraham.
God made a promise to Isaac.
- ¹⁰ God gave the Law to Jacob (*Israel*).
God made his eternal Agreement with
Israel.
- ¹¹ God said,
"I will give you the land of Canaan.
That land will belong to you."
- ¹² God made that promise when Abraham's
family was small.
And they were only travelers living in
Canaan.
- ¹³ They traveled from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
- ¹⁴ But God did not let other people hurt that
family.
God warned kings not to hurt them.
- ¹⁵ God said,

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

The ... world Literally, "His commands are in the whole earth."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- "Don't hurt my chosen people.
Don't do anything bad to my prophets.*"
- 16 God made a famine* happen in that country.
People did not have enough food to eat.
- 17 But God sent a man named Joseph to go ahead of them.
Joseph was sold like a slave.
- 18 They tied a rope around Joseph's feet.
They put an iron ring around his neck.
- 19 Joseph was a slave until the things he said really happened.
The Lord's message proved that Joseph was right.
- 20 So the king of Egypt gave the command to let Joseph go free.
The leader of many people let him out of jail.
- 21 He put Joseph in charge of his house.
Joseph took care of everything in the kingdom.
- 22 Joseph gave instructions to the other leaders.
Joseph taught the older men.
- 23 Then Israel came to Egypt.
Jacob lived in Ham's country.*
- 24 Jacob's family became very large.
They became more powerful than the Egyptians.
- 25 So the Egyptian people began hating Jacob's family.
The Egyptians began making plans against their slaves.
- 26 So God sent his servant, Moses, and Aaron, God's chosen priest.
- 27 God used Moses and Aaron to do many miracles in Ham's country.
- 28 God sent the very dark darkness, but the Egyptians did not listen to him.
- 29 So God changed the water into blood, and all their fish died.
- 30 Then the Egyptians' country was filled with frogs.
The frogs were even in the king's bedroom.
- 31 God gave the command, and the flies and gnats came.
They were everywhere!
- 32 God made the rain become hail.
Fire and lightning hit everywhere in the Egyptians' country.
- 33 God destroyed the Egyptians' grape vines and fig trees.
God destroyed every tree in their country.
- 34 God gave the command, and the locusts and grasshoppers came.
There were too many to count!
- 35 The locusts and grasshoppers ate all the plants in the country.
They ate all the crops on the ground.
- 36 And then God killed every firstborn* in the Egyptian's country.
God killed their oldest sons.
- 37 Then God took his people out of Egypt.
They brought gold and silver with them.
None of God's people stumbled and fell.
- 38 Egypt was happy to see God's people go, because they were afraid of God's people.
- 39 God spread his cloud out like a blanket.
God used his column of fire to give his people light at night.
- 40 The people asked for food, and God brought them quail.
God gave them plenty of bread from heaven.
- 41 God split the rock, and water came bubbling out.
A river began flowing in the desert!
- 42 God remembered his holy promise.
God remembered the promise he made to his servant Abraham.

prophets A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach the people.

famine A time when there is not enough rain for crops to grow. People and animals die without enough food or water.

Ham's country Or, "Egypt." The Bible teaches that the Egyptians were descendants of Ham. See Gen. 10:6-20.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

- ⁴³ God brought his people out from Egypt.
The people came out rejoicing and
singing their happy songs!
- ⁴⁴ Then God gave his people the country
where other people were living.
God's people received the things other
people worked for.
- ⁴⁵ God did this so his people could obey his
laws.
God did this so they could carefully
obey his teachings.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 106

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
Thank the Lord because he is good!
God's love is forever!
- ² No person can describe how great the
Lord really is.
No person can praise God enough.
- ³ The people that obey God's commands
are happy.
Those people do good things all the
time.
- ⁴ Lord, remember me when you are kind to
your people.
Remember to save me, too!
- ⁵ Lord, let me share in the good things you
do for your people.
Let me be happy with your people.
Let me be proud of you with your
people.
- ⁶ We sinned just like our ancestors* sinned.
We were wrong, we did bad things!
- ⁷ Our ancestors in Egypt learned nothing
from the miracles you did, Lord.
There by the Red Sea,
our ancestors turned against you.
- ⁸ But God saved our ancestors* for his own
name's sake.
God saved them to show his great
power.

- ⁹ God gave the command,
and the Red Sea became dry.
God led our ancestors through the deep
sea,
on land as dry as the desert.
- ¹⁰ God saved our ancestors from their
enemies!
God rescued them from their enemies.
- ¹¹ And then God covered their enemies with
the sea.
Not one of their enemies escaped!
- ¹² Then our ancestors* believed God.
They sang praises to him.
- ¹³ But our ancestors quickly forgot about the
things God did.
They did not listen to God's advice.
- ¹⁴ Our ancestors became hungry in the
desert.
And they tested God in the wilderness.
- ¹⁵ But God gave our ancestors the things
they asked for.
But God also gave them a terrible
disease.
- ¹⁶ The people became jealous of Moses.
They became jealous of Aaron,
the Lord's holy priest.
- ¹⁷ So God punished those jealous people.
The ground opened up and swallowed
Dathan.
Then the ground closed up and
covered Abiram's group.
- ¹⁸ Then a fire burned that mob of people.
The fire burned those wicked people.
- ¹⁹ Those people made a golden calf at
Mount Horeb.
They worshiped a statue!
- ²⁰ Those people traded their glorious God,
for a statue of a grass-eating bull!
- ²¹ Our ancestors* forgot about the God that
saved them.
They forgot about the God that did the
miracles in Egypt.
- ²² God did amazing things in Ham's
country.*

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Ham's country Or "Egypt." The Bible teaches that the Egyptians were descendants of Ham. See Gen. 10:6-20.

God did awesome things near the Red Sea!

- ²³ God wanted to destroy those people.
But God's chosen servant Moses
stopped him.

God was very angry,
but Moses blocked the way so God would
not destroy those people.

- ²⁴ Then, those people refused to go
into the wonderful land of Canaan.
The people did not believe
that God would help them defeat the
people living in that land.

- ²⁵ Our ancestors* refused to obey God.

- ²⁶ So God swore that they would die in the
desert.

- ²⁷ God promised that he would let other
people defeat their descendants.*
God promised he would scatter our
ancestors among nations.

- ²⁸ Then at Baal Peor, God's people joined in
worshiping Baal.
God's people ate meat that was
sacrificed to a dead statue.

- ²⁹ God became very angry at his people,
and God made them become very sick.

- ³⁰ But Phinehas prayed to God,
and God stopped the sickness.

- ³¹ God knew Phinehas did a very good
thing.
And God will remember this forever
and ever.

- ³² At Meribah, the people became angry.
And they made Moses do something
bad.

- ³³ Those people made Moses very upset,
so Moses said things without stopping
to think.

- ³⁴ The Lord told the people to destroy the
other nations living in Canaan.

But the people of Israel did not obey
God.

- ³⁵ The people of Israel mixed with the other
people,
and they did the same things those other
people were doing.

- ³⁶ Those other people became a trap to
God's people.
God's people began worshiping the
gods those other people worshiped.

- ³⁷ God's people even killed their own
children,
and offered the children to those devils.

- ³⁸ God's people killed innocent people.
They killed their own children
and offered them to those false gods.

- ³⁹ So God's people became dirty with the
sins of those other people.
God's people were unfaithful to their
God
and did the things those other people
did.

- ⁴⁰ God became angry at his people.
God was fed up with them!

- ⁴¹ God gave his people to other nations.
God let their enemies rule over them.

- ⁴² The enemies of God's people controlled
them and made life hard for them.

- ⁴³ God saved his people many times.
But they turned against God and did the
things they wanted to do.
God's people did many, many bad
things.

- ⁴⁴ But whenever God's people were in
trouble,
they always called to God for help.
And God listened to their prayers
every time.

- ⁴⁵ God always remembered his Agreement.*
God always comforted them with his
great love.

- ⁴⁶ Those other people took God's people as
prisoners.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents,
grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future
families.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten
Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement
between God and Israel.

But God made those people be kind to
his people.

- 47 The Lord our God saved us!
God brought us back from those other
nations
so we could praise his holy name,
and so we could sing praises to him.

- 48 Bless the Lord God of Israel.
God has always lived, and he will live
forever.

And all the people said,
"Amen!
Praise the Lord!"

BOOK 5

Psalm 107

- 1 Thank the Lord, because he is good!
His love is forever!
- 2 Every person the Lord saved should say
those words.
Every person the Lord saved from their
enemies should praise him.
- 3 The Lord gathered his people together
from many different countries.
He brought them from east and west,
north and south.*
- 4 Some of the people wandered in the dry
desert.
Those people were looking for a city
where they could live,
but they could not find a city.
- 5 Those people were hungry and thirsty and
growing weak.
- 6 Then they called to the Lord for help.
And the Lord saved those people from
all their troubles.
- 7 God led those people straight to the city
where they would live.
- 8 Thank God for his love.
Thank God for the amazing things he
does for people.

- 9 God satisfies the thirsty soul.
God fills the hungry soul with good
things.
- 10 Some of God's people were prisoners,
locked behind bars in dark, dark
prisons.
- 11 Why? Because those people fought
against the things God said.
They refused to listen to advice from
God Most-High.
- 12 God made life hard for those people
because of the things they did.
They stumbled and fell,
and there was no person to help them.
- 13 Those people were in trouble, so they
called to the Lord for help.
And the Lord saved them from their
troubles.
- 14 God took them out of their dark prisons.
And God broke the ropes they were tied
with.
- 15 Thank the Lord for his love.
Thank him for the amazing things he
does for people.
- 16 God helps us defeat our enemies.
God can break down their bronze gates.
God can shatter the iron bars on their
gates.
- 17 Some people let their sins and guilt
change them into foolish people.
- 18 Those people refused to eat, and they
almost died.
- 19 They were in trouble, so they called to the
Lord for help.
And the Lord saved them from their
troubles.
- 20 God gave the command and healed the
people.
So those people were saved from the
grave.
- 21 Thank the Lord for his love.
Thank the Lord for the amazing things
he does for people.
- 22 Offer sacrifices to the Lord to thank him
for all he did.
Gladly tell about the things the Lord has
done.

south This is probably the correct reading, although now the Hebrew has "the Mediterranean Sea," which is west of Israel.

- ²³ Some people sailed across the sea in boats to do their jobs.
²⁴ Those people saw the things the Lord can do.
 They saw the amazing things the Lord did at sea.
²⁵ God gave the command, and a strong wind began blowing.
 The waves became bigger and bigger.
²⁶ The waves were as high as the sky.
 The storm was so dangerous the men became afraid.
²⁷ Those men were stumbling and falling like drunk men.
 Their skill as sailors was useless.
²⁸ They were in trouble,
 so they called to the Lord for help.
 And the Lord saved them from their troubles.
²⁹ God stopped the storm.
 And the waves calmed down.
³⁰ The sailors were happy that the sea was calm.
 And God led them safely to the place they wanted to go.
³¹ Thank the Lord for his love.
 Thank the Lord for the amazing things he does for people.
³² Praise God in the great assembly.
 Praise him when the older leaders meet together.
³³ God changed rivers into a desert.
 God stopped springs from flowing.
³⁴ God changed the land that was like new into worthless salty land.
 Why? Because of the things the bad people living there did.
³⁵ God changed the desert into a land with lakes.
 God caused springs of water to flow from dry ground.
³⁶ God led hungry people to that good land.
 And those people built a city to live in.
³⁷ Those people planted seeds in their fields.
 They planted grapes in the field.
 And they had a good harvest.

- ³⁸ God blessed those people, and their families grew.
 They had many, many animals.
³⁹ Because of disaster and troubles, their families were small and weak.
⁴⁰ God shamed and embarrassed their leaders.
 God let them wander through the desert where there are no paths.
⁴¹ But then God rescued those poor people from their misery.
 And now their families are large, like flocks of sheep.
⁴² Good people see this,
 and they are happy.
 But wicked people see this,
 and they don't know what to say.
⁴³ If a person is wise,
 he will remember these things.
 If a person is wise,
 he will understand what God's love really is.

Psalm 108

One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ God, I am ready.
 I am ready to sing and play songs of praise.
² Harps and lyres,* let's wake up the sun!
³ Lord, we will praise you among the nations.
 And we will praise you among other people.
⁴ Lord, your love is higher than the skies.
 Your true love is higher than the highest clouds.
⁵ God, rise above the heavens!
 Let all the world see your glory.
⁶ God, do this to save your friends.
 Answer my prayer and use your great power to save.
⁷ The Lord spoke from his temple and said,

lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.
let's wake up the sun! This song was probably written to be sung at the temple when they offered the morning sacrifices.

- "I will win the war!
I will give Shechem to my people.
I will give the Valley of Shelters.
Gilead and Manasseh will be mine.
Ephraim will be my helmet.
Judah will be my scepter.*
Moab will be the bowl for washing my feet.
Edom will be the slave that carries my sandals.
I will shout in victory after beating the Philistines."
- Who will lead me into the enemy fortress?
Who will help me defeat Edom?
God, is it true that you left us
and will not go with our army?
God, please help us defeat our enemy!
People can't help us!
Only God can make us strong.
And only God can defeat our enemies.

Psalm 109

To the director.* One of David's songs of praise.

- God, don't close your ears to my prayer!
Wicked people are telling lies about me.
Those liars are saying things that are not true.
People are saying hateful things about me.
People are attacking me for no reason.
I loved them,
but they hate me.
So now, I am praying to you, God.
I did good things to those people.
but they are doing bad things to me.
I loved them,
but they hated me.
Punish my enemy for the bad things he did.
Find a person to prove he is wrong.

- Let the judge decide my enemy did wrong and he is guilty.
Let everything my enemy says only make things worse for him.
Let my enemy die soon.
Let another person have my enemy's job.
Make my enemy's children orphans, and his wife a widow.
Let them lose their home and become beggars.
Let the people my enemy owes money to take everything he owns.
Let strangers take everything he worked for.
I hope no person is kind to my enemy.
And I hope no person shows mercy to his children.
Destroy my enemy completely.
Let the next generation remove his name from everything.
I hope the Lord remembers the sins of my enemy's father and mother forever.
I hope the Lord remembers those sins forever,
and I hope the Lord will force people to forget my enemy completely.
Why? Because that evil man never did anything good.
He never loved anyone
He made life hard for poor, helpless people.
That evil man loved to ask for bad things to happen to people,
so let those bad things happen to him.
That evil man never asked for good things to happen to people,
so don't let good things happen to him.
Let curses be his clothes.
Let curses be the water that evil man drinks.
Let curses be the oil on his body.
Let curses be the clothes they wrap around that evil man.

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to show they were rulers.

director Or, "performer."

And let curses be the belt around his waist.

- ²⁰ I hope the Lord does all those things to my enemy.
I hope the Lord does those things to all the people that are trying to kill me.
- ²¹ Lord, you are my Master.
So treat me in a way that brings honor to your name.
You have such great love,
so save me.
- ²² I am only a poor, helpless man.
I am truly sad, my heart is broken.
- ²³ I feel like my life is over,
like long shadows at the end of a day.
I feel like a bug that some person brushed away.
- ²⁴ My knees are weak because I am hungry.
I am losing weight and becoming thin.
- ²⁵ Bad people insult me.
They look at me and shake their heads.
- ²⁶ Lord my God, help me!
Show your true love and save me!
- ²⁷ Then those people will know that you helped me.
They will know that it was your power that helped me.
- ²⁸ Those bad people curse me, but you can bless me, Lord.
They attacked me, so defeat them.
Then I, your servant, will be happy.
- ²⁹ Embarrass my enemies!
Let them wear their shame like a coat.
- ³⁰ I thank the Lord.
I praise him in front of many people.
- ³¹ Why? Because the Lord stands by helpless people.
God saves them from other people that try to condemn them to death.

Psalm 110

One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ The Lord said to my Master,
"Sit here by my right side
until I put your enemies under your feet like a footstool."

- ² The Lord will help your kingdom grow.
Your kingdom will start at Zion,*
and it will grow until, you rule your enemies in their own countries!
- ³ Your people join you on the day you become king.
You have had a holy beauty since birth.
Now, that blessing from your childhood,
is dawning into your new life as king.*
- ⁴ The Lord made a promise.
And the Lord will not change his mind.
You are a priest forever,
(but not from Aaron's family group.)
(Yours is a different priesthood.)
(It is like you are a priest, from Melchizedek's group.)
- ⁵ My Master, you showed your anger that day.
You used your great power,
and you defeated the other kings.
- ⁶ God judged the nations.
God defeated the enemies in that great land.
The ground was covered with their dead bodies!
- ⁷ The king drinks from the stream on the way.*
He will truly lift his head and be very powerful!*

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

You ... king Verse 3 is very hard to understand in Hebrew. Literally, "Holy splendor was yours from the womb. Your dew of youth has become a dawning for you."

stream ... way This might be the Gihon spring at Jerusalem, where the king might have stopped as he walked into Jerusalem to be anointed king.

lift ... powerful Literally, "he will lift his head." This might mean, "He will raise his head after drinking the water." But it can also mean, "God will make him very powerful or important." Here the poet might mean both things.

Psalm 111

- 1 * Praise the Lord!
I thank the Lord with all my heart
in the assembly where good people
meet together.
- 2 The Lord does wonderful things.
People want every good thing that
comes from God.
- 3 God does truly glorious and wonderful
things.
His goodness continues forever.
- 4 God does amazing things so we will
remember
that the Lord is kind and merciful.
- 5 God gives food to his followers.
God remembers his Agreement*
forever.
- 6 The powerful things God did,
shows his people that he was giving
their land to them.
- 7 Everything God does is good and fair.
All his commands can all be trusted.
- 8 God's commands will continue forever.
God's reasons for giving those
commands were honest and pure.
- 9 God saves his people.
God made his Agreement to continue
forever.
God's name is amazing and holy.
- 10 Wisdom begins with fear and respect for
God.
People that respect God are very wise.
Praises will be sung to God forever.

Psalm 112

- 1 * Praise the Lord!
A person that fears and respects the Lord
will be very happy.
That person loves God's commands.
- 2 That person's descendants* will be great
on earth.
Descendants from good people will be
truly blessed.
- 3 That person's family will be very rich.
And his goodness will continue forever.
- 4 To good people, God is like a light
shining in the dark.
God is good and kind and merciful.
- 5 It is good for a person to be kind and
generous.
It is good for a person to be fair in his
business.
- 6 That person will never fall.
A good person will be remembered
forever.
- 7 A good person will not need to be afraid
of disasters.
That person is confident and trusts the
Lord.
- 8 That person is confident.
He will not be afraid.
He will defeat his enemies.
- 9 That person freely gives things to poor
people.
The good things he does will continue
forever.
- 10 Wicked people will see this and become
angry.
They will grind their teeth in anger, and
then disappear.
Wicked people will not get what they
want most.

Psalm 111 In Hebrew, each part of the verse in this psalm begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Psalm 112 In Hebrew, each part of the verse in this psalm begins with the next letter in the Hebrew alphabet.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Psalm 113

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
Servants of the Lord, praise him!
Praise the Lord's name.
- ² I want the Lord's name to be blessed.
now and forever more.
- ³ I want the Lord's name to be praised
from the rising sun in the east
to the place where the sun goes down.
- ⁴ The Lord is higher than all nations.
His glory rises to the skies.
- ⁵ No person is like the Lord our God.
God sits high in heaven.
- ⁶ For God to see the skies and the earth, he
must look down.
- ⁷ God lifts poor people out of the dirt.
God takes beggars from the garbage
dump.
- ⁸ And God makes those people important.
God makes those people important
leaders.
- ⁹ A woman might not have children.
But God will give children to her and
make her happy.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 114

- ¹ Israel left Egypt.
Jacob (*Israel*) left that foreign country.
- ² At that time, Judah became God's special
people.
Israel became his kingdom.
- ³ The Red Sea saw this and ran away.
The Jordan River turned and ran.
- ⁴ The mountains danced like rams.*
The hills danced like lambs.
- ⁵ Red Sea, why did you run away?
Jordan River, why did you turn and run
away?
- ⁶ Mountains, why did you dance like rams?
And hills, why did you dance like
lambs?

- ⁷ The earth shook in front of the Master,
the Lord God of Jacob.
- ⁸ God is the One that caused water to flow
from a rock.
God made a spring of water flow from
that hard rock.

Psalm 115

- ¹ Lord, we should not receive any honor.
The honor belongs to you.
The honor is yours because of your
love and loyalty.
- ² Why should the nations wonder where
our God is?
- ³ God is in heaven, and he does anything
he wants.
- ⁴ Those nation's "gods" are only statues
made from gold and silver.
They are only statues that some person
made.
- ⁵ Those statues have mouths, but they can't
talk.
They have eyes, but they can't see.
- ⁶ They have ears, but they can't hear.
They have noses, but they can't smell.
- ⁷ They have hands, but they can't feel
anything.
They have legs, but they can't walk.
And no sounds come from their
throats.
- ⁸ The people that own and trust those
statues
will become just like them!
- ⁹ But Israel trusts the Lord.
And the Lord helps and protects Israel!
- ¹⁰ Aaron's family trusts the Lord.
And the Lord helps and protects
Aaron's family!
- ¹¹ The Lord's followers trust the Lord.
And the Lord helps and protects his
followers!
- ¹² The Lord remembers us.
The Lord will bless us.
The Lord will bless Israel.

- The Lord will bless Aaron's family.
 13 The Lord will bless his followers, great and small.
 14 I hope the Lord will make your families become large.
 And I hope he will make your children's families large.
 15 The Lord blesses you!
 The Lord made heaven and earth.
 16 Heaven belongs to the Lord.
 But he gave the earth to people.
 17 Dead people don't praise the Lord.
 People down in the grave don't praise the Lord.
 18 But we bless the Lord!
 And we will bless him from now and forever!
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 116

- 1 I love it when the the Lord hears my prayers.
 2 I love it when he listens to me when I call for help.
 3 I almost died!
 Death's ropes were wrapped around me.
 The grave was closing in around me.
 I was scared and worried.
 4 Then I called on the Lord's name. I said:
 "Lord, save me!"
 5 The Lord is good and merciful.
 God is kind.
 6 The Lord takes care of helpless people.
 I was without help, and the Lord saved me.
 7 My soul, relax!
 The Lord is caring for you.
 8 God, you saved my soul from death.
 You stopped my tears.
 You kept me from falling.
 9 I will continue to serve the Lord in the land of the living.
 10 I continued believing even when I said,
 "I am ruined!"
 11 I continued believing even when I was afraid and said,

"All men are liars!"

- 12 What can I give to the Lord?
 The Lord gave me everything I have!
 13 I will give him a drink offering for saving me.
 And I will call on the Lord's name.
 14 I will give the Lord the things I promised.
 I will go in front of all his people now.
 15 The death of one of the Lord's followers is very important to the Lord.
 Lord, I am one of your servants!
 16 I am your servant.
 I am a child of one of your servant women.
 Lord, you were my first teacher!
 17 I will give you a thank offering.
 I will call on the Lord's name.
 18 I will give the Lord the things I promised.
 I will go in front of all his people now.
 19 I will go to the temple in Jerusalem.
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 117

- 1 Praise the Lord, all you nations.
 Praise the Lord all you people.
 2 God loves us very much!
 And God will be loyal to us forever!
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 118

- 1 Honor the Lord because he is God.
 His true love continues forever!
 2 Israel, say it.
 "His true love continues forever!"
 3 Priests, say it.
 "His true love continues forever!"
 4 You people worshiping the Lord, say it.
 "His true love continues forever!"
 5 I was in trouble so I called to the Lord for help.
 The Lord answered me and made me free.
 6 The Lord is with me so I will not be afraid.
 People can't do anything to hurt me.

- 7 The Lord is my helper.
I will see my enemies defeated.
- 8 It is better to trust the Lord than to trust people.
- 9 It is better to trust the Lord than to trust your leaders.
- 10 Many enemies surrounded me.
I defeated my enemies with the Lord's power.
- 11 Enemies surrounded me again and again.
I defeated them with the Lord's power.
- 12 Enemies surrounded me like a swarm of bees.
But, they were finished like a fast burning bush.
I defeated them with the Lord's power.
- 13 My enemy attacked me and almost destroyed me.
But the Lord helped me.
- 14 The Lord is my strength and victory song!
The Lord saves me!
- 15 You can hear the victory celebration in good people's houses.
The Lord showed his great power again.
- 16 The Lord's arms are raised in victory.
The Lord showed his great power again.
- 17 I will live!
I will not die.
And I will tell about the things the Lord has done.
- 18 The Lord punished me,
but he did not let me die.
- 19 Good gates, open for me,
and I will come in and worship the Lord.
- 20 Those are the Lord's gates.
Only good people can go through those gates.
- 21 Lord, I thank you for answering my prayer.
I thank you for saving me.
- 22 The same stone that the builders did not want

- became the cornerstone.
- 23 The Lord made this happen.
and we think it is wonderful!
- 24 Today is the day the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be happy today!
- 25 The people said,
"Praise the Lord!
The Lord saved us!*
- 26 Welcome the man coming in the name of the Lord."
- The priests answered,
"We welcome you to the Lord's house!"
- 27 The Lord is God.
And he accepts us.
Tie up the lamb for the sacrifice.
And carry the lamb up to the horns of the altar."*
- 28 Lord, you are my God and I thank you.
I praise you!
- 29 Praise the Lord because he is good.
His true love is forever.

Psalm 119

Aleph*

- 1 People living pure lives are happy.
Those people follow the Lord's teachings.
- 2 People that obey the Lord's Agreement* are happy.
They obey the Lord with all their heart.
- 3 Those people don't do bad things.
They obey the Lord.
- 4 Lord, you gave us your commands.
And you told us to obey those commands completely.

Praise ... us Literally, "Lord, please save us. Lord, please make us successful." This was a shout of victory to honor the king that was coming back from winning a war.

horns of the altar The corners of the altar looked like horns.

Aleph First letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section of this song begins with the next letter of the alphabet.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ⁵ If I always obey your laws, Lord,
⁶ Then I will never be ashamed when I
 study your commands.
⁷ Then I could truly honor you as I study
 your fairness and goodness.
⁸ Lord, I will obey your commands.
 So please don't leave me!

Beth

- ⁹ How can a young person live a pure life?
 By following your instructions.
¹⁰ I try to serve God with all my heart.
 God, help me obey your commands.
¹¹ I study your teachings very carefully.
 Why? So I will not sin against you.
¹² Bless you Lord.
 Teach me your laws.
¹³ I will talk about all your wise decisions.
¹⁴ I enjoy studying your Agreement* more
 than anything.
¹⁵ I discuss your rules.
 I follow your way of living.
¹⁶ I enjoy your laws.
 I will not forget your words.

Gimel

- ¹⁷ Give your servant the ability,
 and I will obey your commands.
¹⁸ Lord, open my eyes, and I will look into
 your teachings.
 I will read about the wonderful things
 you did.
¹⁹ I am a stranger in this land.
 Lord, don't hide your teachings from
 me.
²⁰ I want to study your decisions all the
 time.
²¹ Lord, you criticize proud people.
 Bad things will happen to those proud
 people.
 They refuse to obey your commands.
²² Don't let me be ashamed and
 embarrassed.

- I have obeyed your Agreement.*
²³ Even the leaders said bad things about
 me.
 But I am your servant, Lord, and I study
 your laws.
²⁴ Your Agreement is my best friend.
 It gives me good advice.

Daleth

- ²⁵ I will soon die.
 Lord, give the command and let me
 live.
²⁶ I told you about my life.
 And you answered me.
 Now, teach me your laws.
²⁷ Lord, help me understand your laws.
 Let me study the wonderful things you
 have done.
²⁸ I am sad and tired.
 Give the command and make me strong
 again.
²⁹ Lord, don't let me live a lie.
 Guide me with your teachings.
³⁰ Lord, I chose to be loyal to you.
 I carefully study your wise decisions.
³¹ I stick with your Agreement* Lord.
 Don't disappoint me.
³² I will gladly obey your commands.
 Lord, your commands make me very
 happy.

He

- ³³ Lord, teach me your laws,
 and I will follow them.
³⁴ Help me understand,
 and I will obey your teachings.
 I will obey them completely.
³⁵ Lord, lead me along the path of your
 commands.
 I truly love your commands.
³⁶ Help me think about your Agreement*
 instead of thinking about how to get
 rich.
³⁷ Lord, don't let me try hard to get
 worthless things.
 Help me live your way.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ³⁸ Lord, I am your servant, so do the things
you promised.
You promised those things to people
that worship you.
- ³⁹ Lord, take away the shame I fear.
Your wise decisions are good.
- ⁴⁰ Look, I love your commands.
Be good to me and let me live.

Waw

- ⁴¹ Lord, show me your true love.
Save me like you promised.
- ⁴² Then I will have an answer for people
that insult me.
I really trust the things you say, Lord.
- ⁴³ Don't take your dependable teachings
from me.
Lord, I depend on your wise decisions.
- ⁴⁴ Lord, I will follow your teachings forever
and ever.
- ⁴⁵ So I will live safely.
Why? Because I try hard to obey your
laws.
- ⁴⁶ I will discuss the Lord's Agreement* with
kings,
and they will not embarrass me.
- ⁴⁷ I enjoy studying your commands, Lord.
I love those commands.
- ⁴⁸ Lord, I praise your commands.
I love them.
And I will study them.

Zain

- ⁴⁹ Lord, remember your promise to me.
That promise gives me hope.
- ⁵⁰ I was suffering, and you comforted me.
Your words let me live again.
- ⁵¹ People that think they are better than me
insulted me constantly.
But I did not stop following your
teachings, Lord.
- ⁵² I always remember your wise decisions.
Lord, your wise decisions comfort me.

- ⁵³ I become very angry when I see the
wicked people
that quit following your teachings.
- ⁵⁴ To me, your laws are like songs at my
home.*
- ⁵⁵ Lord, I remember your name at night.
And I remember your teachings.
- ⁵⁶ This happens because I carefully obey
your commands.

Heth

- ⁵⁷ Lord, I decided my duty is to obey your
commands.
- ⁵⁸ Lord, I depend on you completely.
Be kind to me like you promised.
- ⁵⁹ I thought very carefully,
and I returned to following your
Agreement.*
- ⁶⁰ I hurried back to obey your commands
without delay.
- ⁶¹ A group of bad people said bad things
about me.
But I did not forget your teachings,
Lord.
- ⁶² In the middle of the night,
I get up to thank you for your good
decisions.
- ⁶³ I am a friend to every person that
worships you.
I am a friend to every person that obeys
your commands.
- ⁶⁴ Lord, your true love fills the earth.
Teach me your laws.

Teth

- ⁶⁵ Lord, you did good things for me, your
servant.
You did exactly the things you
promised to do.
- ⁶⁶ Lord, give me the knowledge to make
wise decisions.
I trust your commands.
- ⁶⁷ Before I suffered, I did many wrong
things.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

at my home Or "at the temple."

But now, I carefully obey your
commands.

⁶⁸ God, you are good, and you do good
things.

Teach me your laws.

⁶⁹ Some people that think they are better
than me tell bad lies about me.

But I continue obeying your commands
with all my heart, Lord.

⁷⁰ Those people are very stupid.

And I enjoy studying your teachings.

⁷¹ Suffering was good for me.

I learned your laws.

⁷² Lord, your teachings are good for me.

Your teachings are better than a 1,000
pieces of silver and gold.

Yod

⁷³ Lord, you made me and you support me
with your hands.

Help me learn and understand your
commands.

⁷⁴ Lord, your followers respect me.

And they are happy because I trust the
things you say.

⁷⁵ Lord, I know that your decisions are fair.

And it was right for you to punish me.

⁷⁶ Now, comfort me with your true love.

Comfort me like you promised.

⁷⁷ Lord, comfort me and let me live.

I truly enjoy your teachings.

⁷⁸ Disappoint those people that think they
are better than me,

because they lied about me.

And Lord, I will study your commands.

⁷⁹ Let your followers come back to me.

Let the people that know your
Agreement* come back to me.

⁸⁰ Lord, let me obey your commands
perfectly

So I will not be ashamed.

Kaph

⁸¹ I am about to die waiting for you to save
me.

But I trust the things you say, Lord.

⁸² I keep looking for the things you
promised,

but my eyes are getting tired.

Lord, when will you comfort me?

⁸³ Even when I am like a dried wineskin on
the trash pile,

I will not forget your laws.

⁸⁴ How long will I live?

Lord, when will you punish the people
that persecute me?

⁸⁵ Some proud people stabbed me
with their lies.

And that is against your teachings.

⁸⁶ People can trust all of your commands,
Lord.

Liars persecute me. Help me!

⁸⁷ Those liars have almost destroyed me.

And I have not stopped following your
commands.

⁸⁸ Lord, show me your true love
and let me live.

And I will do the things you say.

Lamedh

⁸⁹ Lord, your word continues forever.

Your word continues forever in heaven.

⁹⁰ You are loyal forever and ever.

Lord, you made the earth, and it still
stands.

⁹¹ Because of your command, all things still
continue.

Lord, all things obey your commands
like servants.

⁹² If your teachings were not like friends to
me,
then my suffering would have destroyed
me.

⁹³ Lord, I will never forget your commands,
because they let me live.

⁹⁴ Lord, I am yours. Save me!

Why? Because I try hard to obey your
commands.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten
Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement
between God and Israel.

- ⁹⁵ Wicked people tried to destroy me.
But your Agreement* made me wise.
⁹⁶ Everything has its limits,
except your law.

Mem

- ⁹⁷ Oh, I love your teachings, Lord.
I talk about them all of the time.
⁹⁸ Lord, your commands make me wiser
than my enemies.
Your law is with me always.
⁹⁹ I am wiser than all my teachers
because I study your Agreement.*
¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the older leaders
because I keep your commands.
¹⁰¹ You keep me off of the wrong path every
step of the way
so I can do what you tell me, Lord.
¹⁰² Lord, you are my teacher
so I will not stop obeying your laws.
¹⁰³ Your words are sweeter than honey in my
mouth.
¹⁰⁴ Your teachings make me wise,
so I hate false teachings.

Nun

- ¹⁰⁵ Lord, your words are like a lamp lighting
my path.
¹⁰⁶ Your laws are good.
I promise to obey them.
And I will keep my promise.
¹⁰⁷ Lord, I suffered for a long time.
Please give the command, and let me
live again!
¹⁰⁸ Lord, accept my praise.
And teach me your laws.
¹⁰⁹ My life is always in danger.
But I have not forgotten your teachings,
Lord.
¹¹⁰ Wicked people try to trap me.
But I have not disobeyed your
commands.
¹¹¹ Lord, I will follow your Agreement*

forever.

It makes me very happy.

- ¹¹² I will always try very hard to obey all
your laws.

Samekh

- ¹¹³ Lord, I hate people that are not
completely loyal to you.
And I love your teachings.
¹¹⁴ Hide me and protect me.
Lord, I trust everything you say.
¹¹⁵ Lord, don't let bad people come near me.
And I will obey my God's commands.
¹¹⁶ Lord, support me like you promised, and
I will live.
I trust you, don't disappoint me.
¹¹⁷ Help me, Lord, and I will be saved.
I will study your commands forever.
¹¹⁸ Lord, you turn away every person that
breaks your laws.
Why? Because those people lied when
they agreed to follow you.
¹¹⁹ Lord, you treat wicked people on earth
like trash.
So I will love your Agreement* forever.
¹²⁰ Lord, I am afraid of you.
I fear and respect your laws.

Ain

- ¹²¹ I have done the things that are right and
good.
Lord, don't give me to the people that
want to hurt me.
¹²² Promise me that you will help me.
I am your servant, Lord, don't let those
proud people hurt me.
¹²³ Lord, you made a good promise to save
me.
But my eyes are tired of looking for you
to save me.
¹²⁴ Show your true love to me.
I am your servant.
Teach me your laws.
¹²⁵ I am your servant.
Help me learn and understand your
Agreement.*

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- 126 Lord, it is time for you to do something.
The people have broken your law.
127 Lord, I love your commands more than
purest gold.
128 I carefully obey all of your commands.*
I hate false teachings.

Pe

- 129 Lord, your Agreement* is wonderful.
That is why I follow it.
130 When people begin understanding your
word,
it is like a light showing them the right
way of living.
Your word makes even simple people
wise.
131 Lord, I really want to study your
commands.
I am like a person breathing hard and
waiting impatiently.
132 God, look at me and be kind to me.
Do the things that are right for the
people that love your name.
133 Lord, guide me like you promised.
Don't let anything bad happen to me.
134 Lord, save me from the people that hurt
me.
And I will obey your commands.
135 Lord, accept your servant,
and teach me your laws.
136 I have cried a river of tears
because people don't obey your
teachings.

Tsadhe

- 137 Lord, you are good.
And your laws are fair.
138 The laws you gave us in the Agreement*
are good.
We can really trust your laws, Lord.
139 The strong feelings I have will soon
destroy me.

I carefully ... commands The Hebrew is not clear
here.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten
Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement
between God and Israel.

- I am so upset because my enemies
forgot your commands.
140 We have proof that we can trust your
word, Lord.
And I love it.
141 I am a young person,
and people don't respect me.
But I don't forget your commands.
142 Lord, your goodness is forever.
And your teachings can be trusted.
143 I had troubles and hard times.
But your commands were like friends to
me.
144 Your Agreement is good forever.
Help me understand your Agreement*
so I can live.

Qoph

- 145 I call to you with all my heart, Lord.
Answer me!
I obey your commands.
146 Lord, I call to you.
Save me!
And I will obey your Agreement.*
147 I got up early in the morning to pray to
you, Lord.
I trust the things you say.
148 I stayed up late at night to study your
word.
149 With all your love, listen to me.
Lord, do the things you say are right,
and let me live.
150 People are making evil plans against me.
Those people don't follow your
teachings, Lord.
151 Lord, you are close to me.
And all your commands can be trusted.
152 Long ago I learned from your
Agreement*
that your teachings will continue
forever.

Resh

- 153 Lord, see my suffering and rescue me.
I have not forgotten your teachings.
154 Lord, fight my fight for me and save me.

Let me live, like you promised.

155 Wicked people will not win.
Why? Because they don't follow your laws.

156 Lord, you are very kind.
Do the things you say are right, and let me live.

157 I have many enemies trying to hurt me.
But I have not stopped following your Agreement.*

158 I see those traitors.*
They don't obey your word, Lord.
And I hate that.

159 Look, I try hard to obey your commands.
Lord, with all your love, let me live.

160 From the very beginning,
all your words could be trusted, Lord.
And your good law will last forever.

Shin

161 Powerful leaders attacked me for no reason.
But I fear and respect only your law.
162 Lord, your word makes me as happy as a person
that just found a great treasure.

163 I hate lies! I despise them!
I love your teachings, Lord.

164 Seven times a day I praise you for your good laws.

165 People that love your teachings will find true peace.

Nothing can make those people fall.

166 Lord, I am waiting for you to save me.
I obeyed your commands.

167 I followed your Agreement.*
Lord, I love your laws very much.

168 I have obeyed your Agreement and your commands.
Lord, you know everything I have done.

Taw

169 Lord, listen to my happy song.
Make me wise like you promised.

170 Lord, listen to my prayer.
Save me, like you promised.

171 I burst into songs of praise,
because you taught me your laws.

172 Help me respond to your words and let me sing my song.

Lord, all your laws are good.

173 Reach out and help me,
because I chose to follow your commands.

174 Lord, I want you to save me.
But your teachings make me happy.

175 Let me live and praise you, Lord.
Let your laws help me.

176 I wandered away like a lost sheep.
Come looking for me, Lord.

I am your servant,
and I have not forgotten your commands.

Psalms 120

A song of ascents.

1 I was in trouble.
I called to the Lord for help.
And he saved me!

2 Lord, save me from the people that lied about me.

3 Liars, do you know how God will punish you?

4 God will use a soldier's sharp arrow and hot coals to punish you.

5 Living near you liars is like living in Meshech.

It is like living in tents in Kedar.*

6 I have lived too long with people that hate peace.

7 I want peace.
I said that,
so those people want war.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

traitors People that turn against their country, friends, or family and do bad things to them.

Meshech ... Kedar People from these places were famous fighters.

Psalm 121*A song of ascents.*

- 1 I look up to the hills.
But where will my help really come from?
- 2 My help will come from the Lord,
the Creator of heaven and earth.
- 3 God will not let you fall.
Your Protector will not fall asleep.
- 4 Israel's Protector does not become sleepy.
God never sleeps.
- 5 The Lord is your Protector.
The Lord protects you with his great power.
- 6 The sun can't hurt you during the day.
And the moon can't hurt you at night.
- 7 The Lord will protect you from every danger.
The Lord will protect your soul.
- 8 The Lord will help as you come and go.*
The Lord will help you now and forever!

Psalm 122*A song of ascents from David.*

- 1 I was very happy when people said,
"Let us go to the Lord's temple.*"
- 2 Here we are standing at the gates of Jerusalem.
- 3 This is New Jerusalem!
The city has been built again as one united city.
- 4 The family groups that belong to God go there.
The people of Israel go there to praise the Lord's name.
- 5 That is the place the kings set their thrones to judge the people.
The kings from David's family put their thrones in that place.
- 6 Pray for peace in Jerusalem.
"I hope the people that love you will find peace there."

come and go This probably refers to going to war.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

I hope there will be peace inside your walls.
 I hope there will be safety in your great buildings."

- 7 For the good of my neighbors and other Israelites,
I pray there will be peace here.
- 8 For the good of the temple of the Lord our God,
I pray that good things will happen to this city.

Psalm 123*A song of ascents*

- 1 God, I look up and pray to you.
You sit as king in heaven.
- 2 Slaves depend on their masters for the things they need.
Slave women depend on their women masters.
- 3 In the same way, we depend on the Lord our God.
And we wait for God to show mercy to us.
- 4 Lord, be merciful to us.
Be merciful because we have been insulted too long.
- 5 Proud people have insulted us long enough.
Those people think they are better than other people.

Psalm 124*A song of ascents from David.*

- 1 What would have happened to us if the Lord had not been on our side in the past?
Tell me the answer, Israel.
- 2 What would have happened to us if the Lord had not been on our side in the past?
What would have happened when people attacked us?
- 3 Then our enemies would have swallowed us alive
whenever they became angry at us.

- ⁴ Then our enemies' armies would have
been like a flood washing over us,
like a river drowning us.
- ⁵ Then those proud people would have
been like water
rising up to our mouth and drowning us.
- ⁶ Praise the Lord!
The Lord did not let our enemies catch
us and kill us.
- ⁷ We are like a bird that was trapped
in a net,
and then escaped.
The net broke, and we escaped!
- ⁸ Our help came from the Lord.
The Lord made heaven and earth!

Psalms 125

A song of ascents.

- ¹ People that trust in the Lord will be like
Mount Zion.
They will never be shaken.
They will continue forever.
- ² Mountains are all around Jerusalem.
In the same way, the Lord is around his
people.
The Lord will protect his people
forever and ever.
- ³ Evil people will not rule good people
forever.
If evil people did that,
then even good people might start doing
bad things.
- ⁴ Lord, be good to good people.
Be good to people that have pure hearts.
- ⁵ Lord, you punish evil people.
Punish those people that stopped
following you.
- Let there be peace in Israel!

Psalms 126

A song of ascents.

- ¹ When the Lord brought us back from
exile,*
it was like a dream!
- ² We were laughing.
And we would suddenly start singing
happy songs!
- ³ People in other nations talked about that.
Those people said,
"The Lord did a wonderful thing for the
people of Israel."
- ⁴ Lord, we were prisoners.
Now, make us like streams of water that
make the desert bloom.
- ⁵ We cried when we planted the seeds.
But we will sing happy songs at harvest
time!
- ⁶ We cried when we carried the seed out to
the field.
So let us be happy as we bring the
harvest in!

Psalms 127

A song of ascents from Solomon.

- ¹ If it is not the Lord that builds a house,
the builder is wasting his time.
If it is not the Lord that watches over a
city,
the guards are wasting their time.
- ² If the only reason you get up early and
work late,
is to pay for the food you eat,
you are wasting your time!
God cares for his loved ones,
even while they are sleeping.
- ³ Children are a gift* from the Lord.
They are a reward coming from a
mother's body.

exile Being forced to leave one's home country.**gift** Literally, "inheritance." Usually, this means the land that God gave to each family in Israel. This land was a gift that never really left the family. A person might sell the land, but at the time of Jubilee, the land was given back to the family.

- ⁴ A young man's sons are like the arrows in a soldier's arrow bag.
- ⁵ A man that fills his arrow bag with sons will be very happy.
- ⁶ That man will never be defeated.
His sons will defend him against his enemies in public places.*

Psalm 128

A song of ascents.

- ¹ All of the Lord's followers are happy.
Those people live the way God wants.
 - ² You will enjoy the things you work for.
No person will take those things from you.
 - You will be happy,
and good things will happen to you.
 - ³ At home, your wife will be like a fruitful grape vine.
Around the table, your children will be like olive trees you planted.
 - ⁴ The Lord will truly bless his followers this way.
 - ⁵ I hope the Lord bless you from Zion.*
I hope you enjoy the blessings in Jerusalem all of your life.
 - ⁶ And I hope you live to see your grandchildren.
- Let there be peace in Israel!

Psalm 129

A song of ascents.

- ¹ "I have had many enemies all my life."
Israel, tell us about those enemies.
- ² "I have had many enemies all my life.
But they never won.
- ³ They beat me until I had deep cuts in my back.

public places Literally, "the gate." This might mean that a person's sons will defend him whenever his enemies try to take him to court.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

- I had long and deep wounds.
- ⁴ But the good Lord cut the ropes
and set me free from those evil people.
- ⁵ The people that hated Zion* were defeated.
They stopped fighting and ran away.
- ⁶ Those people were like grass on top of a house.
That grass dies before it has time to grow.
- ⁷ A worker can't even get a handful of that grass.
And there is not enough for a pile of grain.
- ⁸ People walking by those evil people will not say,
"May the Lord bless you."
People will not greet them and say,
'We bless you in the name of the Lord.'

Psalm 130

A song of ascents.

- ¹ Lord, I am in deep trouble,
so I am calling to you for help.
- ² My Master, listen to me.
Listen to my call for help.
- ³ Lord, if you really punished people for all of their sins,
no person would be left.
- ⁴ Lord, forgive your people.
Then there will be people to worship you.
- ⁵ I am waiting for the Lord to help me.
My soul waits for him.
I trust what the Lord says.
- ⁶ I am waiting for my Master.
I am like guards waiting and waiting for the morning to come.
- ⁷ Israel, trust the Lord.
True love is found only with the Lord.
The Lord saves us again and again.
And the Lord will forgive Israel for all their sins.

Psalm 131

A song of ascents.

- ¹ Lord, I am not proud.
I don't try to act important.
I don't try to do great things.
I don't worry about things that are too hard for me.
- ² I am calm.
My soul is quiet.
- ³ My soul is calm and quiet
like a satisfied baby in his mother's arms.
- ⁴ Israel, trust the Lord.
Trust him now, and trust him forever!

Psalm 132

A song of ascents.

- ¹ Lord, remember the way David suffered.
² But David made a special promise to the Lord.
David made a special promise to the
Mighty God of Israel.
- ³ David said,
"I will not go into my house,
I will not lie down on my bed,
⁴ I will not sleep,
I will not let my eyes rest,
⁵ I will not do any of those things
until I find a house for the Lord!
I will find a home for the Mighty God
of Israel!"
- ⁶ We heard about it in Ephrathah.*
We found the Box of the Agreement* at
Kiriath Jearim.*
- ⁷ Let us go to the Holy Tent.
Let us worship at the stool where God
rests his feet.*

Ephrathah Bethlehem, the town where David was born.

Box of the Agreement Or, "ark of the Covenant." The box containing the flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them and other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai desert.

Kiriath Jearim Literally, "fields of the forest." The Hebrew word meaning "forest" is like the name of this city.

stool ... feet This can mean the Box of the Agreement, the Holy Tent, or the temple. It is like God is a king sitting on his throne and resting his feet on the place where people worship him.

- ⁸ Lord, get up from your resting place.
Get up Lord, you and your powerful
Box.
- ⁹ Lord, your priests are dressed in
goodness.
Your followers are very happy.
- ¹⁰ For the good of your servant David, don't
reject your chosen king.
- ¹¹ The Lord made a promise to David.
The Lord promised to be loyal to David.
The Lord promised that the kings would
come from David's family.
- ¹² The Lord said,
"David, if your children obey my
Agreement* and the laws I teach
them,
then someone from your family will
always be the king."
- ¹³ The Lord chose Zion* to be the place for
his temple.
- ¹⁴ The Lord said,
"This will be my place forever and ever.
I choose this to be the place where I will
be.
- ¹⁵ I will bless this city with plenty of food.
Even poor people here will have plenty
to eat.
- ¹⁶ I will clothe the priests with salvation.
And my followers will be very happy
here.
- ¹⁷ In this place, I will make David strong.
I will provide a lamp for my chosen
king.
- ¹⁸ I will cover David's enemies in shame.
But I will make David's kingdom
grow."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Psalms 133*One of David's songs of ascents.*

- ¹ It is truly good and pleasant
when God's people live together in
peace.
- ² It is like the sweet smelling oil poured
over the priest's head.
It is like the oil running down into
Aaron's beard.
It is like the oil running down onto
Aaron's special clothes.
- ³ It is like the foggy mist from Mount
Hermon,
falling on Mount Zion.
- ⁴ It was at Zion that the Lord gave his
blessing.
The Lord gave the blessing of eternal
life.

Psalms 134*A song of ascents.*

- ¹ Praise the Lord, all of his servants!
You servants served in the temple all
night.
- ² Servants, lift your arms and bless the
Lord.
- ³ And may the Lord bless you from Zion.*
The Lord made heaven and earth.

Psalms 135

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
Servants of the Lord, praise the Lord's
name!
- ² You people standing in the Lord's
temple, praise his name!
You people standing in the temple
courtyard, praise his name!
- ³ Praise the Lord, because he is good.
Praise his name, because it is good to
praise him.
- ⁴ The Lord chose Jacob.*

Israel belongs to God.

- ⁵ I know the Lord is great!
Our Master is greater than all the other
gods!
- ⁶ The Lord does anything he wants,
in heaven and earth,
in the seas or in the deep oceans.
- ⁷ God makes the clouds all over the earth.
God makes the lightning and rain.
And God makes the wind.*
- ⁸ God destroyed all the firstborn men and
animals in Egypt.
- ⁹ God did many wonders and miracles in
Egypt.
God made those things happen to
Pharaoh and his officials.
- ¹⁰ God defeated many nations.
God killed powerful kings.
- ¹¹ God defeated Sihon, king of the
Amorites.
God defeated Og, king of Bashan.
God defeated all the nations in Canaan.
- ¹² And God gave their land to Israel.
God gave that land to his people.
- ¹³ Lord, you will be famous forever!
Lord, people will remember you forever
and ever.
- ¹⁴ The Lord punished the nations.
But the Lord was kind to his servants.
- ¹⁵ 'The other peoples' gods were only gold
and silver statues.
Their gods were only statues that people
made.
- ¹⁶ The statues had mouths, but they could
not speak.
The statues had eyes, but they could not
see.
- ¹⁷ The statues had ears, but they could not
hear.
The statues had noses, but they could not
smell.
- ¹⁸ And the people that made the statues
will become just like those statues!
Why? Because those people believed
their statues could help them.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.**makes the wind** Literally, "brings the wind out of the
storehouses."

- 19 Family of Israel, bless the Lord!
 Aaron's family, bless the Lord!
 20 Levi's family, bless the Lord!
 You people worshipping the Lord, bless
 the Lord!
 21 The Lord is blessed from Zion,
 from Jerusalem his home.
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 136

- 1 Praise the Lord because he is good.
 His true love continues forever.
 2 Praise the God of gods!
 His true love continues forever.
 3 Praise the Lord of lords!
 His true love continues forever.
 4 Praise God, the only One that does
 wonderful miracles!
 His true love continues forever.
 5 Praise God, the One that used wisdom to
 make the skies!
 His true love continues forever.
 6 God put the dry land on the sea.
 His true love continues forever.
 7 God made the great lights.
 His true love continues forever.
 8 God made the sun to rule the day.
 His true love continues forever.
 9 God made the moon and stars to rule the
 night.
 His true love continues forever.
 10 God killed the firstborn men and animals
 in Egypt.
 His true love continues forever.
 11 God took Israel out of Egypt.
 His true love continues forever.
 12 God showed his great power and strength.
 His true love continues forever.
 13 God split the Red Sea into two parts.
 His true love continues forever.
 14 God led Israel through the sea.
 His true love continues forever.
 15 God drowned Pharaoh and his army in
 the Red Sea.
 His true love continues forever.
 16 God led his people through the desert.
 His true love continues forever.

- His true love continues forever.
 17 God defeated powerful kings.
 His true love continues forever.
 18 God defeated strong kings.
 His true love continues forever.
 19 God defeated Sihon king of the Amorites.
 His true love continues forever.
 20 God defeated Og king of Bashan.
 His true love continues forever.
 21 God gave their land to Israel.
 His true love continues forever.
 22 God gave that land for a gift to Israel.
 His true love continues forever.
 23 God remembered us when we were
 defeated.
 His true love continues forever.
 24 God saved us from our enemies.
 His true love continues forever.
 25 God gives food to every person.
 His true love continues forever.
 26 Praise the God of heaven!
 His true love continues forever.

Psalm 137

- 1 By the rivers in Babylon,
 we sat and cried as we remembered
 Zion.*
 2 We hung up our harps on the willow trees
 nearby.*
 3 In Babylon, the people that captured us
 told us to sing.
 They told us to sing happy songs.
 They told us to sing songs about
 Zion.*
 4 But we can't sing the Lord's songs in a
 foreign country!
 5 Jerusalem, if I ever forget you,
 then I hope I never play a song again.
 6 Jerusalem, if I ever forget you,
 then I hope I never will be able to sing
 again.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
harps ... nearby These instruments were used to praise God in the temple in Jerusalem. Since the temple was destroyed, these people had no reason to play the songs.

I promise, I will never forget you.

⁷ I promise, Jerusalem will always be my greatest joy!

⁸ Babylon, you will be destroyed!
Bless the man that will give you the punishment you should get.
Bless the man that will hurt you like you hurt us.

⁹ Bless the man that grabs your babies and smashes them against a rock.

Psalm 138

A song of David's.

¹ God, I praise you with all my heart.
I will sing your songs before all the gods.

² God, I bow down toward your holy temple.
I praise your name, your true love, and your loyalty.
And you used your name,
to make the greatest promise to me.

³ God, I called to you for help.
And you answered me!
You gave me strength.

⁴ Lord, I want all the kings on earth to praise you.
They heard the things you said.

⁵ And I want all those kings to sing about the Lord.
The Lord's glory is great.

⁶ God is great.
But God cares for humble people.
God knows the things proud people do,
but he is not close to them.

⁷ God, if I am in trouble,
keep me alive.
If my enemies are angry at me,
save me from them.

⁸ Lord, give me the things you promised.
Lord, your true love continues forever.
Lord, you made us,
so don't leave us!

Psalm 139

To the director. * One of David's songs of praise.

¹ Lord, you tested me.

You know all about me.

² You know when I sit down and when I get up.

You know my thoughts from far away.

³ Lord, you know where I am going and when I am lying down.
You know everything I do.

⁴ Lord, you know what I want to say,
even before the words leave my mouth.

⁵ Lord, you are all around me—in front and in back of me.

You gently put your hand on me.

⁶ I am amazed at the things you know.
It is too hard for me to understand.

⁷ Your Spirit is in every place I go.
Lord, I can't escape you.

⁸ Lord, if I go up to heaven, you are there.
If I go down to the place of death, you are there.

⁹ Lord, if I go east to the place that the sun rises, you are there.

If I go west to the sea, you are there.

¹⁰ Even there you reach out with your right hand,
and lead me by the hand.

¹¹ Lord, I might try to hide from you and say,

"The day has changed to night.
Surely the darkness will hide me."

¹² But even darkness is not dark to you,
Lord,

The night is as bright as day to you.

¹³ Lord, you made my whole body.*
You knew all about me when I was still in my mother's body.

¹⁴ Lord, I thank you for all the amazing things you did.
The things you do are amazing, and I really know it.

director Or, "performer."

whole body Literally, "kidneys." The ancient Israelites also thought the emotions were centered in the kidneys. So this probably also means God knew how this person felt, even before he was born.

- 15 You know all about me.
You watched my bones grow
while my body took shape,
hidden in my mother's womb.*
- 16 Lord, you saw my body growing in my
mother's womb.
All these things are written in your book.
You watched me every day.
You did not miss one day.
- 17 God, it is very hard to understand your
thoughts.
You know so much!
- 18 If I could count all the things you know,
they would be more than all the pieces
of sand on earth.
But even if I could count them,
I would still be with you.
- 19 God, kill the wicked people.
Take those murderers away from me.
- 20 Those bad people say bad things about
you.
They say bad things about your name.*
- 21 Lord, I hate the people that hate you.
I hate the people that turn against you.
- 22 I hate them completely!
Your enemies are also my enemies.
- 23 Lord, look at me and know my heart.
Test me and know my thoughts.
- 24 Look and see that I don't have any evil
thoughts.
And guide me on your path that
continues forever.

Psalm 140

To the director.* One of David's songs of
praise.

- 1 Lord, save me from evil people.
Protect me from cruel people.
- 2 Those people plan to do evil things.
Those people always start fights.

- 3 Their tongues are like poisonous
snakes.
It is like snake poison is under their
tongue.
- SELAH*
- 4 Lord, save me from wicked people.
Protect me from cruel people.
Those people chase me and try to hurt
me.
- 5 Those proud people set a trap for me.
They have spread a net to catch me.
They have set a trap in my path.
- SELAH*
- 6 Lord, you are my God.
Lord, listen to my prayer.
- 7 Lord, you are my strong Master.
You are my Savior.
You are like a helmet protecting my
head in war.
- 8 Lord, don't let those wicked people have
the things they want.
Don't let their plans succeed.
- SELAH*
- 9 Lord, don't let my enemies win.
Those people are planning bad things.
But make those bad things happen to
them.
- 10 Pour burning coals on their heads.
Throw my enemies into the fire.
Throw them into the pit they will
never climb out of.
- 11 Lord, don't let those liars live.
Make bad things happen to those bad
people.
- 12 I know that the Lord will judge poor
people fairly.
God will help helpless people.
- 13 Good people will praise your name, Lord.
Good people will worship you.

mother's womb Literally, "deepest parts of the earth."

This is a way of saying a place we know nothing about.

They ... name The Hebrew is hard to understand here.

director Or, "performer."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably mean that the singers should pause or that the music
should be louder here.

Psalm 141

One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ Lord, I call to you for help.
Listen to me while I pray to you.
Hurry and help me!
- ² Let my prayer be like a gift of burning incense to you, Lord.
Let my prayer be like an evening sacrifice to you.
- ³ Lord, help me control the things I say.
Help me watch the things I say.
- ⁴ Don't let me say bad things.
Stop me from joining bad people and doing wrong.
Don't let me share the things those bad people enjoy doing.
- ⁵ A good person can correct me.
Your followers can criticize.
(That would be good for me.)
But I will not accept praise from bad people.
Why? Because I am always praying against the bad things those bad people do.
- ⁶ Their rulers will be thrown down from a high cliff.
And then people will know that I spoke the truth.
- ⁷ People dig and plow the ground.
And the dirt is spread around.
In the same way, the bones of those bad people,
will be spread around in their grave.
- ⁸ Lord my Master, I look to you for help.
I trust you.
Please don't let me die.
- ⁹ Don't let me fall into the bad peoples' traps.
Don't let me be trapped by those bad people.
- ¹⁰ Let those bad people be caught in their own traps,
while I escape unharmed.

Psalm 142

One of David's maskil(s).^{*} This is a prayer from the time he was in the cave.

- ¹ I will call to the Lord for help.
I will pray to the Lord.
- ² I will tell the Lord about my problems.
I will tell the Lord about my troubles.
- ³ My enemies have set a trap for me.
I am ready to give up.
But the Lord knows what is happening to me.
- ⁴ I look around,
and I don't see any of my friends.
I have no place to run.
No person is trying to save me.
- ⁵ So I cry to the Lord for help.
Lord, you are my place of safety.
Lord, you can let me continue to live.
- ⁶ Lord, listen to my prayer.
I need you very much.
Save me from the people that chase me.
Those people are too strong for me.
- ⁷ Help me escape this trap.*
Then I will praise your name, Lord.
I promise, good people will meet together and praise you
if you save me.

Psalm 143

One of David's songs of praise.

- ¹ Lord, hear my prayer.
Listen to my prayer.
And then answer my prayer.
Show me that you are truly good and loyal.
- ² Don't judge me, your servant.
Never, in all my life, could I ever be judged innocent.
- ³ But my enemies are chasing me.
They have crushed my life into the dirt.
They are trying to push me into that dark, eternal grave.

maskil(s) We are not sure of the exact meaning of the word "maskil." It might mean "a poem of meditation," "a poem of instruction," or "a skillfully-written poem."

trap Literally, "frame around my soul."

- 4 I am ready to give up.
I am losing my courage.
- 5 But I remember the things that happened
long ago.
I am talking about the many wonderful
things you did, Lord.
- 6 Lord, I lift my arms and pray to you.
I am waiting for your help,
like a dry land waiting for rain.
- SELAH*
- 7 Hurry, answer me Lord!
I have lost my courage.
Don't turn away from me.
Don't let me die and be like dead people
lying in the grave.
- 8 Lord, show me your true love this
morning.
I trust you.
Show me the things I should do.
I put my life in your hands!
- 9 Lord, I come to you for protection.
Save me from my enemies.
- 10 Show me what you want me to do.
You are my God.
- 11 Lord, let me live,
so people will praise your name.
Show me that you are truly good,
and save me from my enemies.
- 12 Lord, show me your love,
and defeat the enemies that are trying to
kill me.
Why? Because I am your servant.

Psalm 144

To David.

- 1 The Lord is my Rock.*
Bless the Lord.
The Lord trains me for war.
The Lord trains me for battle.
- 2 The Lord loves me and protects me.
The Lord is my safe place high

- on the mountain.
The Lord rescues me.
The Lord is my shield.
I trust him.
The Lord helps me rule my people.
- 3 Lord, why are people important to you?
Why do you even notice us?
- 4 A person's life is like a puff of air.
A person's life is like a passing shadow.
- 5 Lord, tear open the skies and come down.
Touch the mountains and smoke will
rise from them.
- 6 Lord, send the lightning and make my
enemies run away.
Shoot your "arrows" and make them run
away.
- 7 Lord, reach down from heaven
and save me!
Don't let me drown in this sea of
enemies.
Save me from these foreigners.
- 8 These enemies are liars.
They say things that are not true.
- 9 Lord, save me,
so I can sing a new song about the
wonderful things you do.
I will praise you with the ten-stringed
harp.
- 10 The Lord helps kings win their wars.
The Lord saved his servant David from
his enemy's swords.
- 11 Save me from these foreigners.
These enemies are liars.
They say things that are not true.
- 12 I hope our young sons will be like big,
strong trees.
And I hope our daughters will be like
the beautiful decorations in the
palace.
- 13 I hope our barns will be filled with all
kinds of crops.
I hope the sheep in our fields will have
thousands and thousands of baby
lambs.
- 14 I hope our cattle will have many babies.
I hope no enemies will come to attack us.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

I hope we will never go to war.
And I hope there will be no cries of
danger in our streets.

- ¹⁵ When those things happen, people are
very happy.
People whose God is the Lord are very
happy.

Psalms 145

One of David's prayers.

- ¹ I praise you my God and King.
I bless your name forever and ever.
² I praise you every day.
I praise your name forever and ever.
³ The Lord is great.
People praise him very much.
We can't count all the great things he
does.
⁴ Lord, people will praise the things you do
forever and ever.
And people will tell other people about
the great things you do.
⁵ People will tell about your wonderful
majesty and glory.
I will tell about your miracles.
⁶ Lord, people will tell about the amazing
things you do.
I will tell about the great things you do.
⁷ People will tell about the good things you
do.
People will sing about your goodness,
Lord.
⁸ The Lord is kind and merciful.
The Lord is patient and full of love.
⁹ The Lord is good to every person.
God shows his mercy in everything he
does.
¹⁰ Lord, the things you do bring praise to
you.
Your followers bless you.
¹¹ Those people tell about your glorious
kingdom.
They tell how great you are.
¹² So other people learn about the great
things you do, Lord.
Those people learn about your majestic
and glorious kingdom.

- ¹³ Lord, your kingdom will continue
forever.
You will rule forever.
¹⁴ The Lord lifts up people that have fallen.
The Lord helps people that are in
trouble.
¹⁵ Lord, all living things look to you for
their food.
And you give them their food at the
right time.
¹⁶ Lord, you open your hands,
and you give all living things everything
they need.
¹⁷ Everything the Lord does is good.
The Lord shows his true love in
everything he does.
¹⁸ The Lord is close to all the people that
worship him.
The Lord is close to every person that
truly worships him.
¹⁹ The Lord does the things his followers
want him to do.
The Lord listens to his followers.
And the Lord answers their prayers
and saves them.
²⁰ The Lord protects every person that loves
him.
And the Lord destroys bad people.
²¹ I will praise the Lord!
I want every person to praise his holy
name forever and ever!

Psalms 146

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
My soul, praise the Lord!
² I will praise the Lord all my life.
I will sing praises to him all my life.
³ Don't depend on your leaders for help.
Don't trust people, because people can't
save you.
⁴ People die and are buried.
And then, all of their plans to help you
are gone.
⁵ People that ask God for help are very
happy.
Those people depend on the Lord their

- God.
 6 The Lord made heaven and earth.
 The Lord made the sea and everything
 in it.
 The Lord will protect them forever.
 7 The Lord does right things for people that
 have been hurt.
 God gives food to hungry people.
 The Lord frees people locked in prison.
 8 The Lord helps blind people see again.
 The Lord helps people that are in
 trouble.
 The Lord loves good people.
 9 The Lord protects strangers living in our
 country.
 The Lord cares for widows and
 orphans.*
 But the Lord ruins bad peoples' plans.
 10 I hope the Lord rules forever!
 I hope your God on Zion* rules forever!
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 147

- 1 Praise the Lord because he is good.
 Sing praises to our God.
 It is good and pleasant to praise him.
 2 The Lord built Jerusalem.
 God brought back the Israelite people that
 were taken as prisoners.
 3 God heals their broken hearts
 and bandages their wounds.
 4 God counts the stars
 and knows the name of each and every
 star.
 5 Our Master is very great.
 He is very powerful.
 There is no limit to the things he
 knows.
 6 The Lord supports humble people.
 But he embarrasses bad people.
 7 Thank the Lord.
 Praise our God with harps.

- 8 God fills the sky with clouds.
 God makes rain for the earth.
 God causes grass to grow on the
 mountains.
 9 God gives food to the animals.
 God feeds the young birds.
 10 War horses and powerful soldiers don't
 please him.
 11 The Lord is happy with people that
 worship him.
 The Lord is pleased with people that
 trust in his true love.
 12 Jerusalem, praise the Lord!
 Zion, praise your God!
 13 Jerusalem, God makes the bars on your
 gates strong.
 And God blesses the people in your
 city.
 14 God brought peace to your country.
 So enemies did not take your grain in
 war.
 You have plenty of grain for food.
 15 God gives a command to the earth,
 and it quickly obeys.
 16 God makes the snow fall until the ground
 is white like wool.
 God makes sleet blow through the air
 like dust.
 17 God makes hail like rocks fall from the
 sky.
 No person can stay out in the cold.
 18 Then, God gives another command,
 and the warm air blows again.
 The ice melts,
 and water begins to flow.
 19 God gave his commands to Jacob
 (Israel).
 God gave his laws and rules to Israel.
 20 God did not do this for any other nation.
 God did not teach his laws to other
 people.
 Praise the Lord!

Psalm 148

- 1 Praise the Lord!
 Angels above, praise the Lord from

strangers ... orphans These were people that had no
 one else to help them.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
 Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

heaven!

- ² Praise the Lord, all you angels!
Praise him, all his army*!
- ³ Sun and moon, praise the Lord!
Stars and lights in the sky, praise him!
- ⁴ Praise the Lord in the highest heaven!
Waters above the sky, praise him!
- ⁵ Praise the Lord's name.
Why? Because God gave the command,
and we were all created!
- ⁶ God made all these things to continue
forever.
God made the laws that will never end.
- ⁷ Everything on earth, praise the Lord!
Great sea animals in the oceans, praise
the Lord!
- ⁸ God made the fire and hail,
the snow and smoke,
and all the stormy winds.
- ⁹ God made the mountains and hills,
the fruit trees and cedar trees.
- ¹⁰ God made all the wild animals and cattle,
the reptiles and birds.
- ¹¹ God made the kings and nations on earth.
God made the leaders and judges.
- ¹² God made the young men and women.
God made the old and young people.
- ¹³ Praise the Lord's name!
Honor his name forever!
Everything in heaven and earth, praise
him!
- ¹⁴ God will make his people strong.
People will praise God's followers.
People will praise Israel, the people
God fights for.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 149

- ¹ Praise the Lord.
Sing a new song about the new things the
Lord has done!
Sing his praise in the meeting of his
followers.
- ² God made Israel.

Let Israel enjoy themselves with the
Lord.

Let the people on Zion* rejoice with
their King.

- ³ Let those people praise God
by dancing and playing their
tambourines and harps.
- ⁴ The Lord is happy with his people.
God did a wonderful thing for his
humble people.
He saved them!
- ⁵ God's followers, rejoice in your victory!
Even after going to bed, be happy.
- ⁶ Let the people shout praise to God.
Let the people take their swords in their
hands,
⁷ and go punish their enemies.
Let them go punish the other people.
- ⁸ God's people will put chains on those
kings and important people.
- ⁹ God's people will punish their enemies
like God commanded.
God is wonderful to his followers.
Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150

- ¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise God in his temple!
Praise his power in heaven!
- ² Praise God for the great things he does!
Praise him for all his greatness!
- ³ Praise God with trumpets and horns!
Praise him with harps and lyres*!
- ⁴ Praise God with tambourines and
dancing!
Praise him with stringed instruments
and flutes!
- ⁵ Praise God with loud cymbals!
Praise him with crashing cymbals!
- ⁶ Every living thing, praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord!

his army This can mean, "angels," or "stars and planets," or
"soldiers in an army."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
lyre(s) An instrument with several strings, like a harp.

Proverbs

Introduction

1 These words are the wise teachings of Solomon, the son of David. Solomon was the king of Israel.

²These words are written so that people can be wise and know the right things to do. These words will help people to have true understanding. ³These words will teach people the best way to live. People will learn the right way to be honest, fair, and good. ⁴These wise words can teach people that need to learn wisdom. Young people can learn from these words.

⁵Even wise people should be careful to follow the teachings in these words. Then those people will learn more and become wiser. And people that are skilled at knowing right and wrong will be able to gain more understanding. ⁶Then people will be able to understand the meanings of wise stories and sayings. People will be able to understand the things wise men say.

⁷A person must respect and obey the Lord. Then that person will begin to have true knowledge. But people that love sin hate wisdom and right teaching.

Solomon's Advice to His Son

⁸My son,* you should obey your father's teaching. And you must also follow your

mother's teaching. ⁹The words of your father and mother will be like a crown of flowers making your head more beautiful. Those teachings will be like a beautiful necklace around your neck.

Warning Against Joining with Bad People

¹⁰My son, people that love sin will tempt you. You must not follow them. ¹¹Those sinners may say, "Come with us! We will hide and wait for someone to kill." ¹²We will attack some innocent person. We will kill that person. We will send that person to the place of death. We will destroy that person and send him to the grave. ¹³We will steal all kinds of things worth lots of money. We will fill our houses with these things. ¹⁴So come with us and help us do these things. We will all share in the things we get!"

¹⁵My son, don't follow those people that love sin. Don't even take the first step toward the way they live. ¹⁶Those bad people are always ready to do evil. They always want to kill people.

¹⁷It is useless to spread a net to catch a bird while the bird is watching you. So watch those bad people. And be careful! Those bad people are setting a trap to kill other people. ¹⁸But really, they will trap only themselves. They will be destroyed by their own trap! ¹⁹Greedy people are always destroyed by the things they take from other people.

My son The book of Proverbs was probably written to a teenage boy that was becoming a young man. This book teaches the boy how to become a responsible young man that loves and respects God.

The Good Woman—Wisdom

Listen! Wisdom is trying to teach people. She (*Wisdom*) is shouting in the streets and in the market place. *She (*Wisdom*) is calling out on the busy street corners. She (*Wisdom*) is near the city gates trying to get people to listen to her. (*Wisdom* says:)

"You are foolish people. How long will you continue doing foolish things? How long will you make fun of wisdom? How long will you continue to hate knowledge? *You should have listened to my advice and teaching. I would have told you everything I knew. I would have given you all my knowledge.

"But you refused to listen to me. I tried to help. I offered my hand—but you refused to accept my help. *You turned away and ignored all my advice. You refused to accept my words. *So, I will laugh at your trouble. I will enjoy seeing trouble come to you! *Great trouble will come to you like a bad storm. Problems will hit you like a strong wind. Your troubles and sadness will be a very great burden on you.

"When all these things happen, you will ask for my help. But I will not help you. You will look for me, but you will not find me. *I will not help because you never wanted my knowledge. You refused to fear and respect the Lord. *You people refused to listen to my words of advice. You would not listen to me when I showed you the right way. *So you people will do things your own way. And you will destroy yourselves by living your own evil ways.

"Foolish people die because they refuse to follow wisdom. They are happy to continue in their foolish ways, and this will destroy them. *But the person that obeys me will live safely. That person will be comfortable. He will not have to be afraid of evil.

Wisdom Solomon uses the picture of Wisdom and Foolishness being two women. Both women are trying to get the attention of the young man Solomon is writing to. Wisdom is like a good woman calling the young man to be wise and obey God. Foolishness is like a bad woman calling the young man to be foolish and do many kinds of sin.

Listen to Wisdom

2 My son, accept these things I say. Remember my commands. *Listen to wisdom, and try your best to understand. *Cry out for wisdom, and shout for understanding. *Look for wisdom like silver. Look for it like hidden treasure. *If you do these things, then you will learn to respect the Lord. You will truly learn about God.

"The Lord gives wisdom! Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth. *He gives help to good and honest people. *He protects people that are fair to other people. He guards His holy people.

"So the Lord will give his wisdom. Then you will understand the things that are good, and fair, and right. *Wisdom will come into your heart, and your soul will be happy with knowledge.

"Wisdom will protect you, and understanding will guard you. *Wisdom and understanding will stop you from living the wrong way that evil people live. Those people are evil even in the things they say. *They have given up goodness and now live in darkness (*sin*). *They are happy in doing wrong and enjoy the bad ways of evil. *Those people can't be trusted—they lie and cheat. But your wisdom and understanding will keep you away from all these things.

"Some woman from another country might use nice words and try to persuade you to sin with her. That woman married when she was young. But she left her husband. She is not keeping her marriage promise. But wisdom will help you to say "No" to her. *If you are weak and enter her house, you walk the first step toward destruction. If you continue to follow her, she will lead you to your grave. *She is like a grave. If a man goes to this woman, he will never come back. That person's life will never be the same again!

"So you should follow the example of good people. Live the way good people live. *People that live right will have the land for their own. People that do good will get to stay on their land. *But evil people will lose their land. Those bad people will be taken away from the

land.

Living Right Will Add to Your Life

3 My son, don't forget my teaching. Remember the things I tell you to do. ¹These things I teach you will give you a longer and happier life.

²Never stop loving. Always be loyal and faithful. Make these things a part of yourself. Tie them around your neck. Write them on your heart. ⁴Then God and people will be happy with you.

Trust the Lord

⁵Trust the Lord completely! Don't depend on your own knowledge. ⁶Trust in the Lord in all things you do. Then he will help you. ⁷Don't depend on your own wisdom. But respect the Lord and stay away from evil.

⁸If you do this, then it will be like good health to your body. Your strength will be like new.

Give to the Lord

⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth. Give him the best you have. ¹⁰Then you will have all you need. Your barns will be full of grain and your barrels will be flowing over with wine.

Accept the Lord's Punishment

¹¹My son, sometimes the Lord will show you that you are doing wrong. But don't be angry about this punishment. Try to learn from it. ¹²Why? Because the Lord corrects the people he loves. Yes, God is like a father that punishes the son he loves.

The Blessings of Wisdom

¹³The person that finds wisdom will be very happy. That person will be blessed when he begins to understand. ¹⁴The profit that comes from wisdom is better than silver. The profit from wisdom is better than fine gold! ¹⁵Wisdom is worth much more than jewels. Nothing you can want is as valuable as wisdom!

¹⁶Wisdom gives you long life, riches, and honor. ¹⁷People with wisdom live in peace and happiness. ¹⁸Wisdom is like the Tree of Life.* It gives full life to people that accept it. People that keep wisdom will be truly happy!

¹⁹The Lord used wisdom to make the earth. The Lord used knowledge to make the skies. ²⁰The Lord used his knowledge to make the water. Through his wisdom, the skies drop rain.

²¹My son, always keep your wisdom and understanding. Don't lose these things. ²²Wisdom and understanding will give you life and make it more beautiful. ²³Then you will live safely and you will not fall. ²⁴When you lie down, you will not be afraid. When you rest, your sleep will be peaceful. ²⁵Don't be afraid of things that might happen to you. Why? Because the Lord is with you. He will keep you safe. And those bad things will happen to bad people.

The Wisdom of Living Right

²⁶Always give things back to the person that owns them if you can. ²⁷If your neighbor asks you to give back the things he owns, give those things to him now! Don't tell him to come back tomorrow.

²⁸Don't plan evil against your neighbor, because he is living in peace with you.

²⁹Don't take another person to court if he has not done anything wrong to you.

³⁰Some people are easily angered and quickly do evil. Don't live the way they live. ³¹Why? Because the Lord hates people that are evil. But the Lord God supports people that live right.

³²The Lord is against the families of evil people. But he blesses the homes of people that live right.

³³If a person is proud and thinks he is better than other people, the Lord will punish him and make fun of him. But the Lord helps humble people.

³⁴Wise people follow God., The Lord will honor wise people. Foolish people don't

Tree of Life The tree whose fruit gives people the power to live forever. See Gen. 3:22 and Rev. 22:1-2.

follow God. Foolish people will be made ashamed.

The Importance of Wisdom and Understanding

4 Sons, listen to your father's teachings. Pay attention so you will understand! ²Why? Because the things I teach you are important and good. So don't ever forget my teachings.

³I was my daddy's little boy. I was my mother's only son. ⁴My father taught me. He said to me, "Remember the things I say. Obey my commands and you will live. ⁵Get wisdom and understanding! Don't forget my words. Always follow my teachings. ⁶Don't turn away from wisdom. Then wisdom will protect you. Love wisdom, and wisdom will keep you safe."

⁷Wisdom begins when you decide to get wisdom. So use everything you own to get wisdom! Then you will become wise. ⁸Love wisdom, and wisdom will make you great. Make wisdom most important, and wisdom will bring you honor. ⁹She (*Wisdom*) is the greatest thing that can happen to you.

¹⁰Son, listen to me. Do the things I say, and you will live long. ¹¹I am teaching you about wisdom. I am leading you along the straight path. ¹²Follow this path, and your feet won't be caught in any trap. You can run and not stumble. You will be safe in the things you try to do. ¹³Always remember these lessons. Don't forget these lessons. They are your life!

¹⁴Don't follow the path evil people walk on. Don't live like that. Don't try to be like them. ¹⁵Stay away from evil. Don't go near it. Walk straight past it. ¹⁶Bad people can't sleep until they do something wrong. Those people can't sleep until they hurt some other person. ¹⁷Those people can't live without doing evil and hurting other people.

¹⁸Good people are like the early morning light. The sun rises and the day becomes brighter and happier. ¹⁹But bad people are like a dark night. They are lost in the darkness and they fall over things they can't see.

²⁰My son, pay attention to the things I say. Listen closely to my words. ²¹Don't let my words leave you. Remember the things I say.

²²My teaching will give life to people that listen. My words are like good health to the body.

²³The most important thing is for you to be careful in the things you think. Your thoughts control your life.

²⁴Don't bend the truth and say things that are not right. Don't tell lies. ²⁵And don't let yourself turn away from the good and wise goals that are before you. ²⁶Be very careful to live the right way and you will have a good stable life. ²⁷Don't leave the straight path—the way that is good and right. But always turn away from evil.

The Wisdom of Staying Away from Another Man's Wife

5 My son, listen to my wise teaching. Pay attention to my words of understanding. ²Then you will know the right way to live. Your words will show that you are wise.

³The lips of another man's wife might be sweet like honey. Her kisses might be smoother than oil. ⁴But in the end, she will bring only bitterness and pain. The pain will be as bitter as poison and as sharp as a sword! ⁵Her feet go down to death. She will lead you to straight to the grave! ⁶Don't follow her! She has lost the right way and does not know it. Be careful! Follow the way to life!

Adultery Can Ruin You

⁷Now my sons, listen to me. Don't forget the words I say. ⁸Stay away from the woman that does the sin of adultery.* Don't even go near the door of her house. ⁹If you do, then you will lose the respect people had for you. Other people will gain the honor you lose. In the end, you will lose your life. Evil men will take it from you. ¹⁰People you don't know will take all your wealth. Other people will get the things you worked for. ¹¹At the end of your life, you will groan. Your body and everything you have will be finished. ¹²⁻¹³Then you will say, "Why didn't I listen to my parents? Why didn't I

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

listen to my teachers? I refused to be disciplined. I refused to be corrected. ¹⁴Now, in the end, I see that my life has been wasted. And all people see my shame."

Enjoy Your Own Wife

¹⁵⁻¹⁶"Drink only the water that flows from your own well. And don't let your water flow out into the streets. Give yourself only to your own wife. She is the only one you should give special love to. And don't become the father of children outside your own home." ¹⁷Your children should belong only to you. You should not have to share them with people out of your own home. ¹⁸So, be happy with your own wife. Enjoy the woman you married while you were young. ¹⁹She is like a beautiful deer, a lovely fawn. Let her love satisfy you completely. Her love captured you. ²⁰Don't let another man's wife capture you in that same way. You don't need the love of another man's wife!

²¹The Lord clearly sees everything that every person does. The Lord looks closely at everything people do. ²²An evil person sins will only trap him. His sins will be like ropes holding him. ²³This person will die because he refused to be disciplined. He will be trapped by his own desires.

The Dangers of Helping a Person Get a Loan

6 My son, don't be responsible for another man's debt. Have you promised to pay another person's debt if that person can't pay? Have you made yourself responsible for another person's debt? ²Then you have been caught! Your own words trapped you! ³You are under that person's power. So go to him and free yourself. Beg that person to free you from his debt. ⁴Don't even wait to rest or sleep. ⁵Escape from that trap like a deer running from a hunter. Free yourself like a bird flying out of a trap.

The Dangers of Being Lazy

¹Lazy person, you should become like the ant. See what the ant does. Learn from the ant.

²The ant has no ruler, no boss, no leader. ³But during summer, the ant gathers all its food. The ant saves its food. And in the winter, it has plenty of food.

⁴Lazy person, how long will you lie there? When will you get up from your rest? ⁵The lazy person says, "I need a short nap. I will lie here for a short rest. ⁶But he sleeps and sleeps. And he becomes poorer and poorer. Soon he will have nothing! It will be like a robber has come and stolen everything.

The Evil Person

¹An evil and worthless person tells lies and says bad things. ²He winks his eye and make signs to fool people. ³That person is evil. All the time he is planning evil. He makes trouble everywhere. ⁴But he will be punished. Trouble will come to him suddenly. He will be quickly destroyed, and nothing will be able help him!

Seven Things That the Lord Hates

¹The Lord hates these seven things:

- ² A person that thinks he is better than other people,
- a person that tells lies,
- a person that kills innocent people,
- ⁴ a person that thinks of bad things to do,
- a person that wants to do evil,
- ⁶ a person that tells one lie after another,
- and a person that makes arguments and causes fights among people.

⁷My son, remember your father's commands. And don't forget your mother's teachings. ⁸Remember their words always. Make their teachings a part of your life. ⁹Their teachings will lead you wherever you go. They will watch over you while you sleep. And when you wake up, they will talk to you and guide you.

¹⁰The commands and teachings from your parents are like a light that shows you the right way. They correct you and train you to follow the path to life. ¹¹Their teaching stops you from going to an evil woman. Their words protect

you from the smooth talk of the wife that left her husband. ²⁵That woman might be beautiful. But don't let that beauty burn inside you and tempt you. Don't let her eyes capture you. ²⁶A prostitute* might cost a loaf of bread. But the price of another man will cost you your life!

²⁷If a man spills fire on himself, his clothes will also be burned. ²⁸If a man steps on a hot coal, his feet will be burned! ²⁹It is the same with any person that sleeps with another man's wife. That person will suffer.

³⁰⁻³¹A man might be hungry and steal food to eat. If that man is caught, he must pay seven times more than he stole. It might cost him everything he owns! But other people understand—they don't lose all their respect for him.

³²But a man that does the sin of adultery is foolish. He is destroying himself—he himself causes his own destruction! ³³People will lose all their respect for him. And he will never lose that shame. ³⁴The woman's husband will become jealous. That husband will be very angry. He will do anything he can to punish the other man. ³⁵No payment—no amount of money—will be enough to stop his anger!

Wisdom Will Keep You from Adultery

7 My son, remember my words. Don't forget the commands I give you. ²Obey my commands and you will have life. Make my teaching the most important thing in your life. ³Keep my commands and teachings with you always. Tie them around your fingers. Write them on your heart. ⁴Treat wisdom like a sister. Treat understanding like a part of your family. ⁵Then they will protect you from other woman. They will protect from the nice words that can lead you into sin.

⁶One day I looked out my window, ⁷and I saw many foolish young men. And I saw one young man that was very foolish. ⁸He walked down the street near a bad woman's house. The young man walked close to this woman's

house. ⁹It was near dark, as the sun was setting. The night was beginning. ¹⁰The woman came out of the house to meet him. She was dressed like a prostitute.* She was planning to sin with him. ¹¹She didn't care about sin. She didn't care about right or wrong. She never stayed at home. ¹²But she walked the streets. She went everywhere looking for trouble. ¹³She grabbed the young man and kissed him. Without being ashamed she said, ¹⁴"I had a fellowship meal today. I gave all that I promised to give. And I still have plenty of food left." ¹⁵So I came out to invite you to join me. I looked and looked for you. And now I found you! ¹⁶I put clean sheets on my bed. They are very beautiful sheets from Egypt. ¹⁷I put perfume on my bed. I used myrrh,* ¹⁸aloes* and cinnamon. ¹⁹Come, we can make love until morning. We can enjoy ourselves all night. ²⁰My husband is gone. He is away on a business trip. ²¹He took enough money with him for a long trip. He will not come home for two weeks."

²²The woman used those words to tempt the young man. Her smooth words tricked him. ²³And the young man followed her to the trap. He was like a bull being led to the slaughter. He was like a deer walking into a trap, ²⁴with a hunter ready to put an arrow through its heart. The boy was like a bird flying into a net. He didn't know the danger he was in.

²⁵Now sons, listen to me. Pay attention to the words I say. ²⁶Don't let an evil woman take you. Don't follow her ways. ²⁷She has caused many men to fall. She has destroyed many men. ²⁸Her house is the place of death. Her path leads straight to death!

Wisdom, the Good Woman

8 Listen! Wisdom is also calling to you.

Understanding is crying for you to listen.

² They stand at the top of the hill by the road where the paths meet.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the sap of certain plants.

aloes Perfume made from a special kind of tree.

- ³ They are at the place where the gates open into the city.
They are calling out from the open doors.
- ⁴ Wisdom says,
"Men, I call out to you.
I call out to all people.
- ⁵ If you are foolish, learn to be wise.
Foolish men, learn to understand.
- ⁶ Listen! The things I teach are important.
I tell you things that are right.
- ⁷ My words are true.
I hate evil lies.
- ⁸ The things I say are right.
There is nothing false or wrong in my words.
- ⁹ All these sayings are clear to the person that has understanding.
The person with knowledge understands these things.
- ¹⁰ Accept my discipline.
It is worth more than silver.
That knowledge is worth more than the best gold.
- ¹¹ Wisdom is worth more than pearls.
Wisdom is worth more than anything a person can want."

What Wisdom Does

- ¹² "I am Wisdom.
I live with good judgment.
You can find me with Knowledge and Good Planning.
- ¹³ If a person respects the Lord,
then that person will hate evil.
I (*Wisdom*) hate pride and people that think they are better than other people.
I hate evil ways, and a lying mouth.
- ¹⁴ But I (*Wisdom*) give people the ability to make good decisions and have good judgment.
I give understanding and power!
- ¹⁵ Kings use me (*Wisdom*) to rule.
Rulers use me to make fair laws.
- ¹⁶ Every good ruler on earth
uses me (*Wisdom*) to rule the people under them.

- ¹⁷ I (*Wisdom*) love people that love me.
And if people try hard to find me,
they will find me.
- ¹⁸ "I (*Wisdom*) also have riches and honor to give.
I give true wealth and success.
- ¹⁹ The things I give are better than fine gold.
And my gifts are better than pure silver.
- ²⁰ I (*Wisdom*) lead people in the right way.
I lead them along the paths of right judgment.
- ²¹ I give wealth to people that love me.
Yes, I will fill their houses with treasures.
- ²² "I (*Wisdom*) was the first thing made,
long ago in the beginning.
- ²³ I (*Wisdom*) was made in the beginning.
I was made before the world began.
- ²⁴ I (*Wisdom*) was born before the oceans;
I was made before there was water.
- ²⁵ I (*Wisdom*) was born before the mountains.
Before the hills came, I was born.
- ²⁶ I (*Wisdom*) was born before the Lord made the earth.
I was born before the fields.
I was born before God made the first dust of the world.
- ²⁷ "At the time the Lord made the skies,
I (*Wisdom*) was there.
The Lord drew the circle around the land,
and I (*Wisdom*) was there
at the time he set the limits for the ocean.
- ²⁸ I was born before the Lord put the clouds in the sky.
And I was there when the Lord put water in the ocean.
- ²⁹ I was there when the Lord set the limits for water in the seas.
The water can't rise higher than the Lord allows.
I was there when the Lord made the foundations of the earth.
- ³⁰ I was beside him like a skilled worker.

"The Lord was happy every day because of me.

I made him laugh and be happy all the time.

³¹ The Lord was excited about the world he made.

He was happy about the people he made there.

³² "Now, children, listen to me!

You can be happy too,
if you follow my ways!

³³ Listen to my teachings and become wise.
Don't refuse to listen.

³⁴ The person that listens to me will be happy.

He watches every day at my doors.
He waits at my doorway.

³⁵ Any person that finds me finds life.
He will get good things from the Lord!

³⁶ But the person that does not find me hurts himself.

All people that hate me love death!"

Wisdom and Stupidity

9 Wisdom built her house. She put the seven columns* in it. ²She (*Wisdom*) cooked meat and made wine. She put food on her table. ³And then she sent her servants to town to invite people to come up to the hill in the city and eat with her. She said, "Come, you people that need to learn." She also invited foolish people. She said, "Come, eat the food of my wisdom. And drink the wine that I have made. Leave your old, foolish ways, and you will have life. Follow the way of understanding."

⁴If you try to show a proud man that he is wrong, then he will only criticize you. That man only makes fun of God's wisdom. If you tell an evil man that he is wrong, then he will make fun of you. ⁵So, if a man thinks that he is better than other people, don't tell him that he is wrong. He will hate you for it. But if you try

to help a wise man then he will respect you. ⁶If you teach a wise man, then he will become wiser. If you teach a good man, then he will learn more.

⁷Respect for the Lord is the first step toward getting wisdom. Getting knowledge of the Lord is the first step toward getting understanding. ⁸If you are wise, then your life will be longer. ⁹If you become wise, then you have become wise for your own good. But if you become proud and make fun of other people, then only you are to blame for your trouble.

¹⁰A foolish person is like a loud, evil woman. She does not have knowledge. ¹¹She sits at the door of her house. She sits on her chair on the hill in the city. ¹²And when people walk by, she calls out to them. Those people are not interested in her, but she says, ¹³"Come you people that need to learn." She also invited foolish people. ¹⁴But she (*Foolishness*) says, "If you steal water, it tastes better than your own. If you steal bread, it tastes better than the bread you cook yourself."

¹⁵And those poor foolish people didn't know that her house was filled only with ghosts. She (*Foolishness*) had invited them into the deepest parts of the place of death!

Solomon's Proverbs

10 These are the proverbs (*wise sayings*) of Solomon:

A wise son makes his father happy. But a foolish son makes his mother very sad.

²If a person gets money by doing bad things, then that money is worthless. But doing good can save you from death.

³The Lord cares for good people. He gives them the food they need. But the Lord takes away the things that evil people want.

⁴A lazy person will be poor. But a person that works hard will be rich.

⁵A smart man gathers the crops at the right time. But if a person sleeps during the time of harvest and does not gather the crops, then he will be shamed.

⁶People ask God to bless a good person. Evil people might say those good things, but

seven columns In ancient Israel, many houses had four main rooms with seven columns to support the roof. This shows Wisdom had a good solid house.

their words only hide the bad things they are planning.*

⁷Good people leave good memories. But evil people will soon be forgotten.

⁸A wise person obeys when someone tells him to do something. But a fool argues and brings trouble to himself.

⁹A good, honest person is safe. But a crooked person that cheats will be caught.

¹⁰A person that hides the truth causes trouble. A person that speaks openly makes peace.*

¹¹A good man's words make life better. But the words from an evil man only shows the bad that is inside him.*

¹²Hate causes arguments. But love forgives every wrong thing people do.

¹³Wise people say things that are worth hearing. But foolish people must be punished before they learn their lesson,.

¹⁴Wise people are quiet, and learn new things. But foolish people talk and bring trouble to themselves.

¹⁵Wealth protects the rich person. And poverty destroys a poor person.

¹⁶If a person does good, then he is rewarded. He is given life. Evil brings only punishment.

¹⁷A person that learns from his punishment can help other people live too. But a person that refuses to learn only leads people the wrong way.

¹⁸A person that hides his hate might be telling a lie. But only a fool tries to find gossip he can spread.

¹⁹A person that talks too much gets himself into trouble. A wise person learns to be quiet.

²⁰The words from a good person are like pure silver. But the thoughts from an evil person are worthless.

²¹A good person's words will help many people. But a foolish person's stupidity will kill him.

²²A blessing from the Lord will bring you true wealth. And that wealth won't bring troubles with it.

²³The foolish person enjoys doing wrong. But a wise man is happy with wisdom.

²⁴An evil person will be defeated by the things he fears. But a good person will get the things that he wants.

²⁵Evil people are destroyed by their trouble. But good people will stand strong forever.

²⁶Never let a lazy man do something for you. He will irritate you—like vinegar in your mouth or smoke in your eyes.

²⁷If you respect the Lord, then you will live long. But evil people will lose years from their life.

²⁸The things good people hope for bring happiness. The things bad people hope for bring ruin.

²⁹The Lord protects good people. But the Lord destroys people that do wrong.

³⁰Good people will always be safe. But evil people will be forced to leave the land.

³¹Good people say wise things. But people will stop listening to a person that says things that bring trouble.

³²Good people know the right things to say. But evil people say things that bring trouble.

11 Some people use scales that don't weigh things properly. They use those scales to cheat people. The Lord hates those false scales. But accurate scales please the Lord.

¹People that are proud and boast will become unimportant. But people that are humble will also become wise.

²Good, honest people are guided by honesty. But evil people destroy themselves when they cheat other people.

³On the day God judges people, money is worth nothing. But goodness will save people from death.

⁴If a good person is honest, then his life will be easy. But an evil person is destroyed by the bad things he does.

⁵Goodness saves the honest person. But evil people are trapped by the bad things they want to do.

Evil ... planning Or, "But violence will cover the mouth of evil people."

A person ... peace This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew repeats the second half of verse 8.

But ... him In Hebrew, this is like the second half of verse 6.

⁷After an evil man dies, there is no hope for him. Everything he hoped for is gone—all of it is worth nothing.

⁸A good person will escape trouble, and that trouble will happen to some evil person.

⁹An evil person can hurt other people by the things he says. But good people are protected by their wisdom.

¹⁰When good people are successful, all the city is happy. When evil people are destroyed, people shout with joy.

¹¹A city becomes great when the honest people living there give it their blessing. But the things an evil person says can destroy a city.

¹²A foolish person criticizes other people. But a wise man is careful about the things he says.

¹³Any person that tells secrets about other people can't be trusted. But a person that can be trusted does not spread gossip.

¹⁴If a nation has weak leaders, then it will fall. But many good advisers will make that nation safe.

¹⁵If you promise to pay another person's debt, then you will be sorry. You will be safe if you refuse to make those deals.

¹⁶A kind, gentle woman gains respect. Pushy men gain only money.

¹⁷A kind man will profit. But a mean man will cause trouble for himself.

¹⁸An evil man cheats people and takes their money. But a person that is fair and does right will get the real reward.

¹⁹Truly, goodness brings life. But evil people chase after evil and find death.

²⁰The Lord hates people that love to do evil. But the Lord is happy with people that try to do right.

²¹It is true that evil people will surely be punished. And good people will be made free.

²²If a woman is beautiful but she is foolish, it is the same as a beautiful gold ring in a pig's nose.

²³When good people get what they want, it always ends in something good. But when evil people get the things they want, it always ends in trouble.

²⁴If a person gives freely, then he will gain even more. But if a person refuses to give, then he will become poor.

²⁵A person that gives freely will profit. If you help others, then you will gain more for yourself.

²⁶People become angry at a greedy man that refuses to sell his grain. But people are happy with the man that sells his grain to feed other people.

²⁷People respect a person that tries to do good. But the person that does evil, will get only trouble.

²⁸The person that trusts in his riches will fall like a dead leaf. But the good person will grow like a new green leaf.

²⁹If a person causes trouble for his family, then he will gain nothing. And in the end, the foolish person will be forced to serve the wise person.

³⁰The things a good man does are like the Tree of Life.* But evil people* take life away from people.

³¹If good people are rewarded on earth, then surely evil people will also get what they deserve.

12 If a person wants to be wise, then he is not angry if someone tells him when he does wrong. The person that hates to be told that he is wrong is stupid.

²The Lord is happy with a good person. But the Lord judges an evil man to be guilty.

³The evil person is never safe. But good people can feel peace.

⁴A husband is happy and proud with a good wife. But if a woman makes her husband ashamed, then she is like a sickness in his body.

⁵Good people are fair and honest in the things they plan to do. But don't trust the things an evil person tells you.

⁶Evil people use their words to hurt other people. But the words of a good person can save people from danger.

⁷Evil people are destroyed and there is nothing left. But people remember a good man long after he is gone.

Tree of Life See Gen. 2:9; 3:22-24; Rev. 22:1-2.
evil people The Hebrew has "a wise man."

¹People praise a wise man. But people don't respect a stupid person.

²It is better to be a person that is not important but works hard than to be a person that pretends to be important but has no food.

³A good man cares for his animals. But evil people can't be kind.

⁴The farmer that works with his land will have enough food. But the person that wastes time on worthless ideas is foolish.

⁵Evil people always want to find wrong things to do. But good people have strength that goes deep like roots.

⁶An evil person says foolish things and is trapped by his words. But a good person escapes from that kind of trouble.

⁷A person is rewarded because of the good things that he says. In the same way, the work he does gives him profit.

⁸A foolish person always thinks his own way is best. But a wise person listens to the things other people tell him.

⁹A foolish person is easily upset. But a smart person quickly forgives other people if they say something wrong.

¹⁰If a person tells the truth, then he is honest in the things he says. But if a person lies, then that leads to trouble.

¹¹If a person speaks words without thinking, then those words can hurt like a sword. But a wise person is careful with the things he says. His words can heal those hurts.

¹²If a person tells a lie, then those words are wasted quickly. But the truth will live forever.

¹³Evil people always want to cause trouble. But people that work for peace will be happy.

¹⁴Good people will be kept safe by the Lord. But evil people will have many troubles.

¹⁵The Lord hates people that tell lies. But the Lord is happy with people that tell the truth.

¹⁶A smart person does not brag about his knowledge. But a foolish person speaks freely and shows he is no fool.

¹⁷People that work hard will be put in charge of other workers. But a lazy person will have to work like a slave.

¹⁸Worry can take away a person's happiness. But a kind word can make a person happy.

¹⁹A good man is very careful about the friends he chooses. But evil people always choose the wrong friends.

²⁰A lazy person won't go after the things he wants. But riches come to the person that works hard.

²¹If you live right, then you will have true life. That is the way to live forever.

13 A wise son listens carefully when his father tells him what to do. But a proud person does not listen. He never believes he is wrong.

²Good people are rewarded for the good things they say. But evil people always want to do wrong.

³The person that is careful about the things he says will save his life. But the person that speaks without thinking will be destroyed.

⁴The lazy person wants things, but he can never get them. But people that work hard will get the things they want.

⁵Good people hate lies. Evil people will be made ashamed.

⁶Goodness protects a good, honest person. But evil defeats the person that loves to sin.

⁷Some people act like they are rich, but they have nothing. Other people act like they are poor, but they are really rich.

⁸A rich person might have to pay a ransom to save his life. But poor people never receive threats like that.

⁹A good person is like a light that shines brightly. But an evil person is like a light that becomes dark.

¹⁰People that think they are better than other people only cause trouble. But people that will listen to the things other people tell them are wise.

¹¹If a person cheats to get money, then that money will soon be gone. But the person that earns his money will make it grow more and more.

¹²If there is no hope, then the heart is sad. If the thing you wish for happens, then you are filled with joy.

¹³If a person refuses to listen when other people try to help him, then he will bring trouble to himself. But the person that respects

the things other people tell him, will be rewarded.

¹¹The teachings of a wise person give life. Those words will help you in times of trouble.

¹²People respect a person that is smart. But if a person can't be trusted, then that person will have trouble.

¹³A wise person always thinks before he does something. But a foolish person shows he is stupid by the things he does.

¹⁴If a messenger cannot be trusted, then there will be trouble around him. But if a person can be trusted, then there will be peace.

¹⁵If a person refuses to learn from his mistakes, then he will be poor and ashamed. But if a person listens when he is criticized or punished, then he will profit.

¹⁶If a person wants something and then gets it, he will be very happy. But stupid people only want evil, and they refuse to change.

¹⁷Be friends with people that are wise, and you will become wise. But if you choose fools to be your friends, then you will have trouble.

¹⁸Trouble chases sinners wherever they go. But good things happen to good people.

¹⁹A good person will have wealth to give to his children and grandchildren. And in the end, good people will get all the things that evil people have.

²⁰A poor man might have good land that can produce plenty of food. But he makes bad decisions and stays hungry.

²¹If a person truly loves his children, then he will correct them when they are wrong. If you love your son, then you will be careful to teach him the right way.

²²Good people will have what they really need. But evil people will always be without the most important thing.

14 The wise woman uses her wisdom to make her home what it should be. But the foolish woman destroys her home by the foolish things she does.

¹The person that lives right respects the Lord. But the person that is not honest hates the Lord.

²A foolish person's words cause him trouble. But the words of a wise person protect

him.

³If there are no cows to do the work, then the barn will be empty. The people can use the strength of a cow to have a great harvest.

⁴A truthful person does not lie—he is a good witness. But a person that can't be trusted never tells the truth—he is a bad witness.

⁵A proud person that thinks he is better than other people might want to be wise. But that proud person will never become wise. But knowledge comes easy to a person that is truly wise.

⁶Don't become friends with a foolish person. There is nothing that a foolish person can teach you.

⁷Smart people are wise because they think carefully about the things they do. But foolish people are fools because they think they can live by cheating.

⁸A foolish person laughs at the idea of paying for the bad things he did. But good people try very hard to get forgiveness.

⁹If a person is sad, he is the only one that can feel that sadness. In the same way, if a person is happy, he is the only one that can feel that joy.

¹⁰The house of the evil person will be destroyed. But the home of a good person will live forever.

¹¹There is a way that people think is right. But that way leads only to death.

¹²A person might be sad, even if he is laughing. And after the laughter, the sadness will still be there.

¹³Evil people will be fully paid (*punished*) for the wrong things they do. And good people will be fully rewarded for the good things they do.

¹⁴A foolish person will believe anything he hears. But a wise man thinks carefully about everything.

¹⁵A wise man respects the Lord and stays away from evil. But a foolish man does things without thinking—he is not careful.

¹⁶A person that becomes angry easily does foolish things. But a wise person is patient.

¹⁷Foolish people are punished for their foolishness. But wise people are rewarded with

knowledge.

¹⁹In the end, good people will win over evil people. Evil people will be forced to serve good people.

²⁰A poor person has no friends, not even his neighbor. But rich people have many friends.

²¹It is wrong to think you are better than other people. If you want to be happy, be kind to poor people.

²²Any person that plans to do evil is doing wrong. But the person that tries to do good will have friends that love and trust him.

²³If you work hard, then you will have the things you need. But if you do nothing but talk, then you will be poor.

²⁴Wise people are rewarded by wealth. But foolish people are rewarded by foolishness.

²⁵A person that tells the truth helps other people. The person that tells lies hurts other people.

²⁶The person that respects the Lord is safe and his children also live in safety.

²⁷Respect for the Lord gives true life. It saves a person from death's trap.

²⁸If a king rules over many people, then he is great. But if there are no people, then the king is worth nothing.

²⁹A patient person is very smart. A person that is easily angered shows that he is a fool.

³⁰If a person has peace in his mind, then his body will be healthy. But jealousy causes sickness in his body.

³¹The person that causes trouble for poor people shows that he does not respect God—God made both people. But if a person is kind to poor people, then he shows honor to God.

³²During times of trouble, evil people are defeated. But good people win a victory even during death.

³³A wise person is always thinking wise things. But a foolish person knows nothing about wisdom.

³⁴Goodness makes a nation great. But sin is a shame to any people.

³⁵A king is happy when he has wise leaders. But a king is angry with leaders that are foolish.

15 A peaceful answer causes anger to disappear. But a rough answer causes anger to grow.

²When a wise person speaks, other people want to listen. But a foolish person speaks only foolishness.

³The Lord sees the things that happen everywhere. The Lord watches the evil people and the good people.

⁴Kind words are like a Tree of Life.* But lying words will crush a man's spirit.

⁵A foolish person refuses to listen to his father's advice. But a wise person listens closely when people try to teach him.

⁶Good people are rich in many things. But the things that an evil person has only cause him trouble.

⁷When a wise person speaks, he is speaking wisdom. But foolish people say nothing worth hearing.

⁸The Lord hates the offerings that evil people give. But the Lord is happy to hear a good person's prayers.

⁹The Lord hates the way evil people live. The Lord loves people that try to do good.

¹⁰If a person begins to live wrong, then he will be punished. And the person that hates to be corrected will be destroyed.

¹¹The Lord knows everything, even what happens in the place of death. So surely the Lord will know what happens in the hearts and minds of people.

¹²The foolish person hates to be told when he is wrong. And that person refuses to ask wise people for advice.

¹³If a person is happy, then his face will show joy. But if a person is sad in his heart, then his spirit will show that sadness.

¹⁴A person that is wise tries to gain more knowledge. But a foolish person only wants more foolishness.

¹⁵Some poor people are sad all the time. But for people with happiness in their hearts, life is one big party.

¹⁶It is better to be poor and respect the Lord than to be rich and have many troubles.

¹¹It is better to eat a little in a place where there is love, than to eat a lot where there is hate.

¹²People that are easily angered cause trouble. But a patient person causes peace.

¹³A lazy person will have trouble everywhere. But life will be easy for honest people.

¹⁴A wise son brings happiness to his father. But a foolish person brings shame to his mother.

¹⁵A foolish person is happy with foolishness. But a wise person is careful to do the things that are right.

¹⁶If a person does not get enough advice, then his plans will fail. But a person can succeed if he listens to the things wise people tell him.

¹⁷A person is happy when he gives a good answer. And the right word at the right time is very good.

¹⁸The things a wise person does leads to success. And those things stop him from going down to the place of death.

¹⁹The Lord will destroy everything a proud person has. But the Lord protects the things that a widow has.

²⁰The Lord hates evil thoughts. But the Lord is happy with kind words.

²¹If a person cheats to get things, then he will bring trouble to his family. But if a person is honest, then he will have no trouble.

²²Good people think before they answer. But evil people speak before they think, and that causes them trouble.

²³The Lord is far away from evil people. But he always hears the prayers of good people.

²⁴A person that smiles makes other people happy. And good news makes people feel better.

²⁵If a person listens carefully when someone tells him that he has done wrong, then he is very wise.

²⁶If a person refuses to learn, then he is only hurting himself. But the person that listens when someone tells him he is wrong, will understand more and more.

¹The person that respects the Lord is learning to be wise. A person must be humble before he can truly respect the Lord.

16 People make their plans. But it is the Lord who makes those things happen.

²A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

³Always turn to the Lord for help in everything you do, and you will be successful.

⁴The Lord has a plan for everything. And in the Lord's plan, evil people will be destroyed.

⁵The Lord hates every person that thinks that he is better than other people. The Lord will surely punish all those proud people.

⁶True love and loyalty will make you pure.* Respect the Lord, and you will stay far away from evil.

⁷If a person is living a good life, pleasing to the Lord, then even that person's enemies will be at peace with him.

⁸It is better to gain only a little the right way than to gain much through cheating.

⁹A person can make plans about the things that he wants to do. But it is the Lord who decides what will happen.

¹⁰When a king speaks, his words are law. His decisions should always be fair.

¹¹The Lord wants all scales and balances to be honest. He wants all business agreements to be fair.

¹²Kings hate people that do evil. Goodness will make his kingdom stronger.

¹³Kings want to hear the truth. Kings like people that don't lie.

¹⁴When a king is angry, he can kill someone. And a wise person will try to keep the king happy.

¹⁵When the king is happy, life will be better for everyone. If the king is pleased with you, then it will be like spring rain falling from a cloud.

¹⁶Wisdom is worth much more than gold. Understanding is worth much more than silver.

make ... pure Or, "make atonement." The Hebrew word means "to cover or erase a person's sins."

¹⁷Good people live their lives trying to stay away from evil. The person that is careful with his life, is guarding his soul.

¹⁸If a person is proud, then he is in danger of destruction. If a person thinks he is better than other people, then he is in danger of defeat.

¹⁹It is better to be humble and live with poor people than to share wealth with people that think they are better than other people.

²⁰The person that listens when people try to teach him will profit. And the person that trusts in the Lord will be blessed.

²¹People will know if a person is wise. And a person that carefully chooses his words can be very persuasive.

²²Wisdom brings true life to people that have it. But fools only learn to be more foolish.

²³A wise man always thinks before he speaks. And the words he says are good and worth hearing.

²⁴Kind words are like honey. They are easy to accept and good for your health.

²⁵There is a way that seems right to people. But that way leads only to death.

²⁶A worker's appetite keeps him working. His hunger makes him work so that he can eat.

²⁷A worthless person plans bad things to do. His advice destroys like fire.

²⁸Troublemakers are always causing problems. And the person that spreads gossip causes trouble between close friends.

²⁹A person that becomes angry easily will cause trouble for his friends. He will lead them in a way that is not good.

³⁰The person that winks his eye and smiles is planning something wrong and evil.

³¹Gray hair is the crown of glory on people that have lived good lives.

³²It is better to be patient than to be a strong soldier. It is better to control your anger than to take control over a whole city.

³³People throw lots* to make decisions. But the decisions always come from God.

17 It is better to have only a dry piece of bread to eat in peace than to have a

whole house full of food with everyone arguing.

²A smart servant will gain control over a master's lazy son. That wise servant will gain everything the master has.

³Gold and silver are put into fire to make them pure. But the Lord is the One who makes peoples' hearts pure.

⁴An evil person listens to the evil things other people say. People that tell lies also listen to lies.

⁵Some people make fun of poor people. They laugh at people that have problems. This shows that those bad people don't respect God who made them. These bad people will be punished.

⁶Grandchildren make old people happy. And children are proud of their parents.

⁷It is not wise for a fool to speak too much. In the same way, it is not wise for a ruler to tell lies.

⁸Some people think a bribe is like a lucky charm—wherever they go, it seems to work.

⁹If you forgive a person that does wrong to you, then you can be friends. But if you continue to remember the wrong that he did, then it will hurt your friendship.

¹⁰A smart person learns from the things he does wrong. But a fool learns nothing, even after a hundred lessons.

¹¹An evil person only wants to do wrong. In the end, God will send a messenger to punish him.

¹²It is very dangerous to meet a mother bear that is angry because her cubs are stolen. But that is better than to meet a fool that is busy doing his foolishness.

¹³Don't do bad things to people that do good things to you. If you do, then you will have trouble for the rest of your life.

¹⁴If you start an argument, it is like breaking a hole in a dam. So stop the argument before it becomes bigger and bigger.

¹⁵The Lord hates these two things—punishing someone that has done nothing wrong, and forgiving someone that is guilty.

¹⁶If a foolish person has money, it is wasted. Why? Because that foolish person does not use

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.

the money to become wise.

¹⁷A friend loves at all times. A true brother always supports you, even in times of trouble.

¹⁸Only a fool will promise to be responsible for another person's debts.

¹⁹The person that enjoys arguing also enjoys sin. If you brag about yourself, then you are inviting trouble.*

²⁰An evil person will not profit. The person that tells lies will have trouble.

²¹The father with a foolish son will be very sorry. There is no happiness for the father of a fool.

²²Happiness is like good medicine. But sorrow is like a sickness.

²³An evil person accepts secret payment for cheating.

²⁴The wise man is always thinking of the best thing to do. But a foolish person is always dreaming about faraway places.

²⁵A foolish son brings sorrow to his father. And a foolish son brings sadness to the mother that gave birth to him.

²⁶It is wrong to punish a person that has done nothing wrong. It is wrong to punish leaders when they are honest.

²⁷A wise person uses words carefully. A wise person does not become angry easily.

²⁸Even a fool seems wise if he keeps quiet. People think he is wise if he does not say anything.

18 A person that does not like other people is selfish in the things he does. That person disagrees with everyone.

¹A foolish person does not want to understand. That person always wants to tell his own ideas.

²Where there is sin, there will be shame. Where there is shame, there is no honor.

³The things a person says can be wise. Those words can be like a deep ocean or a flowing stream.

⁴If a person is guilty, then don't help him. If he has done nothing wrong, then be fair to him.

⁵A foolish person causes himself trouble with the things he says. His words can start fights.

⁶When a foolish person talks, he ruins himself. His own words trap him.

⁷People always want to hear gossip. That gossip is like good food going down into the stomach.

⁸A lazy person is as bad as a person that destroys.

⁹There is much strength in the name of the Lord. It is like a strong tower. Good people run to that tower and are safe.

¹⁰Rich people think that their wealth will protect them. They think that it is like a strong fort.

¹¹An humble person will be respected. But a proud person will fall.

¹²If a person answers before he listens closely, then he will be embarrassed and show that he is foolish.

¹³A person's mind can keep him alive during sickness. But if a person thinks he has lost, then all hope is gone.

¹⁴The wise person always wants to learn more. That person listens closely for more wisdom.

¹⁵If you want to meet an important person, give him a gift. Then you can easily get to meet him.

¹⁶The first person to speak always seems right until someone comes and questions him.

¹⁷If two powerful people are arguing, throwing lots* may be the best way to decide the argument.

¹⁸If you help your friend, then he will protect you like a strong city wall. But if you do something against him, then he will be against you.

¹⁹A person must be ready to defend everything he says.

²⁰The things a person says are powerful. They can mean life or death. If people like the things you say, then they will accept you.

²¹If you find a wife, then you have found a good thing. The Lord is happy with you.

If you ... trouble Literally, "The person that makes his door fall is looking for trouble."

lots) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions.

²A poor person must be very nice in the things he says. But a rich person can say anything he wants.

³If a person has too many friends, then it could destroy him. But a good friend is better than a brother.

19 It is better to be poor and honest than to be a fool that tells lies and cheats.

²Being excited about something is not enough. You must also know what you are doing. You should not rush into something or you will do it wrong.

³A person's foolishness will ruin his life. But he will blame the Lord.

⁴If a person is rich, then his wealth will bring him many friends. But if a person is poor, all his friends will leave him.

⁵A person that tells a lie against another person will be punished. The person that tells lies will not be safe.

⁶Many people want to be friends with the ruler. And everyone wants to be the friend of a person that gives gifts.

⁷If a person is poor, then even his family is against him. And all of his friends turn away from him. That poor person can beg them for help. But they will not go near him.

⁸The person that tries to learn shows that he loves himself. The person that loves wisdom will profit.

⁹A person that tells lies will be punished. And the person that continues to tell lies will be destroyed.

¹⁰A foolish person should not be rich. That is like a slave that rules over princes.

¹¹If a person is wise, that wisdom gives him patience. And it is wonderful when he forgives people that do wrong to him.

¹²When a king is angry, it is like the roar of a lion. But if he is happy with you, it is like the soft rain.

¹³A foolish son can ruin his father. And a wife that likes to argue is like trouble that will not go away.

¹⁴People get houses and money from their parents. But a good wife is a gift from the Lord.

¹⁵A lazy person gets plenty of sleep. But he will also be hungry.

¹⁶The person that obeys wise teaching is making his soul safe. But the person that refuses to listen to wise teaching will die.

¹⁷The person that is kind to poor people is helping the Lord. The Lord will reward that person for the things he does.

¹⁸Teach your son and punish him when he is wrong. That is the only hope. If you refuse to do this, then you are helping him destroy himself.

¹⁹If a person becomes angry easily, then he must pay the price. If you help him out of trouble, then he will do the same things again.

²⁰Listen to advice and learn. Then you will become wise.

²¹People make many plans. But the things that the Lord wants is what will happen.

²²It is shameful for a person to be selfish. It is better to be poor than to be a liar.

²³Respect for the Lord leads to true life. Then a person will have peace and be safe from trouble.

²⁴A lazy person will not even do the things he needs to do to feed himself. He is too lazy to lift his food from his plate to his mouth!

²⁵If a person thinks he is better than other people, then he should be punished. Then the foolish people will learn a lesson. A wise person learns when he is criticized.

²⁶If a person steals from his father and forces his mother to leave, then he is a very bad person. That person brings shame and dishonor to himself.

²⁷If you refuse to learn, then you will soon forget the things you already know.

²⁸If a witness is not honest, then the judgment will not be fair. The things evil people say bring more evil.

²⁹The person that thinks that he is better than other people will be punished. The foolish person will get the punishment that is saved for him.

20 Wine makes you brave and beer causes fights. The person that drinks too much is foolish.

²The anger of a king is like the roar of a lion. If you make the king angry, then you will lose your life.

³Any fool can start an argument. So, a person that stays away from arguments should be respected.

⁴A lazy person is too lazy to plant seeds. So, at the time of harvest he looks for food and finds nothing.

⁵You can't see a person's thoughts. They are like deep water. But a wise person can understand what someone is thinking.

⁶Many people say that they are loyal and full of love. But it is very hard to find someone that really is.

⁷A good person lives a good life. And his children will be blessed.

⁸When the king sits and judges people, he can see evil with his own eyes.

⁹Can any person really say that he has always done his best? Can any person really say that he has no sin? [No!]

¹⁰The Lord hates people that cheat other people using weights and measures that are not fair.

¹¹Even a child shows that he is good or bad by the things he does. You can watch that child and know if he is honest and good.

¹²We have eyes to see with and ears to hear with—and the Lord made them for us!

¹³If you love to sleep, then you will become poor. But use your time working and you will have plenty to eat.

¹⁴The person that buys something from you always says, "It's no good! It costs too much!" Then that person goes away and tells other people that he made a good deal.

¹⁵Saying wise things is worth much more than gold or pearls.

¹⁶You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man's debts.

¹⁷If you get something by cheating, it may seem like a good thing. But in the end it will be worth nothing.

¹⁸Get good advice before you make plans. If you are starting a war, find good people to guide you.

¹⁹A person that tells gossip about other people can't be trusted. So don't be friends with a person that talks too much.

²⁰If a person speaks against his father or mother, then that person is like a light that becomes dark.

²¹If your wealth was very easy to get, it will not be worth much to you.

²²If someone does something against you, don't try to punish him yourself. Wait for the Lord! In the end, he will make you the winner.

²³The Lord hates people that cheat other people using scales and weights that are not fair.

²⁴If the Lord decides what happens to every person, then how can any person understand what happens in his life?

²⁵Think carefully before you promise to give something to God. Later you might wish that you had not made that promise.

²⁶A wise king will decide which people are evil. And that king will punish those people.

²⁷The Lord is able to know the things that are inside a person.

²⁸If a king is fair and honest, then he will keep his power. If people love him, then he will continue to rule.

²⁹We admire a young man for his strength. But we respect an old man for his gray hair—it shows he lived a full life.

³⁰If we are punished, we will stop doing wrong. Pain can change a person.

21 Farmers dig small ditches to water their fields. They change where the water goes by closing different ditches. The Lord controls a king's mind just like that. The Lord can lead the king wherever he wants him to go.

²A person thinks everything he does is right. But the Lord judges the real reasons people do things.

³Do the things that are right and fair. The Lord loves those things better than sacrifices.

⁴People show that they are evil by their eyes and heart-eyes that look at other people like they are worthless, and a heart that believes they are better than other people—are sinful.

⁵Careful plans can lead to profit. But if you are not careful, and you do things too quickly, then you will become poor.

⁶If you cheat to become rich, then your wealth will soon be gone. And your riches will lead you to death.

⁷The bad things that evil people do will destroy them. Those people refuse to do what is right.

⁸Bad people always try to cheat other people. But good people are honest and fair.

⁹It is better to live on the roof than to live in a house with a wife that wants to argue.

¹⁰Evil people always want to do more evil. And those people show no mercy to people around them.

¹¹If a person thinks he is better than other people, but he is punished, then everyone learns a lesson. A wise person always learns from things that happen. That person gains more and more knowledge.

¹²God, the Good One, knows the people that are evil. He will punish them.

¹³If a person refuses to help poor people, then there will be no help for him when he needs it.

¹⁴If a person is angry with you, give him a gift in secret. A gift that is given in secret can stop great anger.

¹⁵Fair judgment makes good people happy. But it makes evil people very afraid.

¹⁶If a person leaves the way of wisdom, then he is going toward destruction.

¹⁷If having fun is the most important thing to a person, then that person will become poor. If that person loves wine and food, then he will never be rich.

¹⁸Evil people have to pay for all the bad things they do to good people. People that are not honest have to pay for the things they do to honest people.

¹⁹It is better to live in the desert than to live with a wife that has a short temper and loves to argue.

²⁰A wise person saves the things he needs. But a foolish person uses everything as fast as he gets it.

²¹The person that always tries to show love and kindness will have a good life, wealth, and honor.

²²A wise person can do almost anything. He can attack a city defended by strong men. And he can destroy the walls that they trusted to save them.

²³If a person is careful about the things he says, then he saves himself from trouble.

²⁴A proud person that thinks himself better than other people is called a mocker. He shows that he is evil by the things he does.

²⁵A lazy person destroys himself when he wants more and more. He destroys himself because he refuses to work for those things. But a good person can give because he has plenty.

²⁶The Lord is not happy when evil people offer him sacrifices, especially when those evil people are trying to get something from him.

²⁷A person that tells lies will be destroyed. Any person that listens to those lies will be destroyed with him.

²⁸A good person always knows that he is right. But an evil person has to pretend.

²⁹There is no person that is wise enough to make a plan that can succeed if the Lord is against it.

³⁰People can prepare everything for a battle, even the horses, but they can't win unless the Lord gives them the victory.

22 It is better to be respected than to be rich. A good name is more important than silver or gold.

²Rich people and poor people are the same. The Lord made them all.

³Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But foolish people go straight to the trouble and suffer because of it.

⁴Respect the Lord and be humble. Then you will have wealth, honor, and true life.

⁵Evil people are trapped by many troubles. But the person that cares for his soul stays away from trouble.

⁶Teach a child the right way to live while he is young. Then when he grows older, he will continue living that way.

⁷Poor people are slaves to rich people. The person that borrows is a servant to the person that lends.

⁸A person that spreads trouble will harvest trouble. And in the end, that person will be

destroyed because of the trouble he gave other people.

⁹A person that gives freely will be blessed. He will be blessed because he shares his food with poor people.

¹⁰If a person thinks he is better than other people, force him to leave. When that person leaves, trouble will leave with him. Then arguments and bragging will end.

¹¹The king will be your friend if you love a pure heart and kind words.

¹²The Lord watches over and protects people that know him. But he destroys people that turn against him.

¹³The lazy person says, "I can't go to work, now. There is a lion outside. It might kill me."

¹⁴The sin of adultery is like a trap. The Lord will become very angry at the person that falls into that trap.

¹⁵Children do foolish things. But if you punish them, they will learn not to do those things.

¹⁶These two things will make you poor—hurting poor people to make yourself rich, and giving gifts to rich people.

Thirty Wise Sayings

¹⁷Listen to the things that I say. I will teach you the things wise men have said. Learn from these teachings. ¹⁸It will be good for you if you remember these things. It will help you if you can say these words. ¹⁹I will teach you these things now. I want you to trust the Lord. ²⁰I have written 30 sayings for you. These are words of advice and wisdom. ²¹These words will teach you true and important things. Then you can give good answers to the one that sent you.

— 1 —

¹It is easy to steal from poor people. But don't do it. And don't take advantage of those poor people in court. ²The Lord is on their side. He supports them and he will take things away from any person that takes from them.

— 2 —

³Don't be friends with a person that becomes angry easily. Don't go near a person that becomes mad fast. ⁴If you do, you may learn to be like him. Then you will have the same troubles he has.

— 3 —

⁵Don't promise to be responsible for another person's debts. ⁶If you can't pay his debt, then you will lose everything you have. Why should you lose the bed you sleep on?

— 4 —

⁷Never move an old property line that was marked long ago by your ancestors.*

— 5 —

⁸If a person is skilled in his work, then he is good enough to serve kings. He will not have to work for people that are not important.

— 6 —

23 When you sit and eat with an important man, remember who you are with. ²Never eat too much even if you are very hungry. ³And don't eat too much of the fine food he serves. It might be a trick.

— 7 —

⁴Don't ruin your health trying to become rich. If you are wise, you will be patient. ⁵Money is gone very quickly. It is like the money grew wings and flew away like a bird.

— 8 —

⁶Don't eat with a selfish person. And stay away from the special foods he likes. ⁷He is the kind of man that is always thinking about the cost. He might say to you, "Eat and drink." But that is not really what he wants. ⁸And if you eat his food, then you will become sick. And you will be embarrassed.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

— 9 —

¹Don't try to teach a fool. He will make fun of your wise words.

— 10 —

¹⁰Never move an old property line. And never take land that belongs to orphans.* ¹¹The Lord will be against you. The Lord is powerful and he defends those orphans.

— 11 —

¹²Listen to your teacher and learn all you can.

— 12 —

¹³Always punish a child if it needs it. It will not hurt him to spank him. ¹⁴If you spank him, you may save his life.

— 13 —

¹⁵My son, if you become wise, then I will be very happy. ¹⁶I will be happy in my heart if I hear you say things that are right.

— 14 —

¹⁷Don't be jealous of evil people. But always try as hard as you can to respect the Lord. ¹⁸There is always hope. And that hope will never be gone.

— 15 —

¹⁹So listen, my son, and be wise. Always be careful to live the right way. ²⁰Don't be friends with people that drink too much wine and eat too much food. ²¹People that drink too much and eat too much become poor. All they do is eat, drink, sleep, and soon they have nothing.

— 16 —

²²Listen to the things your father tells you. Without your father, you would never have

been born. And respect your mother, even when she is old. ²³Truth, wisdom, learning, and understanding, are worth paying money for. And they are worth far too much to even sell. ²⁴The father of a good person is very happy. If a person has a wise child, then that child brings joy. ²⁵So let your father and mother be happy with you. Let your mother have joy.

— 17 —

²⁶My son, listen closely to what I am saying. Let my life be your example. ²⁷Prostitutes and bad women are a trap. They are like a deep well that you can't get out of. ²⁸A bad woman waits for you like a thief. And she causes many men to become sinners.

— 18 —

²⁹³⁰It will be very bad for people that drink too much wine and strong drinks. Those people have many fights and arguments. Their eyes are red and they stumble and hurt themselves. They could have avoided all those troubles! ³¹So be careful with wine. It is pretty and red. It shines in the cup. When you drink it, it feels good. ³²But in the end it bites like a snake.

³³Wine will cause you to see strange things. Your mind will be confused. ³⁴When you lie down, you will think you are on a rough sea. You feel like you are lying on a ship. ³⁵You will say, "They hit me but I never felt it. They beat me but I don't remember it. Now I can't wake up. I need another drink."

— 19 —

24 Don't be jealous of evil people. Don't waste your time with them. ²In their hearts they plan to do evil. All they talk about is making trouble.

— 20 —

³Good homes are built on wisdom and understanding. ⁴And the rooms are filled using knowledge.

orphan(s) Children whose parents are dead. Often these children have no one to care for them.

- 21 -

¹Wisdom makes a man more powerful. Knowledge gives a man strength. ²You must make careful plans before you start a war. If you want to win, you must have many good advisers.

- 22 -

¹Foolish people can't understand wisdom. And when people are discussing important things, the foolish person can say nothing.

- 23 -

¹If you are always planning trouble, then people will know that you are a person that makes trouble. And they will not listen to you. ²The things that a foolish person plans to do are sin. People hate a person that thinks he is better than other people.

- 24 -

¹If you are weak during times of trouble, then you really are weak.

- 25 -

¹If people are planning to kill a person, then you must try to save him. ²You can't say, "It's none of my business." The Lord knows everything. And he knows why you do things. The Lord watches you. He knows. And the Lord will reward you for the things you do.

- 26 -

¹My son, eat honey. It is good. Honey from the honeycomb* is sweet. ²In the same way, wisdom is good for your soul. If you have wisdom, then you will have hope. And your hope will never end.

- 27 -

¹Don't be like a thief that wants to steal from a good person, or take away his home. ²If a good man falls seven times, he will always

stand again. But evil people will always be defeated by trouble.

- 28 -

¹Don't be happy when your enemy has troubles. Don't be happy when he falls. ²If you do, the Lord will see this. And the Lord will not be happy with you. Then the Lord might help your enemy.

- 29 -

¹Don't let evil people cause you worry. And don't be jealous of evil people. ²Those evil people have no hope. Their light will become dark.

- 30 -

¹Son, respect the Lord and the king. And don't join with the people that are against them. ²Why? Because men like that can quickly be destroyed. You don't know how much trouble God and the king can make for their enemies.

More Wise Sayings

¹These are the words of wise men:

A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because he knows him.

²If a judge tells a guilty person that he can go free, then people will be against him. And nations will say bad things against him.

³But if a judge punishes a guilty person, then all the people will be happy with him.

⁴An honest answer is something that makes all people happy—it is like a kiss on the lips.

⁵Don't build your house before you plant your fields. Make sure that you are prepared to grow food before you build a place to live.

⁶Don't speak against someone without a good reason. And don't tell lies.

⁷Don't say, "He hurt me, so I will do the same to him. I will punish him for the things he did to me."

⁸I walked past a field that belonged to a lazy man. I walked by a field of grapes that belonged to a person that was not wise.

⁹Weeds were growing everywhere in those

honeycomb The wax nest that bees use for storing honey.

fields. Worthless plants were growing on the ground. And the wall around the fields was broken and falling down. ²¹I looked at this and I thought about it. Then I learned a lesson from these things: ²²a little sleep, a little rest, folding your arms, and taking a nap. ²³These things will make you poor very quickly. You will have nothing. It will be like a thief that suddenly comes and takes everything away.

More Wise Sayings from Solomon

25 These are some more wise sayings of Solomon. These words were copied by servants of Hezekiah, king of Judah:

¹God has the right to hide things that he does not want us to know about. But a king is honored for the things he says.

²The sky is high above and the ground is far below us. It is the same with the minds of kings. We can't understand them.

³If you take the worthless things from silver and make it pure, then a worker can make beautiful things.

⁴In the same way, if you take evil advisers away from a king, then goodness will make his kingdom strong.

⁵Don't brag about yourself before a king. Don't say that you are a famous person.

⁶It is much better for the king to invite you himself. But if you invite yourself, then you might be embarrassed in front of other people.

⁷Don't be too quick to tell a judge about something you saw. If another person says that you are wrong, then you will be embarrassed.

⁸If you and another person can't agree, then decide among yourselves what to do. And don't tell about another person's secret. ⁹If you do, then you will be ashamed. And you will never lose that bad name.

¹⁰If you say a good thing at the right time, then it is like a golden apple in a silver setting.

¹¹If a wise person gives you a warning, it is worth more than gold rings or jewelry made from the finest gold.

¹²A messenger that can be trusted is worth much to the people that send him. He is like cool water during the hot days of harvest.

¹³People that promise to give gifts, but never give them, are like clouds and wind that bring no rain.

¹⁴Patient talk can make any person change his thinking, even a ruler. Gentle talk is very powerful.

¹⁵Honey is good. But don't eat too much. If you do, then you will be sick. ¹⁶In the same way, don't go into your neighbor's home too often. If you do, then he will begin to hate you.

¹⁷A person that does not tell the truth is dangerous. He is like a club, or a sword, or a sharp arrow. ¹⁸Never depend on a liar during times of trouble. That person is like a hurting tooth or a crippled foot. He hurts you when you need him most.

¹⁹Singing happy songs to a sad person is like taking away his clothes when he is cold. It is like mixing soda and vinegar.

²⁰If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat. If your enemy is thirsty, give him water to drink. ²¹If you do this, then you will make him ashamed. It is like putting burning coals on his head. And the Lord will reward you because you were good to your enemy.

²²The wind that blows from the north brings rain. And in the same way, gossip brings anger.

²³It is better to live on the roof than to share a house with a wife that wants to argue.

²⁴Good news from a faraway place is like a cool drink of water when you are hot and thirsty.

²⁵If a good person becomes weak and follows an evil person, it is the same as good water that has become dirty.

²⁶If you eat too much honey it is not good for you. In the same way, don't try to get too much honor for yourself.

²⁷If a person can't control himself, then he is like a city with walls that are broken down.

Wise Sayings About Fools

26 Showing honor to a fool is a waste. It is like snow in summer or rain during harvest time.

¹Don't worry if a person asks for bad things to happen to you. If you did nothing wrong, nothing bad will happen. That person's words

are like birds that fly past you and never stop.

³You have to whip a horse. You have to put a bridle on a mule. And you have to beat a fool.

⁴Here is a difficult situation: If a fool asks a stupid question, then don't give him a stupid answer or you, too, will look like a fool; ⁵But if a fool asks a stupid question, then you should give him a stupid answer or he will think he is very smart.

⁶Never let a fool carry your message. If you do, it will be like cutting off your own feet. You are asking for trouble.

⁷When a fool tries to say something wise, it is like a crippled person trying to walk.

⁸Showing honor to a fool is as bad as tying a rock in a sling.*

⁹When a fool tries to say something wise, it is the same as a drunk person trying to pick a thorn out of his hand.

¹⁰Hiring a fool, or hiring whoever passes by, is dangerous. You don't know who might get hurt.

¹¹A dog eats food. Then he gets sick and vomits. Then the dog eats that food again. It is the same with a foolish person. He does the same foolish things again and again.

¹²If a person thinks that he is wise but he is not, he is worse than a fool.

Wise Sayings About Lazy People

¹³A lazy person says, "I can't leave my house. There is a lion in the street."

¹⁴A lazy person is like a door. All he does is turn in his bed like a door turns on its hinges. He never goes anywhere.

¹⁵A lazy person is too lazy to lift his food from his plate to his mouth.

¹⁶A lazy person thinks he is very wise. He thinks he is smarter than seven men that can give good reasons for their ideas.

¹⁷It is dangerous to become part of an argument between two people. It is the same as walking along the street and grabbing a dog by the ears.

¹⁸A man that tricks another person and then says that he was only joking, is like a crazy person that shoots flaming arrows into the air and accidentally kills someone.

¹⁹If a fire has no wood, then the fire will become cold. In the same way, an argument without gossip is finished.

²⁰Charcoal keeps the coals burning. And wood keeps the fire burning. In the same way, people that make trouble keep arguments alive.

²¹People love gossip. It is like eating good food.

²²Good words that hide an evil plan is like silver paint over a cheap, clay pot. ²³An evil person makes himself look good by the things he says. But he hides his evil plans in his heart.

²⁴The things he says might seem good. But don't trust him. His heart is full of evil ideas.

²⁵He hides his evil plans with nice words. But he is mean. And in the end all people will see the evil things that he does.

²⁶If a person tries to trap another person, then he will trap himself. If a person tries to roll a stone over another person, he will be crushed himself.

²⁷The person that tells lies hates the people he hurts. And if a person says things he does not mean, he is only hurting himself.

27 Never brag about what will happen in the future. You don't know what will happen tomorrow.

²Never praise yourself. Let other people do it.

³A stone is heavy, and sand is hard to carry. But the trouble caused by a fool is much harder to bear than those two things.

⁴Anger is cruel and mean. It causes destruction. But jealousy is much worse.

⁵Open criticism is better than hidden love.

⁶A friend might hurt you sometimes, but he does not want to do this. An enemy is different. Even when an enemy is kind to you, he wants to hurt you.

⁷If you are not hungry, then you will not eat even honey. But if you are hungry, you will eat anything—even if it tastes bad.

⁸A man away from home is like a bird away from its nest.

¹Perfume and sweet-smelling things make you feel happy. But trouble destroys your peace of mind.

²Don't forget your friends and your father's friends. And if you have trouble, don't go far away to your brother's house for help. It is better to ask a neighbor that is near you than to go far away to your brother.

³My son, be wise. This will make me happy. Then I will be able to answer any person that criticizes me.

⁴Wise people see trouble coming and get out of its way. But a fool goes straight to the trouble and suffers because of it.

⁵You will lose your shirt if you make yourself responsible for another man's debts.

⁶Don't wake up your neighbor early in the morning with a shout of, "Good morning! He will treat it like a curse, not a blessing.

⁷A wife that always wants to argue is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.

⁸Trying to stop that woman is like trying to stop the wind. It is like trying to grab oil with your hand.

⁹People use pieces of iron to sharpen iron knives. In the same way, people learn from other people, making each other sharp.

¹⁰A person that cares for fig trees will be able to eat their fruit. In the same way, a person that cares for his master will be rewarded. His master will care for him.

¹¹When a person looks into the water he can see his own face. In the same way, a man's heart shows what the man is really like.

¹²The things that people want are like the place of death and destruction. There is always room for more.

¹³People use fire to make gold and silver pure. In the same way, a man is tested by the praise people give him.

¹⁴You can grind a fool to powder, and still you will not force the foolishness out of him.

¹⁵Watch your sheep and cattle carefully. Be sure you care for them the best you can.

¹⁶Wealth does not last forever. Even nations don't last forever. ¹⁷People cut hay and new grass begins to grow. Later, they cut that grass growing on the hills.

¹⁸So, be satisfied with what you have. You can make clothes from the wool of your lambs. And you can buy land with the money you get from selling your goats. ¹⁹And your other goats give you plenty of milk. So there will be enough food for you and your family, and for your servant girls also.

28 Evil people are afraid of everything. But a good person is as brave as a lion.

¹If a country has many sins, it has many leaders trying to rule the country. But a nation that is strong will have one good and wise leader that will rule for a long time.

²If a ruler makes trouble for poor people, he is like a hard rain that destroys the crops.

³If you refuse to obey the law, then you are for the evil people. But if you obey the law, then you are against them.

⁴Evil people don't understand fairness. But people that love the Lord understand it.

⁵It is better to be poor but honest than to be rich and evil.

⁶A person that obeys the law is smart. But the person that becomes friends with worthless people brings shame to his father.

⁷If you get rich by cheating poor people, then you will lose your wealth. It will go to another person that is kind to them.

⁸If a person refuses to listen to God's teachings, then God will refuse to hear his prayers.

⁹A bad person might make plans to hurt a good person. But the bad person will fall into his own trap. And good things will happen to the good person.

¹⁰Rich people always think they are wise. But a poor person that is wise can see the truth.

¹¹When good people become leaders, everyone is happy. But when an evil person is elected, all people go and hide.

¹²A person will never be successful if he tries to hide his sins. But if a person confesses his sins and tells people that he was wrong, then God and everyone else will show mercy to him.

¹³If a person always respects the Lord, then that person will be blessed. But if a person is stubborn and refuses to respect the Lord, then

he will have trouble.

¹¹When an evil person rules over weak people, he is like an angry lion or a bear that is ready to fight.

¹²If a ruler is not wise, he will hurt the people under him. But the ruler that is honest and hates cheating will rule for a long time.

¹³If a person is guilty of killing another person, then that person will never have peace. Don't support that person.

¹⁴If a person is living right, then he will be safe. But if a person is evil, then he will lose his power.

¹⁵A person that works hard will have plenty to eat. But a person that wastes his time with dreams will always be poor.

¹⁶God will bless a person that follows him. But a person that is only trying to get rich will be punished.

¹⁷A judge must be fair. He must not support a person simply because he knows him. But some judges will change their decisions for only the smallest payment.

¹⁸A selfish person only wants to get rich. That person does not realize that he is very close to being poor.

¹⁹If you help someone by telling him he is doing wrong, then later he will be happy with you. That is much better than always saying only nice things to people.

²⁰Some people steal from their father and mother. They say, "It's not wrong." But that person is as bad as a man that comes in and smashes everything in the house.

²¹A selfish person causes trouble. But the person that trusts in the Lord will be rewarded.

²²If a person trusts in himself, then he is a fool. But if a person is wise, then he will escape disaster.

²³If a person gives to poor people, then he will have everything he needs. But if a person refuses to help poor people, then he will have much trouble.

²⁴If an evil person is elected to rule, then all the people hide. But when that evil person is defeated, then good people rule again.

29 If a person is stubborn and becomes more angry every time people tell him

that he is doing wrong, then that person will be destroyed. There is no hope.

²When the ruler is a good person, then all the people are happy. But when an evil person rules, then all the people complain.

³If a person loves wisdom, then his father is very happy. But if a person wastes his money on prostitutes,* then he will lose his wealth.

⁴If a king is fair, then the nation will be strong. But if a king is selfish and people must pay him to do things for them, then the nation will be weak.

⁵If a person tries to get what he wants by saying nice things to people, then he is only setting a trap for himself.

⁶Evil people are defeated by their own sin. But a good person can sing and be happy.

⁷Good people want to do the right thing for poor people. But evil people don't care.

⁸People that think they are better than other people can cause much trouble. They can put whole cities into confusion. But people that are wise make peace.

⁹If a wise person tries to settle a problem with a fool, then the fool will argue and say stupid things. And the two people will never agree.

¹⁰Murderers always hate honest people. Those evil people want to kill good, honest people.*

¹¹A foolish person becomes angry easily. But a wise person is patient and controls himself.

¹²If a ruler listens to lies, then all his officials will be evil.

¹³In one way a poor person and the person that steals from the poor are the same: The Lord made them both.

¹⁴If a king is fair to poor people he will rule for a long time.

¹⁵Spankings and teachings are good for children. If parents let a child do whatever he wants, then he will bring shame to his mother.

prostitute(s) A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Those ... people Or "But a good, honest person saves his life."

¹⁶If evil people are ruling the nation, then sin will be everywhere. But good people will win in the end.

¹⁷Punish your son when he is wrong, then you will always be proud of him. He will never make you ashamed.

¹⁸If a nation is not guided by God, then that nation will not have peace. But the nation that obeys God's law will be happy.

¹⁹A servant won't learn a lesson if you only talk to him. That servant may understand your words but he won't obey.

²⁰If a person speaks without thinking, there is no hope for him. There is more hope for a fool than for the person that speaks without thinking.

²¹If you always give your servant everything he wants, then in the end he will not be a good servant.

²²An angry person causes trouble. And the person that becomes angry easily is guilty of many sins.

²³If a person thinks he is better than other people, then that will destroy him. But if a person is humble, then other people will respect him.

²⁴Two thieves that work together are enemies. One thief will threaten the other one, so if he is forced to tell the truth in court, he will be too afraid to speak.

²⁵Fear is like a trap. But if you trust in the Lord, you will be safe.

²⁶Many people want to be the friends of a ruler. But the Lord is the One that judges people fairly.

²⁷Good people hate those people that are not honest. And evil people hate people that are honest.

Wise Sayings of Agur Son of Jakeh

30 These are the wise sayings of Agur son of Jakeh:

The man is talking to Ithiel and to Ucal:*

¹I am the worst person on earth. I am not able to understand like I should. ²I have not

learned to be wise. And I know nothing about God.

³No person has ever learned about the things from heaven. No person has ever caught the wind in his hand. No person has ever held water in a piece of cloth. No person can ever really know the limits of the earth. If any person can do these things, who is he? Where is his family?

⁴Every word that God says is perfect. God is a safe place for people that go to him. ⁵So, don't try to change the things God says. If you do, he will punish you and prove that you tell lies.

⁶Lord, I ask you to do two things for me before I die. ⁷Help me to not tell lies. And don't make me too rich or too poor—only give me the things I need each day. ⁸If I have more than I need, then I will think I don't need you. But if I am poor then I might steal. Then I will bring shame to the name of God.

⁹Never say bad things against a servant to his master. If you do, the master will not believe you. He will think you are guilty.

¹⁰Some people speak against their fathers. And they don't show respect for their mothers.

¹¹Some people think they are good but they are really very bad.

¹²Some people think they are very good. They think they are much better than other people.

¹³There are people whose teeth are like swords. Their jaws are like knives. They use their time to take everything they can from poor people.

¹⁴Some people want to take everything they can get. All they say is, "Give me, give me, give me." There are three things that are never satisfied—really four things that never have enough: ¹⁵The place of death, a woman with no children, dry ground that needs rain, and a hot fire that can't be stopped.

¹⁶Any person that makes fun of his father or refuses to obey his mother will be punished. It will be as bad for him as if his eyes were eaten by vultures and wild birds.

¹⁷There are three things that are hard for me to understand—really four things that I don't

The ... Ucal Or "This man says, 'I am too weak. I am too weak, but I will succeed!'"

understand: ⁹An eagle flying in the sky, a snake moving on a rock, a ship moving across the ocean, and a man in love with a woman.

¹⁰A woman that is not faithful to her husband acts like she has done nothing wrong. She eats, takes a bath, and says she has done nothing wrong.

¹¹There are three things that make trouble on the earth—really four that the earth can't bear:

¹²A servant that becomes a king, a foolish person that has everything he needs, ¹³a woman that is full of hate but still finds a husband, and a servant girl that becomes ruler over the woman she serves.

¹⁴There are four things on the earth that are small. But these things are very wise: ¹⁵Ants are small and weak but they save their food all summer; ¹⁶A badger is a small animal but it is able to make its home in the rocks; ¹⁷locusts have no king but they are able to work together; ¹⁸lizards are small enough to catch with your hands but you can find them living in kings' homes.

¹⁹There are three things that seem important when they walk. Really there are four: ²⁰A lion is the strongest of all animals. He is afraid of nothing. ²¹A rooster that walks very proudly, a goat, and a king among his people.

²²If you are foolish and think that you are better than other people and you plan evil, you should stop and think about what you are doing.

²³If a person churns* milk, he makes butter. If a person hits another person's nose, then blood will come. In the same way, if you make people angry you will cause trouble.

Wise Sayings of King Lemuel

31 These are the wise sayings of King Lemuel. His mother taught him these things.

¹You are my son. The son that I love. You are the son that I prayed to have. ²Don't waste your strength on women. It is women that destroy kings. Don't waste yourself on them.

³Lemuel, it is not wise for kings to drink wine. It is not wise for rulers to want beer. ⁴They may drink too much and forget what the law says. Then they will take away all the rights of poor people. ⁵Give beer to the poor people. Give wine to those people that are in trouble. ⁶Then they will drink and forget that they are poor. They will drink and forget all their troubles.

⁷If a person can't help himself, then you should help him. You should help all people that are in trouble. ⁸Stand for the things you know are right. And judge all people fairly. Protect the rights of poor people and people that need you.

The Perfect Wife

¹ * It is very hard to find "the perfect woman."

But she is worth much more than jewels.

² Her husband can trust her.

He will never be poor.

³ The good wife does good for her husband all her life.

She never causes him trouble.

⁴ She is always busy, making wool and cloth.

⁵ She is like a ship that comes from a faraway place.

She brings food home from everywhere.

⁶ She wakes very early in the morning.

She cooks food for her family and food for the servant girls.

⁷ She looks at land and buys it.

She uses money she has saved to plant a vineyard.

⁸ She works very hard.

She is strong and able to do all her work.

⁹ When she trades the things she has made, she always earns a profit.

And she works until late at night.

¹⁰ She makes her own thread and weaves her own cloth.

churn(s) To stir cream for a long time until it becomes butter.

Verses 10-31 In Hebrew, each verse of this poem starts with the next letter of the alphabet, so this poem shows all the good qualities of a woman, from "A" to "Z."

- 20 She always gives to poor people
and helps people that need it.
- 21 When it is cold, she is not worried about
her family.
She has given them all good, warm
clothes.
- 22 She makes sheets and spreads for the
beds.
And she wears clothes made of fine
linen.
- 23 People respect her husband.
He is one of the leaders of the land.
- 24 She is a very good businesswoman.
She makes clothes and belts,
and sells these things to businessmen.
- 25 She is strong and people respect her.
- 26 When she talks, she is wise.

- She is full of wise teaching.
- 27 She is never lazy.
But she takes care of the things in her
house.
- 28 And her children grow up and show her
honor.
And her husband says many good things
about her.
- 29 Her husband says,
"Many women become good wives.
But you are the best."
- 30 Grace and beauty can fool you.
But a woman that respects the Lord
should be praised.
- 31 She should get the reward she deserves.
All people should honor her in public
for the things she has done.

Ecclesiastes

1 These are the words from the Teacher. The Teacher was a son of David and king of Jerusalem.

²The Teacher says, "Everything is senseless and useless! I mean that all things are a waste!*" ³Do people really gain anything from all the hard work they do in this life?*, "No!"

Things Never Change

⁴People live and people die. But the earth continues forever. ⁵The sun rises and the sun goes down. And then the sun hurries to rise again in the same place.

⁶The wind blows to the south, and the wind blows to the north. The wind blows around and around. Then the wind turns and blows back to the place it began.

⁷All rivers flow again and again to the same place. They all flow to the sea, but the sea doesn't become full.

⁸Words can't fully explain things.* But people continue speaking.* Words come again and again to our ears. But our ears don't become full. And our eyes don't become full of the things we see.

senseless ... waste The Hebrew word means "vapor or breath" or "something that is useless, meaningless, empty, wrong, or a waste of time."

in this life Literally, "under the sun."

Words ... things Literally, "All words (things) are weak."

But ... speaking The Hebrew could also be translated, "Man can't speak."

Nothing Is New

⁹All things continue the way they have been since the beginning. The same things will be done that have always been done. There is nothing new in this life.*

¹⁰A person might say, "Look, this is new!" But that thing has always been here. It was here before we were!

¹¹People don't remember the things that happened long ago. In the future, people will not remember what is happening now. And later, other people will not remember what those people before them did.

Does Wisdom Bring Happiness?

¹²I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³I decided to study and to use my wisdom to learn about all the things that are done in this life. I learned that it is a very hard thing that God gave us to do. ¹⁴I looked at all the things done on earth, and I saw that it is all a waste of time. It is like trying to catch the wind.* ¹⁵You can't change these things. If something is crooked, you can't say it is straight. And if something is missing, you can't say it is there.

¹⁶I said to myself, "I am very wise. I am wiser than all the kings that ruled Jerusalem before me. I know what wisdom and knowledge really are!"

trying to catch the wind Or, "It is very troubling to the spirit." The word for "troubling" can also mean "craving" and the word for "spirit" can also mean "wind."

¹¹I decided to learn how wisdom and knowledge are better than thinking foolish things. But I learned that trying to become wise is like trying to catch the wind.* ¹²With much wisdom comes frustration. The person that gains more wisdom also gains more sorrow.

Does "Having Fun" Bring Happiness?

2 I said to myself, "I should have fun—I should enjoy everything the most I can." But I learned that this is also useless. ²It is foolish to laugh all the time. Having fun doesn't do any good.

³So I decided to fill my body with wine while I filled my mind with wisdom. I tried this foolishness because I wanted to find a way to be happy. I wanted to see what was good for people to do during their few days of life.

Does Hard Work Bring Happiness?

⁴Then I began doing great things. I built houses, and I planted fields of grapes for myself. ⁵I planted gardens, and I made parks. I planted all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶I made pools of water for myself. And I used these pools to water my growing trees. ⁷I bought men slaves and women slaves. And there were slaves born in my house. I owned many great things. I had herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. I owned more things than any other person in Jerusalem.

⁸I also gathered silver and gold for myself. I took treasures from kings and their nations. I had men and women singing for me. I had everything anyone could want.

⁹I became very rich and famous. I was greater than any person that lived in Jerusalem before me. And my wisdom was always there to help me. ¹⁰Anything my eyes saw and wanted, I got for myself. My mind was pleased with all the things I did. And this happiness was the reward for all my hard work.

¹¹But then I looked at all the things I had done. I thought about all the hard work I did. I decided it was all a waste of time! It was like

trying to catch the wind.* There is nothing to gain from all the things we do in this life.

Maybe Wisdom Is the Answer

¹²No person can do more than a king can do. Some king has already done anything you might want to do.* And I learned that even the things a king does are a waste of time. So I again began to think about being wise, being foolish, and doing crazy things. ¹³I saw that wisdom is better than foolishness in the same way that light is better than darkness. ¹⁴It is like this: A wise man uses his mind like eyes to see where he is going. But a fool is like someone walking in the dark.

But I also saw that the foolish man and the wise man both end the same way. (They both die.) ¹⁵I thought to myself, "The same thing that happens to a foolish person will also happen to me. So why have I tried so hard to become wise?" I said to myself, "Being wise is also useless." ¹⁶The wise man and the foolish person will both die! And people will not remember either the wise man or the foolish person forever. In the future, people will forget everything they did. So both the wise man and the foolish person are really the same.

Is There Real Happiness In Life?

¹⁷This made me hate life. It made me very sad to think that everything in this life* is useless, like trying to catch the wind.*

¹⁸I began to hate all the hard work I had done. I had worked hard, but I saw that the people that live after me will get the things that I worked for. I will not be able to take those things with me. ¹⁹Some other person will control everything I worked and studied for. And I don't know if that person will be wise or foolish. This is also senseless.

²⁰So, I became sad about all the work I had done. ²¹A person can work hard using all his wisdom and knowledge and skill. But that person will die and other people will get the

trying to catch the wind. Or, "It is very troubling to the spirit." The word for "troubling" can also mean "craving" and the word for "spirit" can also mean "wind."

No person ... want to do. The Hebrew is not clear here.

in this life. Literally, "under the sun."

things he worked for. Those people did not do the work, but they will get everything. That makes me very sad. That is also not fair and is senseless.

²²What does a person really have after all his work and struggling in this life? ²³All his life he has pain, frustrations, and hard work. Even at night, a person's mind does not rest. This is also senseless.

^{24,25}Is there any person that tried to enjoy life more than I have? No! And this is what I learned: The best thing a person can do is eat, drink, and enjoy the work he must do. I also saw that this comes from God. ²⁶If a person does good and pleases God, then God will give that person wisdom, knowledge, and joy. But a person that sins will get only the work of gathering and carrying things. God takes from the bad person and gives to the good person. But all this work is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.*

There Is a Time...

3 There is a right time for everything. And everything on earth will happen at the right time.

- ² There is a time to be born,
and a time to die.
There is a time to plant,
and a time to pull up plants.
- ³ There is a time to kill,
and a time to heal.
There is a time to destroy,
and a time to build.
- ⁴ There is a time to cry,
and a time to laugh.
There is a time to be sad,
and a time to dance from joy.
- ⁵ There is a time to throw weapons down,

and a time to pick them up.* There is a time to greet someone with a hug,
and a time not to greet them.

- ⁶ There is a time to look for something,
and a time to stop looking.
There is a time to keep things,
and there is a time to throw things away.
- ⁷ There is a time to tear cloth,
and there is a time to sew it.
There is a time to be silent,
and a time to speak.
- ⁸ There is a time to love,
and a time to hate.
There is a time for war,
and there is a time for peace.

God Controls His World

⁹Does a person really gain anything from his hard work? (No!) ¹⁰I saw all the hard work God gave us to do. ¹¹God gave us the ability to think about his world.* But we can never completely understand everything God does. And yet, God does everything at just the right time.

¹²I learned that the best thing for people to do is to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live. ¹³God wants every person to eat, drink, and enjoy his work. These are gifts from God.

¹⁴I learned that anything God does will continue forever. People can't add anything to the work of God. And people can't take anything away from the work of God. God did this so people would respect him. ¹⁵Things that happened in the past have happened, (and we can't change them). And things that will happen in the future will happen, (and we can't change them). But God wants to help people that have been treated badly.*

¹⁶I also saw these things in this life.* I saw that the courts should be filled with goodness and fairness—but there is evil there now. ¹⁷So I

in this life Literally, "under the sun."

Is there ... God Or, "The best a person can do is eat, drink, and enjoy his work. I also saw this comes from God. ²⁶No one can eat or enjoy life without God."

trying to catch the wind Or, "It is very troubling to the spirit." The word for "troubling" can also mean "craving" and the word for "spirit" can also mean "wind."

There ... up Literally, "There is a time to throw stones away, and a time to gather stones."

the ... world Or, "a desire to know the future."

Verse 15 Or, "What happens now also happened in the past. The things that happen in the future have also happened before. God makes things happen again and again."

said to myself, "God has planned a time for everything. And God has planned a time to judge everything people do. God will judge the good people and the bad people."

Are People Just Like Animals?

¹"I thought about the things people do to each other. And I said to myself, "God wants people to see that they are like animals. "Is a man better than an animal? No! Why? Because everything is useless. The same thing happens to animals and to people—they die. People and animals have the same "breath."* Is a dead animal different from a dead person?

²"The bodies of people and animals end the same way. They came from the earth, and in the end they will go back to the earth. "Who knows what happens to the spirit of a man? Who knows if a man's spirit goes up to God while an animal's spirit goes down into the ground?"

³So I saw that the best thing a person can do is to enjoy what he does. That is all he has. Also a person should not worry about the future. Why? Because no one can help that person see what will happen in the future.

Is It Better to Be Dead?

4 Again I saw that many people are treated badly. I saw their tears. And I saw that there was no one to comfort those sad people. I saw cruel people had all the power. And I saw that there was no one to comfort the people they hurt. ¹I decided that things are better for people that have died than for people that are still alive. ²And things are even better for people that die at birth! Why? Because, they never saw the evil that is done in this world.*

Why Work So Hard?

"Then I thought, "Why do people work so hard?" I saw people try to succeed and be better than other people. Why? Because people are jealous. They don't want other people to have

more than they have. This is senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.*

³Some people say, "It is foolish to fold your hands and do nothing. If you don't work, you will starve to death." Maybe that is true. But I say it is better to be satisfied with the few things you have than to always be struggling to get more.

⁴Again I saw something else that didn't make sense: ¹A person might not have any family. He might not have a son or even a brother. But that person will continue to work very, very hard. That person is never satisfied with what he has. And he works so hard that he never stops and asks himself, "Why am I working so hard? Why don't I let myself enjoy my life?" This is also a very bad and senseless thing.

Friends and Family Give Strength

¹Two people are better than one. When two people work together, they get more from the work they do.

²If one person falls, then the other person can help him. But it is very bad for the person that is alone when he falls—there is no one there to help him.

³If two people sleep together, they will be warm. But a person sleeping alone will not be warm.

⁴An enemy might be able to defeat one person, but that enemy can't defeat two people. And three people are even stronger. They are like, a rope that has three parts wrapped together—it is very hard to break.

People, Politics, and Popularity

¹A young leader that is poor but wise is better than a king that is old but foolish. That old king does not listen to warnings. ²Maybe that young ruler was born a poor man in the kingdom. And maybe he came from prison to rule the country. ³But I have watched people in this life, and I know this: People will follow

breath Or, "spirit."
in this world Literally, "under the sun."

trying to catch the wind Or, "It is very troubling to the spirit." The word for "troubling" can also mean "craving" and the word for "spirit" can also mean "wind."

that young man. He will become the new king.
 "Many, many people will follow this young man. But later, those same people will not like him. This is also senseless. It is like trying to catch the wind.*

Be Careful About Making Promises

5 Be very careful when you go to worship God. It is better to listen to God, than to give sacrifices* like foolish people. Foolish people often do bad things, and they don't even know it. Be careful when you make promises to God. Be careful about the things you say to God. Don't let your feelings cause you to speak too soon. God is in heaven, and you are on the earth. So you need to say only a few things to God. This saying is true:

- ¹ Bad dreams come from too much worrying,
 and too many words come from foolish people.

"If you make a promise to God, then keep your promise. Don't be slow to do the thing you promised. God is not happy with foolish people. Give God what you promised to give him. It is better to promise nothing than to promise something and not be able to do it. "So don't let your words cause you to sin. Don't say to the priest,* "I didn't mean what I said!" If you do this, then God might become angry with your words and destroy everything you have worked for. You should not let your useless dreams and bragging bring you trouble. You should respect God.

For Every Ruler There Is a Ruler

"In some country you might see poor people that are forced to work very hard. You might see that this is not fair to the poor people. It is

against the rights of the poor people. But don't be surprised! The ruler that forces those people to work has another ruler that forces him. And there is still another ruler that forces both of these rulers. Even the king is a slave—his country owns him.*

Wealth Can't Buy Happiness

"The person that loves money will never be satisfied with the money he has. The person that loves wealth will not be satisfied when he gets more and more. This is also senseless.

"The more wealth a person has, the more "friends" he has to help spend it. So that rich person really gains nothing. He can only look at his wealth.

"A man that works hard all day comes home and sleeps in peace. It is not important if he has little or much to eat. But a rich person worries about his wealth and is not able to sleep.

"There is a very sad thing that I have seen happen in this life. A person saves his money for the future.* And then something bad happens and he loses everything. So that person has nothing to give to his son.

We Come with Nothing. We Leave with Nothing

"A person comes into the world from his mother's body with nothing. And when that person dies, he leaves the same way—with nothing. He works hard to get things. But he can take nothing with him when he dies. That is very sad. He will leave the world the same way he came. So, what does a person gain from his "trying to catch the wind"? He only gets days that are filled with sadness and sorrow. In the end, he is frustrated, sick, and angry!

trying to catch the wind Or, "It is very troubling to the spirit." The word for "troubling" can also mean "craving" and the word for "spirit" can also mean "wind."

sacrifices A gift to God. Sometimes it was a special kind of animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

priest Or, "angel," "messenger." This might be an angel, or it might be a priest or a prophet who speaks for God.

The ruler ... owns him Or, "One ruler is cheated by a higher ruler. And they are cheated by an even higher ruler.

"Even the king gets his share of the profit. The wealth of the country is divided among them."

for the future Or, "to his harm."

Enjoy Your Life's Work

¹"I have seen that this is the best a person can do: A person should eat, drink, and enjoy the work he does during his short life on earth. God has given him these few days, and that is all he has.

²If God gives a person wealth, property, and the power to enjoy those things, then that person should enjoy them. That person should accept the things he has and enjoy his work—that is a gift from God. ³A person does not have many years to live. So he must remember these things all his life. God will keep him busy with the work that person loves to do.*

Wealth Does Not Bring Happiness

6 I have seen another thing in this life that is not fair. It is very hard to understand: ²God gives a person great wealth, riches, and honor. That person has everything he needs and everything he could ever want. But then God does not let that person enjoy those things. Some stranger comes and takes everything. This is a very bad and senseless thing.

³A person might live a long time. And that person might have 100 children. But if that person is not satisfied with those good things, and if no one remembers him after his death, then I say that a baby that dies at birth is better off than that man. ⁴It is really senseless when a baby is born dead. That baby is quickly buried in a dark grave, without even a name. ⁵That baby never saw the sun. That baby never knew anything. But that baby finds more rest than the man that never enjoyed the things God gave him. ⁶That man might live 2,000 years. But if he does not enjoy life, then the baby that was born dead has found the easiest way to the same end.*

⁷A man works and works. Why? To feed himself. But he is never satisfied. ⁸In this way, a wise man is no better than a foolish person. It is better to be a poor man that knows how to

accept life as it is. ⁹It is better to be happy with the things you have than to always want more and more. Always wanting more and more is useless. It is like trying to catch the wind.*

¹⁰⁻¹¹A man is only what he was created to be—a man. And it is useless to argue about it. A man can't argue with God about this. Why? Because God is more powerful than man. And a long argument will not change that fact.

¹²Who knows what is best for a person during his short life on earth? His life passes like a shadow. No one can tell him what will happen later.

A Collection of Wise Teachings

7 It is better to have a good name (*respect*) than good perfume.

The day a person dies is even better than the day he is born.

² It is even better to go to a funeral than to a party.

Why? Because all people must die, and every living person should accept this.

³ Sorrow is even better than laughter.

Why? Because when our face is sad, our heart becomes good.

⁴ A wise man thinks about death, but a foolish person thinks only about having a good time.

⁵ It is better to be criticized by a wise man than to be praised by a foolish person.

⁶ The laughter of foolish people is useless. It is like trying to heat a pot by burning thorns under it.

The thorns burn fast, but the pot does not get hot.

⁷ Even a wise man will forget his wisdom if someone pays him enough money. That money destroys his

God ... do Or, "God will do whatever he wants to that person."

then ... end Or, "Isn't it true that all go to the same place?"

It is better ... catch the wind Or, "Having what you can see is better than chasing after the things you want. This is also like trying to catch the wind."

understanding.

- ⁸ It is better to finish something than to start it.

It is better to be gentle and patient than to be proud and impatient.

- ⁹ Don't become angry quickly.
Why? Because being angry is foolish.

- ¹⁰ Don't say,
"Life was better in the 'good old days.'
What happened?"
Wisdom does not lead us to ask that question.

¹¹Wisdom is better if you also have property. Really, wise people* will get more than enough wealth. ¹²A wise person can become wealthy. Wisdom takes care of its owner.

¹³Look at the things God has made. You can't change a thing, even if you think it is wrong! ¹⁴When life is good, enjoy it. But when life is hard, remember that God gives us good times and hard times. And no one knows what will happen in the future.

People Can't Be Truly Good

¹⁵In my short life, I have seen everything. I have seen good men die young. And I have seen evil men living long lives. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷So why kill yourself? Don't be too good or too bad. And don't be too wise or too foolish. Why should you die before your time?

¹⁸Try to be a little of this and a little of that.* Even God's followers will do some good things and some bad things. ¹⁹⁻²⁰Surely there is not a good man on earth that always does good and never sins.

Wisdom gives a person strength. One wise man is stronger than ten foolish leaders in a city.

²¹Don't listen to all the things people say. You might hear your own servant saying bad

things about you. ²²And you know that many times you too have said bad things about other people.

²³I used my wisdom and thought about all these things. I wanted to be truly wise. But it was impossible. ²⁴I can't understand why things are like they are. It is too hard for anyone to understand. ²⁵I studied and I tried very hard to find true wisdom. I tried to find a reason for everything. (What did I learn?), I learned that it is foolish to be evil, and it is crazy to act like a foolish person.

²⁶I also found that some women are dangerous like traps. Their hearts are like nets, and their arms are like chains. It is worse than death to be caught by those women. A person that follows God will run away from those women. But a sinner will be caught by them.

²⁷⁻²⁸The Teacher says, "I added all these things together to see what answer I could find. I am still looking for answers. But I did find this: I found one good man in a thousand. But I did not find even one good woman.

²⁹"There is one other thing I have learned: God made people good. But people found many ways to be bad."

Wisdom and Power

8 No one can understand and explain things the way a wise man can. His wisdom makes him happy. It changes a sad face into a happy one.

²I say you should always obey the king's command. Do this because you made a promise to God. ³Don't be afraid to give suggestions to the king. And don't support something that is wrong. But remember, the king gives the commands that please him. The king has the authority to give commands. And no one can tell him what to do. ⁴A person will be safe if he obeys the king's command. But a wise man knows the right time to do this, and he also knows when to do the right thing.

⁵There is a right time and a right way for a person to do everything. And each person must take a chance and decide what he should do. He must do this even when he has many troubles and he isn't sure what will happen.

wise people Literally, "People that see the sun." This means wise people can see and plan what they should do.

Try ... that Literally, "Hold onto this, but don't let go of that."

Why? Because no one can tell him what will happen in the future.

¹No person has the power to keep his spirit from leaving. No person has the power to stop his death. During war, a soldier does not have the freedom to go any place he wants to go. In the same way, if a person does evil, that evil won't allow him to be free.

²I saw all those things. I thought very hard about the things that happen in this world. And I saw that people always struggle for the power to rule other people. And this is bad for them.

³I also saw great and beautiful funerals for evil people. While the people were going home after the funeral services, they said good things about the evil people that had died. This happened even in the same towns where the evil people had done many, many bad things. That is senseless.

Justice, Rewards, and Punishment

¹Sometimes people are not immediately punished for the bad things they do. Their punishment is slow to come. And that makes other people want to do bad things too.

²A sinner might do a hundred evil things. And he might have a long life. But I know that it is still better to obey and respect God. ³Evil people don't respect God, so those people won't really get good things. Those evil people won't live long lives. Their lives won't be like the shadows that become longer and longer as the sun goes down.

⁴There is something else that happens on earth that does not seem fair. Bad things should happen to bad people and good things should happen to good people. But sometimes bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. That is not fair. ⁵So I decided it was more important to enjoy life. Why? Because the best thing people can do in this life* is to eat, drink, and enjoy life. At least that will help people enjoy the hard work God gave them to do during their life on earth.

We Can't Understand All God Does

¹I carefully studied the things people do in this life. I saw how busy people are. They work day and night, and they almost never sleep. ²I also saw the many things that God does. And I saw that people can't understand all the work that God does on earth. A person might try and try to understand, but he can't. Even if a wise man says he understands the work God does, it is not true. No person can understand all those things.

Is Death Fair?

9 I thought about all these things very carefully. I saw that God controls what happens to the good and wise people and the things they do. People don't know if they will be loved or hated. And people don't know what will happen in the future.

²But, there is one thing that happens to everyone—we all die! Death comes to good people and bad people. Death comes to people that are pure and to people that are not pure. Death comes to people that give sacrifices* and to people that do not give sacrifices. A good man will die just like a sinner. A person that makes special promises to God will die just like a person that is afraid to make those promises.

³Of all the things that happen in this life, the worst thing is that all people end the same way. But it is also very bad that people always think evil and foolish thoughts. And those thoughts lead to death. ⁴There is hope for any person that is still alive—it does not matter who he is. But this saying is true:

A living dog is better than a dead lion.

⁵Living people know that they will die. But dead people don't know anything. Dead people have no more reward. People will soon forget them. ⁶After a person is dead, his love, hate, and jealousy are all gone. And dead people will never again share in the things that happen on earth.

in this life Literally, "under the sun."

sacrifices A gift to God. Sometimes it was a special kind of animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

Enjoy Life While You Can

¹So go and eat your food now and enjoy it. Drink your wine and be happy. It is all right with God if you do these things. ²Wear nice clothes and make yourself look good. ³Enjoy life with the wife you love. Enjoy every day of your short life. God has given you this short life on earth—and it is all you have. So, enjoy the work you have to do in this life. ¹⁰Everytime you find work to do, do it the best you can. In the grave there is no work. There is no thinking, no knowledge, and there is no wisdom. And we are all going to that place of death.

Good Luck? Bad Luck? What Can We Do?

¹"I also saw other things in this life* that were not fair: The fastest runner does not always win the race; the strongest army does not always win the battle; the wisest man does not always get the food he earns; the smartest man does not always get the wealth; and an educated person does not always get the praise he deserves. When the time comes, bad things happen to everyone!

²A person never knows what will happen to him next. He is like a fish caught in a net—the fish does not know what will happen. He is like a bird caught in a trap—the bird does not know what will happen. In the same way, a person is trapped by the bad things that suddenly happen to him.

The Power of Wisdom

¹"I also saw a person doing a wise thing in this life. And it seemed very important to me. ²There was a small town with a few people in it. A great king fought against that town and put his armies all around it. ³But there was a wise man in that town. That wise man was poor, but he used his wisdom to save his town. After everything was finished, the people forgot about that poor man. ⁴But I still say that wisdom is better than strength. Those people forgot about the poor man's wisdom, and the

people stopped listening to what he said. But I still believe that wisdom is better.

¹⁷ A few words quietly spoken by a wise man are much better than words shouted by a foolish ruler.*

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than swords and spears used in war. But one foolish person* can destroy much good.

10 A few dead flies will make even the best perfume smell bad. In the same way, a little foolishness can ruin much wisdom and honor.

²A wise man's thoughts lead him in the right way. But the thoughts of a foolish person leads him the wrong way. ³A fool shows his foolishness, even when he is just walking down the road. So everyone sees that he is a foolish person.

⁴Don't quit your job just because the boss is angry at you. If you remain calm and helpful, you can correct even great mistakes.*

⁵Here is something else that I have seen in this life. And it is not fair. It is the kind of mistake that rulers make: 'Foolish people are given important positions, while rich people get jobs that are not important.' ⁷I have seen people that should be servants riding on horses, while people that should be rulers were walking beside them like slaves.

Every Job Has Its Dangers

⁵A person that digs a hole might fall into it. A person that knocks down a wall might be bitten by a snake. ⁸A person that moves large stones might be hurt by them. And a person that cuts trees is in danger—the trees might fall on him.

A few ... ruler Or, "Words of a wise man quietly heard are better than the shouts of a ruler among foolish people."
foolish person Literally, "sinner."

If you ... great mistakes Literally, "A healer can put to rest great sins." The word "healer" means a person that is forgiving and that tries to help other people.

in this life Literally, "under the sun."

¹⁰But wisdom will make any job easier. It is very hard to cut with a dull knife. But if a person sharpens the knife, then the job is easier. Wisdom is like that.

¹¹A person might know how to control snakes. But that skill is useless if a snake bites someone when he is not around. Wisdom is like that.

¹² A wise man's words bring praise.
But a foolish person's words bring destruction.

¹³A foolish person begins by saying foolish things. In the end, he is saying crazy things. ¹⁴A foolish person is always talking about what he will do. But no one knows what will happen in the future. No one can tell what will happen later.

¹⁵ A foolish person isn't smart enough to find his way home,
so he must work hard all his life.

The Value of Work

¹⁶It is very bad for a country if the king is like a child. And it is very bad for a country if its rulers use all their time eating. ¹⁷But it is very good for a country if the king comes from a good family.* And it is very good for a country if the rulers control their eating and drinking. Those rulers eat and drink to become strong, not to become drunk.

¹⁸ If a person is too lazy to work,
his house will begin to leak,
and the roof will begin to fall.

¹⁹People enjoy eating, and wine makes life happier. But money solves a lot of problems.

Gossip

²⁰Don't say bad things about the king. Don't even think bad things about him. And don't say

bad things about rich people, even if you are alone in your home. Why? Because a little bird might fly and tell them everything you said.

Boldly Face the Future

11 Do good things every place you go.* After a while, the good things you do will come back to you.

²Invest what you have in several different things.* You don't know what bad things might happen on earth.

³There are some things you can be sure of. If clouds are full of rain, then they will pour water on the earth. If a tree falls—to the south or to the north—then it will stay where it falls.

⁴But there are some things that you can't be sure of. You must take a chance. If a person waits for perfect weather, then he will never plant his seeds. And if a person is afraid that every cloud will bring rain, then he will never harvest his crops.

⁵You don't know where the wind blows. And you don't know how a baby grows in its mother's body. In the same way, you don't know what God will do—and he makes everything happen.

⁶So begin planting early in the morning, and don't stop working until evening. Why? Because you don't know which things will make you rich. Maybe everything you do will be successful.

⁷It is good to be alive! It is nice to see the light from the sun. ⁸You should enjoy every day of your life, no matter how long you live! But remember that you will die. And you will be dead much longer than you were alive! And after you are dead, you can't do anything!

comes from a good family Literally, "is a son of freedmen." This is a person that was never a slave and whose parents were not slaves.

Do good ... you go Literally, "Throw your bread on the water."

Invest ... things Literally, "Give a part to seven, or even eight."

Serve God While You Are Young

¹So young people, enjoy yourselves while you are young. Be happy! Do whatever your heart leads you to do. Do whatever you want. But remember that God will judge you for everything you do.

²Don't let your anger control you. And don't let your body lead you to sin.* People do foolish things in the dawn of life while they are young.

12 Remember your Creator while you are young. If you forget God while you are young, then when you are old you will not want to remember those days.

The Problems of Old Age

¹When you become old, the light from the sun, moon, and stars will seem dark to you. Your life will be full of troubles, like clouds in the sky that rain and never go away.

²At that time, your powerful arms will lose their strength. Your strong legs will become weak and bent. Your teeth will fall out, so you will not be able to chew your food. Your eyes will not see clearly.

³You will become hard of hearing. You will not be able to hear the noise in the market place. Even a grindstone* will seem very quiet. You will hardly be able to hear people singing. But you will not be able to sleep well, so, even the sound of a bird singing will wake you early in the morning.

⁴You will be afraid of high places. You will be afraid of tripping over every small thing in your path.

Your hair will become white like the flowers on an almond tree. You will drag yourself like a grasshopper when you walk. You will be too old to be the father or mother of a baby.

Then you will go to your new home (*the grave*) forever. And the streets will be filled with people going to your funeral.

Don't ... sin Or, "Don't worry about things. Protect yourself from troubles."

grindstone A large stone used to grind grain to make flour or to crush seeds to make oil.

Death

⁵Your life is important. Your life is valuable, like gold or silver. But soon it will be like a broken thread or a broken bowl. Your life will be useless, like a broken bucket by a well. Your life will be useless, like a stone lid that breaks and falls into the well that it was supposed to cover.

⁶Your body came from the earth. And when you die, it will become part of the earth again. But your spirit came from God. And after your body dies, your spirit will go to God again.

⁷Everything is useless! The Teacher says that everything is useless.

CONCLUSION

⁸The Teacher was very wise. He used his wisdom to teach the people. The Teacher very carefully studied and arranged* many wise teachings. ⁹The Teacher tried very hard to find the right words. And he wrote the teachings that are true and dependable.

¹⁰Words from wise men are like sharp sticks people use to make their animals go the right way. Those teachings are like strong pegs that won't break. You can trust those teachings to show you the right way to live. Those wise teachings all come from the same Shepherd (God). ¹¹So son, study those teachings, but be careful about other books. People are always writing books, and too much study will make you very tired.

¹²Now, what should we learn from all the things that are written in this book? ¹³The most important thing a person can do is to respect God and obey his commands. Why? Because God knows about all the things people do—even the secret things. He knows about all the good things and all the bad things. He will judge everything people do.

arranged This Hebrew word means, "to make straight, arrange, correct, edit."

Now ... book Literally, "The sum of the matter, when all is heard, is: ..."

Song of Solomon

Introduction

1 Solomon's Greatest Song

The First Song—The Woman

- ¹ Cover me with kisses from your mouth.
Your love is better than wine.
- ² Your perfume smells wonderful,
but your name*
is better than expensive perfume.
That is why the young women love
you.
- ⁴ Take me with you and we will run away.
My king, take me into your room.

The Women of Jerusalem

We will rejoice and be happy in you.
We know your love is better than wine.
With good reason the young women
love you.

The Woman to the Women of Jerusalem

- ⁵ I am dark and beautiful,
daughters of Jerusalem;
I am dark like the tents of Teman and
Salma.*
- ⁶ Don't look at how dark I am;
at how dark the sun has made me.
My brothers were angry with me—

they made me take care of the fields
where the grapes grow—
so I have not taken care of myself.

Shulamith Speaks to Solomon

- ⁷ Tell me, O you that I love—
where do you feed your sheep,
Where do you make them lie down at
noon?
I should not be like a girl that puts on a
veil*
for your friends' sheep!

The Daughters of Jerusalem Speak to Shulamith

- ⁸ Surely you know,
you are the most beautiful of women.
Go, follow where the sheep walk,
and feed your young goats near the
shepherds' tents.

Solomon Speaks to Shulamith at Dinner

- ⁹ My darling,
you are more beautiful than a mare*
among Pharaoh's chariots.
- ¹⁰ Your cheeks are beautiful with
decorations,,
your neck is beautiful, with beads.
- ¹¹ We will make for you gold
decorations with silver studs.

name In Hebrew this word is like the word "perfume."

Salma An Arabian tribe. The Hebrew text here has
"Solomon."

a girl ... veil This probably means a prostitute, a woman
that sells her body for sex.

mare A female horse.

Shulamith Speaks

- ¹² The smell of my perfume spreads out
to the king on his couch.
¹³ My darling is like a bag of myrrh;*
he will lie all night between my breasts.
¹⁴ To me, my darling is a bunch of cypress*
flowers in the grape fields of En-gedi.

Solomon Speaks

- ¹⁵ My darling, you are beautiful!
Oh you are beautiful!
Your eyes are as gentle as doves.

Shulamith Answers Solomon

- ¹⁶ You are so handsome, my beloved;
yes, and so pleasant!
Our bed is so enjoyable!
¹⁷ The beams holding up our house are
cedar wood;
the beams holding up our ceiling are fir
wood.

Shulamith Speaks

- 2** I am a rose in Sharon;*
I am a lily*
in the valleys.

Solomon Speaks

- ¹ My darling, among the other young
women,
you are like a lily among thorns!

Shulamith Speaks

- ¹ My darling among the other young men,
you are like an apple tree among the
trees in the woods!
I enjoy sitting in my darling's shadow;
his fruit is sweet to my taste.

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the liquid of plants.
cypress A kind of flower that grows on a thorny bush. These
flowers are white and smell sweet like perfume.
rose in Sharon The exact nature of this flower is
unknown. It is often translated, "crocus."
lily A type of flower.

SONG OF SOLOMON 1:12-2:14

- ⁴ My darling brought me to the wine house;
His intent toward me is love.
⁵ Feed me with raisins;
refresh me with apples,
because I am sick for love.
⁶ My darling's left hand is under my head,
and his right hands hugs me!

Shulamith Speaks to the Daughters of Jerusalem

- ⁷ Daughters of Jerusalem, I tell you
love is strong,
love is very powerful!*
So don't wake love,
don't arouse love,
until you are ready for it!*

Shulamith Tells About Solomon's Visit in Lebanon

- ⁸ My darling's voice comes
jumping over the mountains,
skipping over the hills.
⁹ My darling is like a gazelle or a young
deer.
Look, he stands on the other side of our
wall;
he stares out through the windows,
looking through the lattice.*
¹⁰ My darling spoke and said to me,
"Get up, my darling, my beautiful one,
and let's go away!"
¹¹ See, the winter is past,
the rain is finished and gone.
¹² The blossoms appear on the ground;
the time has come for the birds to sing,
the voice of the dove is heard in our
land.
¹³ Young figs grow on the fig trees;
and a sweet smell comes from the
blossoms on the vines.
Get up, my darling, my beautiful one,
and let's go away!
¹⁴ My dove, that hides in the deep places of
the cliff,

love ... powerful Or, "by the gazelles and by the does."
until you are ready for it Or, "Until it desires."
lattice Wooden bars over a window.

and in the secret places, of the steep mountains,
show me your face.
Let me hear your voice,
because your voice is sweet,
and your face is beautiful!"

Shulamith Speaks

- ¹⁵ Catch the foxes for us—
the little foxes that ruin the fields of grapes!
Our fields of grapes are now,
blossoming.
¹⁶ My darling is mine,
and I am his!
My darling feeds among the lilies,
¹⁷ until the day breathes its last breath
and the shadows run away.
Turn, my darling,
be like a gazelle or a young hart*
on the mountains of Bether!*

Shulamith's Dream

- 3** Every night on my bed, I look for the man I love—
I looked for him, but I could not find him!
² I will get up now,
I will go around the city.
In the streets and squares,
I will look for the man I love.
I looked for him, but I could not find him!
³ The watchmen that patrol the city found me;
I asked them, "Have you seen the man I love?"
⁴ I went only a little way, from the watchmen,
Then I found the man I love!
I held him, I would not let him go
until I had brought him to my mother's house,

into the room of the woman that conceived me.

Shulamith Speaks to the Daughters of Jerusalem

- ⁵ I tell you, daughters of Jerusalem,
love is strong,
love is very powerful!*
So don't wake love,
don't arouse love,
until you are ready for it!*

Solomon Comes to Get His Bride

- ⁶ Who are those people coming out of the desert?
The dust rises behind them, like clouds of smoke,
like the smoke from burning myrrh* and frankincense,*
like the powders of the trader.
⁷ Look, Solomon's couch!*
Sixty soldiers are around this traveling couch,
soldiers of Israel!
⁸ These soldiers all carry swords—
they are skilled in war;
every man wears his sword at his side
ready for the terrible dangers, of the night!
⁹ King Solomon has made a traveling couch for himself.
It is, made from cedar, wood from Lebanon;
¹⁰ he made the traveling couch's poles*
from silver,
and its support from gold.
He covered the bottom of the traveling couch with purple cloth—
the daughters of Jerusalem wove the
inside of this seat with love.

love ... powerful Or, "by the gazelles and by the does."
until you are ready for it Or, "until it desires."

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the liquid of plants.

frankincense An expensive perfume from Arabia.

couch Something like a bed carried by slaves. Solomon lay on this couch.

poles The long poles on which the slaves carried the travelling couch.

gazelle ... hart Two kinds of deer.

mountains of Bether Or perhaps, "on the rugged mountains."

- ¹¹ Daughters of Zion,*
go out,
see King Solomon
with the crown his mother put on him
the day he was married
when his heart was happy!

Solomon Speaks to Shulamith on Their Wedding Night

- 4** You are beautiful, my darling!
You are beautiful!
Your eyes under your veil are like gentle doves.
Your hair is long and flowing.
It is like the little goats dancing down
the sides of Mount Gilead.
- ² Your teeth are white like ewes*
just coming from their bath.
They all give birth to twins;
none of them loses her babies.
- ³ Your lips are like a red silk thread.
Your mouth is beautiful.
Your temples* under your veil
are like two slices of pomegranate.*
- ⁴ Your neck is long and thin like David's tower.
The tower was built for the special weapons.*
A thousand small shields hang on its walls.
Each shield belongs to a strong soldier.
- ⁵ Your two breasts are like two young twin fawns,*
like twins of a gazelle,*
eating among the lilies.
- ⁶ I will go to that mountain of myrrh*
and to that hill of frankincense*

- until the day breathes its last breath,
and the shadows have all run away.
- ⁷ My love, you are beautiful all over.
You have no blemishes* anywhere!
- ⁸ Come with me, my bride, from Lebanon,
come with me from Lebanon—
come from the top of Amana,*
from the top of Senir*
and Hermon,
from the lion's caves,
from the mountain of the leopards!
- ⁹ My sister, my bride,
my heart would have been satisfied
to see just one of your eyes,
just one of the jewels from your necklace.
- ¹⁰ Your love is so beautiful, my sister, my bride!
Your love is better than wine;
the smell of your perfume is better
than any kind of spice!
- ¹¹ My bride, your lips drip honey—
honey and milk are under your tongue.
Your clothes smell as sweet as
perfume.*
- ¹² My sister, my bride, is like a garden
locked up—
a spring shut up,
a fountain closed.
- ¹³ Your limbs are like a garden
filled with pomegranates* and other
pleasant fruit;
filled with with cypress,* ¹⁴nard,*
saffron,*
calamus,*
and cinnamon*;

Zion One of the hills on which Jerusalem was built. Often Zion is used to mean Jerusalem itself.
ewes Female goats.
temples The sides of the head.
pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.
special weapons The meaning of this Hebrew word is unknown.
fawns Baby deer.
gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.
myrrh A kind of perfume made from the liquid of plants.
frankincense An expensive perfume from Arabia.

blemishes Ugly marks.

Amana The name of a mountain in Lebanon.

Senir The Amorite word for "Snow Mountain." This means Mount Hermon.

perfume Or, "incense."

cypress A kind of tree.

nard A very expensive oil from the root from the nard plant. It was used as a perfume.

saffron A kind of flower yellow in color. Perfume was made from it.

calamus A kind of reed plant used for perfume.

cinnamon A kind of plant that usually grows in the East Indies.

filled with trees of frankincense,*
myrrh,* and aloes;*
with all the best spices.

- ¹⁵ You are like a garden fountain,
a well of fresh water
flowing down from the mountains of
Lebanon.

Shulamith Speaks

- ¹⁶ Awake, north wind!
Come, you south wind!
Blow on my garden,
let its sweet smells flow out.
Let my darling enter my garden,
and let him eat its pleasant fruit.

Solomon Speaks

- 5** My sister, my bride,
I have entered my garden.
I have gathered my myrrh* with my
spice.
I have eaten my honeycomb and my
honey,
I have drunk my wine and my milk.

The Chorus Speaks

Eat, friends,
Drink, yes, get drunk lovers.

Shulamith Speaks

- ² I sleep, but my heart wakes.
I hear my sweetheart knocking at the
door.
"Open to me, my sister, my love, my
dove, my perfect one!
My head is covered with dew,
And my hair is wet from the dampness
of the night."
³ "I have taken off my coat;
I don't want to put it back, on.
I have washed my feet,

- I don't want to make them dirty again."
⁴ My sweetheart put his hand through the
opening,
and I feel sorry for him.
⁵ I get up to open for my sweetheart:
Myrrh* dripping from my hands,
sweet-smelling myrrh* from my
fingers,
on the handles of the lock.
⁶ I opened for my sweetheart,
But my sweetheart had left—he was
gone!
My life went out when he spoke.
I looked for him, but I could not find him;
I called for him, but he didn't answer
me.
⁷ The watchmen that patrol the city found
me,
they hit me, they hurt me;
the guards on the wall took my veil*
from me.
⁸ I tell you, daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my sweetheart,
tell him I want his love.*

The Daughters of Jerusalem Answer Shulamith

- ⁹ Is your sweetheart better than other,
sweethearts?
You are most beautiful among women.
Is your sweetheart better than other,
sweethearts?
Is that why you tell us this?

Shulamith Answers the Daughters of Jerusalem

- ¹⁰ My sweetheart is tanned and shining.
He is the best of 10,000 men.
¹¹ His hair is beautiful,
his hair is, black like a raven,
¹² his eyes are like, doves by the streams of
waters,
his eyes are like doves, bathing in milk,

frankincense An expensive perfume from Arabia.
myrrh A kind of perfume made from the liquid of plants.
aloes Perfume made from a special kind of tree.

veil A piece of cloth used to cover a person's face.
I want his love Literally, "I am lovesick."

like doves, sitting by a pool of
water.*

- ¹³ His cheeks are like, a bed of spices,
like, flowers whose smell spreads out.
His lips are like, lilies;*
his lips drop liquid myrrh.*
- ¹⁴ His hands are like gold rods, filled with
jewels;*
His body is like smooth ivory with
sapphires*
put in it.
- ¹⁵ His legs are like marble pillars,
on bases*
of fine gold.
He stands tall like a cedar of Lebanon,
like the best cedar trees.
- ¹⁶ Yes, daughters of Jerusalem,
my sweetheart is the most desirable.
His mouth is the sweetest of all.
That is my sweetheart,
that is my friend.

The Daughters of Jerusalem Speak to Shulamith

- 6** Where has your sweetheart gone?
You are most beautiful among
women.
Which way did your sweetheart turn?
Tell us, so that we can look for him
with you.

Shulamith Answers the Daughters of Jerusalem

- ² My sweetheart has gone down into his
garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed his sheep, in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
- ³ I belong to my sweetheart,
and my sweetheart belongs to me.

He feeds among the lilies.

Solomon Speaks to Shulamith

- ⁴ My love, you are beautiful like Tirzah.*
You are pretty like Jerusalem,
you are as wonderful as an army with
flags.
- ⁵ Turn your eyes from me;
your eyes excite me.
Your hair is long and flowing like, a
flock of goats
that come dancing down the slopes of,
Mount Gilead.
- ⁶ Your teeth are white like, ewes* just
coming from their bath.
They all give birth to twins.
None of them loses her babies.
- ⁷ Your temples* under your veil*
are like slices of pomegranate.*
- ⁸ There are 60 queens and 40 women
servants,*
and young women you can't count.
- ⁹ But my dove, my perfect one, is the only
one.
She is the favorite of her mother that
gave birth to her.
The young women saw her and praised
her;
yes, the queens and the women
servants,*
and they praised her.

The Young Women Praise Shulamith

- ³⁰ Who is that young woman?
She shines out like the dawn,
she is as pretty as the moon,
she is as clear as the sun,
And she is as wonderful as an army
with flags.

by a ... water The meaning of this term is uncertain.
lilies Lilies are a kind of flower.
myrrh A kind of perfume made from the liquid of plants.
jewels The exact kind of jewel here is uncertain.
sapphires Blue stones.
bases Meaning the feet.

Tirzah One of the capitals of the northern state of Israel.

ewes Female goats.

temples The sides of the head.

veil A piece of cloth used to cover a person's face.

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it.

Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

women servants Or, "concubines," slave women who
were like wives to a man.

Shulamith Speaks

- ¹¹ I went down into the orchard of nut trees
to see the blossoms of the valley,
to see if the grapes had grown,
to see if, the pomegranates*
budded.
- ¹² Before I realized it,*
I had put myself into the chariots* of
my kingly people.*

The Daughters of Jerusalem Call to Shulamith

- ¹³ Come back, come back, Shulamith!*
Come back, come back,
so we may look at you.

Shulamith Answers the Daughters of Jerusalem

Why do you stare at Shulamith,
As at the dance of the two camps?*

Solomon Praises Shulamith's Beauty

- 7** Prince's daughter!
Your feet are truly beautiful in
those sandals,*
your round thighs are like, jewels,
made by an artist.
- ² Your navel is like, a round cup;*
let it be filled with wine.
Your stomach is like a pile of wheat
with lilies around it like a fence.
- ³ Your breasts are like twin fawns* of a
young gazelle.*
- ⁴ Your neck is like an ivory tower.

pomegranate A red fruit containing many tiny seeds
covered with a soft, juicy part of the fruit.

Before ... it The meaning of this verse is uncertain.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

my kingly people Or, "Ammiinadib."

Shulamith Or, "Shulamite." The word may be the female
form of the name "Solomon."

two camps Or, "Mahanaim."

sandals Open shoes tied to the feet with leather strings.

a round cup Or, "full moon."

fawns Baby deer.

gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.

Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon
near the gate of Bath-Rabbim.

Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
which looks toward Damascus.

- ⁵ Your head is like Carmel,
and the hair of your head is like silk.

Your long, beautiful, hair pleases even
a king.

- ⁶ You are really a pleasure!
O love, delightful young woman!

- ⁷ You are tall like a palm tree.
Your breasts are like, clusters of the
palm tree's fruit.

- ⁸ I said, "I will climb up the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches."

Let your breasts be like clusters of the
vine.

Let the smell of your breath*
be like apples,

and your mouth* be like the best
wine.

This wine goes down sweetly for my
love.

It flows gently past, the lips of
people that fall asleep.

Shulamith Invites Solomon to Go Out For a Springtime Walk

- ¹⁰ I belong to my darling,
and he desires me!
- ¹¹ Come, my darling,
let's go out into the field,
let's stay in the villages.
- ¹² Let's get up early and go to the fields of
grapes.
Let's see if the buds are coming up on
the vines,
let's see if, the blossoms have already
opened,
and if the pomegranate* flowers are
blossoming out.
- There I will give you my love.
- ¹³ The mandrakes*

breath Literally, "nose."

mouth Literally, "the roof of your mouth."

mandrakes People thought these plants had the power to
make people fall in love.

give their sweet smell,
and at our gates there are, all kinds of
pleasant fruits,
new and old—
I have saved them for you, my
darling.

Shulamith Says Solomon Is Like Her Brother

8 I wish, you were like my baby
brother
nursing at my mother's breasts!
If I found you outside,
I would kiss you;
no person would blame me!
² I would lead you,
and bring you to my mother's house,
to the room of my mother that taught
me.
I would give you spiced wine from my
pomegranate* juice to drink.

Solomon Makes Love to Shulamith

- ³ His left hand is under my head,
and his right hand hugs me.
- ⁴ I tell you, daughters of Jerusalem,
don't bother love,
don't wake love,
until you are ready for it!*

The Daughters of Jerusalem Speak

- ⁵ Who is this young woman, coming out
of the desert,
leaning on her sweetheart?

Solomon Speaks to Shulamith

- I woke you under the apple tree;
it was there where your mother
conceived you;
it was there you were born.
- ⁶ Put me like a seal on your heart,
like a seal on your arm,

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:1-12

because love is as strong as death.
Passion is as strong as the grave.*
Its flames are like very strong flames!*

- ⁷ Many waters cannot put out love;
floods cannot drown love.

If a man gives everything from his house
for love,
no one would blame him.

Shulamith's Brothers Speak

- ⁸ We have a little sister,
and her breasts are not yet grown.
What should we do for our sister
on the day she is engaged?*
- ⁹ If she were a wall,
we would put her on silver supports.
If she were a door,
we would cover her with expensive
cedar boards.

Shulamith Answers Her Brothers

- ¹⁰ I am a wall,
and my breasts are like towers.
So I was to him,
as one that finds peace.
- ¹¹ Solomon had a field of grapes at
Baal-Hamon;
he gave the field of grapes to keepers;
every person had to bring 1,000 pieces of
silver
for the fruit.
- ¹² But my own field of grapes is before me,
Solomon, the 1,000 shekels*
are for you to keep.
And 200 shekels are for the people
that care for the fruit from the
fields.

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it.
Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.
until you are ready for it Or, "until it desires."

the grave Or, "Sheol," the place where dead people go.
like very strong flames Or, "the flame of the Lord."
We are not sure what this line means.
engaged Literally, "spoken for."
shekels A kind of money used by the Israelites.

Solomon

- ¹³ You that live in the gardens,
friends are listening for your voice;
let me also hear it.

Shulamith

- ¹⁴ Hurry, my darling,
be like a gazelle* or a young hart*
on the mountains of spice!

gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.

hart An animal like a deer.

Isaiah

1 This is the vision* of Isaiah son of Amoz. God showed Isaiah things that would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah saw these things during the time Uzziah,* Jotham,* Ahaz,* and Hezekiah* were kings of Judah.

God's Case Against His People

²Heaven and Earth, listen to the Lord! The Lord says,

"I raised my children.

I helped my children grow.

But my children turned against me.

³ A cow knows its master.

And a donkey knows the place where its owner feeds it.

But the people of Israel don't know me.

My people don't understand."

⁴The nation of Israel is full of guilt. This guilt is like a heavy weight the people have to carry. Those people are like bad children from evil families. They have left the Lord. Those people hate the Holy One (*God*) of Israel. They are like strangers to God.

⁵God says, "Why should I continue to punish you people? I punished you, but you did not change. You continue to rebel against me. Now every head and every heart is sick. ⁶From the bottom of your feet to the top of your

head, every part of your body has wounds, hurts, and open sores. You have not cared for your sores. Your wounds are not cleaned and covered.

⁷"Your land is ruined. Your cities have been burned with fire. Your enemies have taken your land. Your land is ruined like a country destroyed by armies. ⁸The Daughter of Zion (*Jerusalem*) is now like an empty tent left in a field of grapes. It is like an old house left in a field of cucumbers. It is like a city that has been defeated by enemies." ⁹(This is true, but the Lord All-Powerful did allow a few people to continue living. We were not completely destroyed like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.)*

God Wants True Service

¹⁰You leaders of Sodom, listen to the Lord's message! You people of Gomorrah, listen to God's teachings! ¹¹God says, "Why do you continue giving me all these sacrifices? I have had enough of your sacrifices of goats and fat from bulls, sheep, and goats.

¹²"When you people come to meet with me, you trample (*walk on*) everything in my yard. Who told you to do this?

¹³"Don't continue bringing worthless sacrifices to me. I hate the incense* you give

vision Like a dream. God gave messages to his special people by letting them see and hear things in visions.

Uzziah A king of Judah. He ruled about 767-740 B.C.

Jotham A king of Judah. He ruled about 740-735 B.C.

Ahaz A king of Judah. He ruled about 735-727 B.C.

Hezekiah A king of Judah. He ruled about 727-687 B.C.

Sodom, Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

sacrifices Gifts to God. Sometimes these were special kinds of animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

me. I can't bear your feasts for the New Moon,* the Sabbath,* and your holidays. I hate the evil you do during your holy meetings. "With my whole self I hate your monthly meetings and councils. These meetings have become like heavy weights to me. And I am tired of carrying those weights.

¹⁵"You people will raise your arms to pray to me—but I will refuse to look at you. You people will say more and more prayers—but I will refuse to listen to you. Why? Because your hands are covered with blood.

¹⁶"Wash yourselves. Make yourselves clean. Stop doing the bad things you do. I don't want to see those bad things. Stop doing wrong!

¹⁷Learn to do good things. Be fair with other people. Punish the people that hurt others. Help the children that have no parents. Help the women whose husbands are dead."

¹⁸The Lord says, "Come, we will discuss these things. Your sins are red like scarlet,* but they can be washed away and you will be, white like snow. Your sins are bright red, but you can become white like wool.

¹⁹"If you listen to the things I say, then you will have the good things from this land. ²⁰But if you refuse to listen, you are against me. And your enemies will destroy you."

The Lord himself said those things.

Jerusalem Is Not Loyal to God

¹God says, "Look at Jerusalem. She was a city that trusted and followed me. What caused her to become like a prostitute?* She does not follow me now. Jerusalem should be filled with fairness. People living in Jerusalem should live the way God wants. But now, murderers live there.

²"Goodness is like silver. But your silver has become worthless. Your wine (*goodness*)

has been mixed with water—it is now weak. ³Your rulers are rebels and friends of thieves. All of your rulers demand bribes—they accept money for doing wrong things. All of your rulers take pay for cheating people. Your rulers don't try to help the children that have no parents. And your rulers don't listen to the needs of the women whose husbands are dead."

⁴Because of all these things, the Master, the Lord All-Powerful, the Mighty One of Israel, says, "I will punish you, my enemies. You will not cause me any more trouble. ⁵People use lye* to clean silver. In the same way, I will clean all your wrongs away. I will take all the worthless things out from you. ⁶I will bring back the kind of judges you had in the beginning. Your counselors will be like the counselors you had long ago. Then you will be called 'The Good and Faithful City.'"

⁷God is good and does the things that are right. So he will rescue Zion* and the people that come back to him. ⁸But all criminals and sinners will be destroyed. (They are the people that don't follow the Lord.)

⁹In the future, people will be ashamed of the oak trees* and special gardens* you choose to worship. ¹⁰This will happen because you people will be like oak trees with leaves that are dying. You people will be like a garden dying without water. ¹¹Powerful people will be like small dry pieces of wood. And the things those people do will be like sparks that start a fire,—the powerful people and the things they do will begin to burn. And no person will be able to stop that fire.

2 Isaiah son of Amoz saw this message about Judah and Jerusalem.

¹The Lord's temple* is on a mountain. In the last days, that mountain will be made the

lye A chemical used like soap.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

oak trees People worshiped these trees to show honor to false gods.

special gardens People worshiped false gods in these gardens.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

New Moon The first day of the Jewish month. This was a special day of worship.

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

scarlet A bright red dye, or a piece of expensive, bright red cloth.

prostitute A woman that sells her body for sex. Sometimes this also means a person that stops following God.

highest of all mountains. That mountain will be raised higher than the hills. People from all nations will go there. ³Many people will go there. They will say, "We should go up to the Lord's mountain. We should go to the temple of the God of Jacob. Then God will teach us his way of living. And we will follow him."

The teachings from God—the Lord's message—will begin in Jerusalem on the mountain of Zion* and go out to all the world. "Then God will be a judge for the people of all nations. God will end the arguments for many people. Those people will stop using their weapons for fighting. They will make plows from their swords. And they will use their spears as tools for cutting plants. People will stop fighting against other people. People will never again train for war.

⁴Family of Jacob, you should follow the Lord. ⁵I say this to you, because you have left your people. Your people have become filled with the wrong ideas of the people in the east. Your people try to tell the future like the Philistines.* Your people have completely accepted those strange ideas. ⁷Your land has been filled with silver and gold from other places. There are many, many treasures there. Your land has been filled with horses. There are many, many chariots* there. ⁸Your land is full of statues that people worship. The people made those idols* and the people worship them. ⁹People have become worse and worse. People have become very low. God, surely you will not forgive them, will you?*

God's Enemies Will Be Afraid

"Go hide in the dirt and behind the rocks! You should be afraid of the Lord and you should hide from his great power!

"Proud people will stop being proud. Those proud people will bow down to the ground with

shame. At that time, only the Lord will still stand high.

"The Lord has a special day planned. On that day, the Lord will punish the proud and boastful people. Then those proud people will be made not important. ¹³Those proud people are like, tall cedar trees from Lebanon.* They are like, great oak trees from Bashan.* But God will punish those people. ¹⁴Those proud people are like, tall mountains and high hills. ¹⁵Those proud people are like, tall towers and high, very strong walls. But God will punish those people. ¹⁶Those proud people are like great ships from Tarshish.* (These ships are full of important things.) But God will punish those proud people.

"At that time, people will stop being proud. The people that are now proud will bow low to the ground. And at that time, only the Lord will stand high. ¹⁸All the idols (*false gods*) will be gone. ¹⁹People will hide behind rocks and in cracks in the ground. People will be afraid of the Lord and his great power. This will happen when the Lord stands to make the earth shake.

²⁰At that time, people will throw away their gold and silver idols. (The people made those statues so the people could worship them.) The people will throw those statues into holes in the ground where bats and moles* live. ²¹Then the people will hide in cracks in the rocks. They will do this because they will be afraid of the Lord and his great power. This will happen when the Lord stands to make the earth shake.

Israel Should Trust God

²²You should stop trusting other people to save you. They are only people—and people die. So, you should not think they are strong like God.

3 Understand these things I am telling you. The Master, the Lord All-Powerful, will

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Philistines People living on the coast of Palestine. They were one of Israel's enemies.

chariots Small wagons used for war.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshipped.

God ... you Literally, "Surely you will not raise them up."

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

Bashan An area northeast of Israel.

ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship.

bats and moles Small animals that live in holes in the ground.

take away all the things Judah and Jerusalem depend on. God will take away all the food and all the water. ²God will take away all the heroes and great soldiers. God will take away all the judges,* the prophets,* the people that do magic, and the elders.* ³God will take away the military leaders and the government leaders. God will take away the skilled counselors and the wise men that do magic and try to tell the future.

⁴God says, "I will cause young boys to be your leaders. ⁵Every person will be against every other person. Young people will not respect older people. Common people will not respect the important people."

⁶At that time, a person will grab one of his brothers from his own family. That person will tell the brother, "You have a coat,* so you will be our leader. You will be the leader over all these ruins."

⁷But that brother will stand and say, "I can't help you. I don't have enough food or clothes in my house. You will not make me your leader."

⁸This will happen because Jerusalem has stumbled and has done wrong. Judah has fallen and has stopped following God. The things they say and do are against the Lord. The Lord's glorious eyes clearly see all these things.

⁹The people's faces show that they are guilty of doing wrong. And they are proud of their sin. They are like the people of the city Sodom*—they don't care who sees their sin. It will be very bad for them. They have brought much trouble to themselves.

¹⁰Tell the good people that good things will happen to them. They will receive a reward for

the good things they do. ¹¹But it will be very bad for the evil people. Much trouble will come to them. They will be punished for all the wrong things they have done. ¹²Children will defeat my people. Women will rule over my people. My people, your guides lead you in the wrong way. They turn you away from the right way.

God's Decision About His People

¹³The Lord will stand to judge the people. ¹⁴The Lord will give his judgment against the elders* and leaders for the things they have done.

The Lord says, "You people have burned the field of grapes (*Judah*). You took things from poor people, and those things are still in your houses. ¹⁵What gives you the right to hurt my people? What gives you the right to push the faces of the poor people into the dirt?" My Master, the Lord All-Powerful said these things.

¹⁶The Lord says, "The women in Zion* have become very proud. They walk around with their heads in the air, acting like they are better than other people. Those women flirt with their eyes. And they dance around making noise with their ankle bracelets."

¹⁷My Master will make sores on the heads of those women in Zion.* The Lord will make the women lose all their hair. ¹⁸At that time, the Lord will take away all the things they are proud of: the beautiful ankle bracelets, the necklaces that look like the sun and the moon, ¹⁹the earrings, bracelets, and veils (*face coverings*), ²⁰the scarves, the ankle chains, the sashes worn around their waists, the bottles of perfume, and the things they wear on their necklaces, ²¹the signet rings,* and the nose-rings, ²²the fine robes, capes, shawls, and purses, ²³the mirrors, linen dresses, turbans, and long shawls.

judges In Israel, judges were people that judged, led, and protected the people.

prophets A true prophet was a person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach the people.

elders Older men that were city leaders; they helped make decisions for the people.

coat Literally, "robe." This showed a person was a leader of the people.

Sodom A city that God destroyed because its people were so evil.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

signet rings Rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay, they left a mark. This mark was like a signature.

¹Those women now have, sweet smelling perfume, but at that time, their perfume will become moldy and rotten. Now they wear belts. But at that time, they will have only ropes to wear. Now they have their hair fixed fancy ways. But at that time, their heads will be shaved—they will have no hair.* Now they have party dresses. But at that time, they will have only clothes to show sadness. They have beauty marks on their faces now. But at that time, they will have another mark. It will be a mark burned into their skin.

²At that time, your men will be killed with swords. Your heroes will die in war. ³There will be crying and sadness in the meeting places near the city gates. Jerusalem will sit there empty like a woman that has lost everything to thieves and robbers. She will sit on the ground and cry.

4 At that time, seven women will grab one man. The women will say, "We will make our own bread to eat. And we will make our own clothes to wear. We will do all these things for ourselves if you will only marry us. Let us have your name. Please, take away our shame."

²At that time, the Lord's plant (*Judah*) will be very beautiful and great. The people still living in Israel will be very proud of the things the land grows. ³At that time, all the people that are still living in Zion* and Jerusalem will be called holy (*special*) people. This will happen to all the people that have their names on a special list; the list of people that will be allowed to continue living.

⁴The Lord will wash away the blood* from the women of Zion.* The Lord will wash all the blood out of Jerusalem. God will use the spirit of justice and judge fairly. And he will use the spirit of burning, and make everything pure (good).

they ... hair This shows that those people will become slaves.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

wash away the blood This is like a special ceremony for washing the blood after a menstrual period. After this a man and wife could be together and show their love for each other.

⁵At that time, God will prove that he is with his people. During the day, God will make a cloud of smoke. And during the night, God will make a bright flaming fire.* These proofs will be in the sky over every building and over every meeting of the people on the mountain of Zion.* There will be a covering over every person* for protection. This covering will be a place of safety. The covering will protect the people from the heat of the sun. The covering will be a safe place to hide from all kinds of floods and rain.

Israel, God's Special Garden

5 Now, I will sing a song for my friend (*God*). This song is about the love my friend has for his field of grapes (*Israel*).

My friend had a vineyard*
in a very rich field.

² My friend dug and cleared the field.
He planted the best grapevines there.
And he built a tower in the middle of the field.

My friend hoped for good grapes to grow there.
But there were only bad grapes.

³So God said:

"You people living in Jerusalem,*
and you, man of Judah,*
think about me and my vineyard.*

⁴ What more could I do to help my field of grapes?
I did everything I could.
I hoped for good grapes to grow.
But there were only bad grapes.
Why did that happen?

⁵Now, I will tell you what I will do to my field of grapes:

cloud ... fire These were signs that God used to show he was with his people.

person Literally, "glory," but this also means "soul," "person" (see Psalm 16:9).

vineyard A garden for growing grapes.

You ... Jerusalem Or, "You leaders in Jerusalem."

man of Judah This probably means the king of Judah.

I will pull up the thorn bushes, protecting the field,
and I will burn them.

I will break down the stone wall,
and the stones will be walked on.

- ⁶ I will make my vineyard* an empty field.
No person will care for the plants.
No person will work in the field.
Weeds and thorns will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on the field."

⁷The field of grapes that belongs to the Lord All-Powerful is the nation of Israel. The grapevine—the plant the Lord loves—is the man of Judah.*

The Lord hoped for justice,
but there was only killing.
The Lord hoped for fairness,
but there were only cries
from people being treated badly.

⁸You people live very close together. You build houses until there is no place for anything else. But the Lord will punish you, and you will be made to live alone. You will be the only people in the whole land!* ⁹The Lord All-Powerful said this to me, and I heard him, "There are many houses now. But I promise that all the houses will be destroyed. There are nice, big houses now. But those houses will be empty." ¹⁰At that time, a ten-acre field of grapes will make only a little wine.* And many sacks of seed will grow only a little grain.*

¹¹You people rise early in the morning and go looking for beer to drink. You stay awake late at night, becoming drunk with wine. ¹²You party with your wine, harps,* drums, flutes, and other musical instruments. And you don't see

the things the Lord has done. The Lord's hands have made many, many things—but you don't notice those things. So, it will be very bad for you people.

¹³The Lord says, "My people will be captured and taken away. Why? Because they don't really know me. Some of the people living in Israel are important now. They are happy with their easy lives. But all those great people will become very thirsty and very hungry. ¹⁴Then they will die and, Sheol,* the place of death, will get more and more people. That place of death will open her mouth with no limit. And all those people will go down into Sheol."

¹⁵Those people will be humbled. Those great people will bow their heads and look at the ground. ¹⁶The Lord All-Powerful will judge fairly, and people will know he is great. The Holy God will do the things that are right, and the people will respect him. ¹⁷God will make the people of Israel leave their country; the land will be empty. Sheep will go any place they want. Lambs will walk on the land that rich people once owned.

¹⁸Look at those people! They pull their guilt and sins behind them like people pull wagons with ropes.* ¹⁹Those people say, "We wish God would hurry and do the things he plans to do. Then we would know what will happen. We wish the Lord's plan would happen soon. Then we would know what his plan is."

²⁰Those people say that good things are bad, and bad things are good. Those people think light is darkness, and darkness is light. Those people think sour is sweet, and sweet is sour. ²¹Those people think they are very smart. They think they are very intelligent. ²²Those people are famous for drinking wine. They are champions at mixing drinks. ²³And if you pay those people money, they will forgive a criminal. But they don't allow good people to

vineyard A garden for growing grapes.

man of Judah This probably means the king of Judah.

You people ... in the whole land Or, "You join houses to houses and fields to fields until there is no room (for other people), until you are left living alone in the land."

only a little wine Literally, "one bath." A bath is a measure that equals about 6 gallons.

only a little grain Literally, "A homer of seed will grow only an ephah of grain." A homer equals about 6 bushels. An ephah equals about one-half bushel.

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die. Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where our spirits go.

ropes Literally, "useless ropes." The Hebrew words for useless ropes are like the words meaning "useless things—idols."

be judged fairly. ¹Bad things will happen to those people. Their descendants^{*} will be completely destroyed—like straw and leaves are burned by fire. Their descendants will be destroyed like a root that dies and becomes dust. Their descendants will be destroyed like a fire destroys a flower—the ashes blow away in the wind.

Those people have refused to obey the teachings^{*} of the Lord All-Powerful. Those people hated the message from the Holy One (God) of Israel. ²So the Lord has become very angry with his people. And the Lord will raise his hand and punish them. Even the mountains will be frightened. Dead bodies will lie in the streets like garbage. But God will still be angry. His hand will still be raised to punish the people.

God Will Bring Armies to Punish Israel

³Look! God is giving a sign to the nations in a faraway land. God is raising a flag, and he is whistling to call those people. The enemy is coming from a faraway land. The enemy will soon enter the country. They are moving very quickly. ⁴The enemy never becomes tired or falls down. They never become sleepy and fall asleep. Their weapon belts are always ready. Their shoestrings never break. ⁵The enemy's arrows are sharp. All of their bows are ready to shoot. The horses' feet are hard like rock. Clouds of dust rise from behind their chariots.^{*}

⁶The enemy shouts, and their shout is like a lion's roar. It is loud like a young lion. The enemy growls and grabs the people it is fighting against. The people struggle and try to escape. But there is no person to save them. ⁷So, the "lion" roars loud like the waves of the sea. And the captured people look at the ground, and then there is only darkness. All light becomes dark in this thick cloud.

descendants A person's children, and all the people born from those children.

teachings This can also mean "laws." Sometimes this means the laws God gave Moses to teach to the people of Israel.

chariots Small wagons used for war.

God Calls Isaiah to Be a Prophet

6 In the year that King Uzziah^{*} died,^{*} I saw my Master. He was sitting on a very high and wonderful throne.^{*} His long robe filled the temple.^{*} ²Seraph angels^{*} stood around the Lord. Each Seraph angel had six wings. The angels used two of their wings to cover their faces. The angels used two of their wings to cover their feet. And the angels used two of their wings for flying. ³Each angel was calling to the other angels. The angels said, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord All-Powerful is very holy. The Lord's glory fills the whole earth." The angels' voices were very loud. Their voices caused the frame around the door to shake. Then the temple^{*} began filling with smoke.^{*}

⁴I became very scared. I said, "Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure (good) enough to speak to God. And I live among people that are not pure enough to speak to God." Yet I have seen the King, the Lord All-Powerful.

⁵There was a fire on the altar.^{*} One of the Seraph angels^{*} used a pair of tongs^{*} to take a hot coal from the fire. The angel flew to me with the hot coal in his hand. ⁶The Seraph angel touched my mouth with the hot coal. Then the angel said, "Look! Because this hot coal touched your lips the wrong things you have done are gone from you. Your sins are now erased."

⁷Then I heard my Lord's voice. The Lord said, "Who can I send? Who will go for us?"

So I said, "Here I am. Send me!"

Uzziah A king of Judah. He ruled from about 767-740 B.C.
year ... died This was probably 740 B.C.

throne A special chair a king or queen sits on.

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Seraph angels Special angels God used as messengers. The name might mean they were bright like fire.

smoke This showed that God was in the temple. See Exodus 40:34-35.

people ... God Literally, "people that do not have pure lips."

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices as gifts to God.

tongs A "U-shaped" tool for holding hot things.

⁹Then the Lord said, "Go and tell this to the people: 'Listen closely, but don't understand! Look closely, but don't learn!'" ¹⁰Confuse the people. Make the people not able to understand the things they hear and see. If you don't do this, then people might really understand the things they hear with their ears. The people might really understand in their minds. If they did this, then the people might come back to me and be healed (*forgiven*)!"

¹¹Then I asked, "Master, how long should I do this?"

The Lord answered, "Do this until the cities are destroyed, and the people are gone. Do this until there are no people left living in the houses. Do this until the land is destroyed and left empty."

¹²The Lord will make the people go far away. There will be large areas of empty land in the country. ¹³But a tenth of the people will be allowed to stay in the land. These people will not be destroyed because they will return to the Lord. These people are like an oak tree. When the tree is chopped down, a stump is left. This stump (the people remaining) is a very special seed.

Trouble with Syria

7 Ahaz* was the son of Jotham.* Jotham was the son of Uzziah.* Rezin* was the king of Syria.* Pekah son of Remaliah* was the king of Israel. During the time Ahaz was king of Judah, Rezin and Pekah went up to Jerusalem to fight against it. But they were not able to defeat the city.

²A message was told to the family of David.* The message said, "The army of Syria and the army of Ephraim (*Israel*) have joined together. The two armies are camped together."

When King Ahaz heard this message, he and the people became very scared. They were shaking with fear like trees of the forest blowing in the wind.

³Then the Lord told Isaiah, "You and your son Shear Jashub* should go out and talk to Ahaz. Go to the place where the water flows into the upper pool. This is on the street going to Laundryman's Field.

⁴"Tell Ahaz, 'Be careful, but be calm. Don't be afraid. Don't let those two men, Rezin and Remaliah's son,* scare you! Those men are like two burnt sticks. In the past they were burning hot. But now they are only smoke. Rezin, Syria, and Remaliah's son are angry. ⁵They have made plans against you. They said: 'We should go and fight against Judah. We will divide Judah for ourselves. We will make Tabeel's son the new king of Judah.'"

⁶The Lord my Master says, "Their plan will not succeed. It will not happen. ⁷It will not happen while Rezin* is the ruler of Damascus.* Ephraim (*Israel*) is now a nation, but 65 years in the future Ephraim (*Israel*) will not be a nation. ⁸Their plan will not succeed while Samaria is the capital of Ephraim (*Israel*) and while the ruler of Samaria is Remaliah's son.* If you don't believe this message then people should not believe you."

Immanuel—God Is with Us

⁹Then the Lord continued to speak to Ahaz.* ¹⁰The Lord said, "Ask for a sign to prove to yourself that these things are true. You can ask for any sign you want. The sign can come from a place as deep as Sheol,* or the sign can come from a place as high as the skies.*

¹¹But Ahaz said, "I will not ask for a sign as proof. I will not test the Lord."

Ahaz A king of Judah. He ruled about 735-727 B.C.

Jotham A king of Judah. He ruled about 740-735 B.C.

Uzziah A king of Judah. He ruled about 767-740 B.C.

Rezin A king of Aram (Syria). He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

Syria Or, "Aram," a country north of Israel.

Pekah ... Remaliah A king of north Israel. He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

family of David The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David's family would be kings in Judah.

Shear Jashub This name means "a few people will come back."

Remaliah's son This is Pekah, the king of north Israel. He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

Damascus A city in the country Syria.

The ... Sheol Or, "make your question deep." The Hebrew word for "question" is like the word for Sheol.

the ... skies Literally, "make your question very high."

¹²Then Isaiah said, "Family of David,* listen very carefully! You test the people's patience—and this is not important to you. So, now you test my God's patience. ¹³But God, my Master, will show you a sign:

Look, a virgin* will become pregnant.

This young woman will have a baby, and she will name the boy Immanuel.*

¹⁴Immanuel will eat butter and honey.*
He will live like this, to learn the way to choose to do good and to refuse to do evil.

¹⁵But before the child learns what is good and what is evil, the land of Ephraim (Israel) and Syria will be empty.

"You are afraid of those two kings now.

¹⁶But you should be afraid of the Lord. Why? Because, the Lord will bring some troubled times to you. Those troubles will come to your people and to the people of your father's family. What will God do? God will bring the king of Assyria* to fight against you.

¹⁷At that time, the Lord will call for the 'Fly.' (The 'Fly' is now near the streams of Egypt.) And the Lord will call for the 'Bee.' (The 'Bee' is now in the country of Assyria.)* These enemies will come to your country. These enemies will camp in the rocky canyons near the desert streams and near the bushes and watering holes. ¹⁸The Lord will use Assyria to punish Judah. Assyria will be hired and used like a razor. It will be like the Lord is shaving the hair from Judah's head and legs. It will be like the Lord is shaving off Judah's beard.*

Family of David The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David's family would be kings in Judah.

virgin The Hebrew word means "a young woman." Often this meant a girl that was not married and had not yet had sexual relations with anyone.

Immanuel This name means "God is with us."

butter and honey This probably means the food that poor people can also find and eat.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

shaving ... beard This showed that the people of Judah would be made slaves.

¹⁹At that time, a person will be able to keep only one young cow and two sheep alive.

²⁰There will be only enough milk for that person to eat butter. Every person in the country will eat butter and honey.* ²¹In this land, there are now fields that have 1,000 grapevines. Each grapevine is worth 1,000 pieces of silver. But these fields will become full of weeds and thorns. ²²The land will become wild and useful only as a hunting ground. ²³People once worked and grew food on these hills. But at that time, people will not go there. The land will be filled with weeds and thorns. Only sheep and cattle will go to those places."

Assyria Will Come Soon

8 The Lord told me, "Take a large scroll* to write on. Use a pen* to write these words: 'To Maher Shalal Hash Baz.' (This means 'There will soon be looting and stealing.')

¹I gathered some people that could be trusted to be witnesses. (These people were Uriah the priest, Zechariah, and Jereberekiah.) These men watched me writing these things. ²Then I went to the woman that is a prophet.* After I was with her, she became pregnant and had a son. Then the Lord told me, "Name the boy Maher Shalal Hash Baz. 'Why?' Because before the boy learns to say, 'Mama' and 'Daddy,' God will take all the wealth and riches from Damascus* and Samaria,* and God will give those things to the king of Assyria.*"

³Again the Lord spoke to me. "My Master said, "These people refuse to accept the slow-moving waters of the pool of Shiloah.* These people are happy with Rezin* and

scroll This Hebrew word might also mean "a clay or stone tablet."

pen Literally, "stylus of a man." This might be a special pen for writing on clay.

prophet A true prophet was a person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

Damascus A city in the country Syria.

Samaria The capital city of north Israel.

Shiloah A pool of water in Jerusalem. In the New Testament this pool is called, "Siloam."

Rezin A king of Aram (Syria). He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

Remaliah's son (*Pekah*). ⁷But I, the Lord, will bring the king of Assyria and all his power against you. They will come like a powerful flood of water from the Euphrates River. It will be like water rising up and over the river banks. ⁸That water will spill out of that river and flow into Judah. The water will rise to Judah's throat—it will almost drown Judah.

Immanuel, this flood will spread until it covers your whole country.*"

The Lord Protects His Servants

- ⁹ All you nations, prepare for war!
You will be defeated.
Listen, all you faraway countries!
Prepare for battle!
You will be defeated.
- ¹⁰ Make your plans for the fight!
Your plans will be defeated.
Give orders to your armies!
Your orders will be useless.
Why? Because God is with us!*

Warnings to Isaiah

¹¹The Lord spoke to me with his great power. The Lord warned me not to be like these other people.* The Lord said, ¹²"Every person is saying that other people are making plans against him. You should not believe those things. Don't be afraid of the things those people fear. Don't be afraid of those things!"

¹³The Lord All-Powerful is the One you should be afraid of. He is the One you should respect. He is the One you should fear. ¹⁴If you will respect the Lord and consider him holy, then he will be a safe place for you. But you don't respect him. So God is like a rock that you people fall over. He is a rock that makes the two families of Israel stumble. The Lord is a trap to catch all the people of Jerusalem.

Immanuel ... country Literally, "Then the edge of his garment will fill your whole land. God is with us." The name "Immanuel" means "God is with us."

God is with us! In Hebrew, these words are like the name Immanuel.

The Lord spoke ... people Or, "The Lord spoke to me. With his great power he prevented me from living like these other people."

¹⁵(Many people will fall over this rock. Those people will fall and be broken. They will be trapped and caught.)

¹⁶Isaiah said, "Make an agreement and seal^a it. Save my teachings for the future. Do this: while my followers are watching. ¹⁷This is the agreement:

I will wait for the Lord to help us.

The Lord is ashamed of the family of Jacob (*Israel*).

He refuses to look at them.

But I will wait for the Lord.

He will save us.

¹⁸"My children and I are signs and proofs for the people of Israel. We have been sent by the Lord All-Powerful—the Lord who lives on the Mount Zion.*"

¹⁹Some people say, "Ask the fortune tellers and wizards what to do." (These fortune tellers and wizards talk like birds and speak quietly to make people think they have smart ideas.) But I tell you that, people should ask their God for help. Those fortune tellers and wizards ask dead people what to do. Why should living people ask something from the dead?

²⁰You should follow the teachings and the agreement.* If you don't follow these commands, then you might follow the wrong commands. (The wrong commands are those commands that come from the wizards and fortune tellers. Those commands are worth nothing; you will gain nothing by following those commands.)

²¹If you follow those wrong commands, then there will be troubles and hunger in the land. People will become hungry. Then they will become angry and say things against their king and his gods.* Then they will look up to God for help. ²²If they look around them at their land, then they will see only trouble and

seal This showed that the agreement should not be changed.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

agreement Usually, this means the agreement God made with Israel through Moses. Here it might mean the agreement of verse 17, above.

his gods Or possibly, "his God."

depressing darkness—the dark sadness of people forced to leave their country. And the people that are trapped in that darkness will not be able to free themselves.

A New Day Is Coming

9 In the past, people thought the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali were not important. But in a later time, God will make that land great: the land near the sea, the land across the Jordan River, and Galilee where the non-Jews live.

²Now those people live in darkness. But they will see a great light. Those people live in a place that is dark like the place of death. But the “Great Light” will shine on them.

³God, you will cause the nation to grow. You will make the people happy. And the people will show their happiness to you. It will be like the joy during harvest time. It will be like the joy when people take their share of things they have won in war. ⁴Why? Because you will take away the heavy burden. You will take away the heavy pole on the people’s backs. You will take away the rod that the enemy uses to punish your people. This will be like the time you defeated Midian.*

⁵Every boot that marched in battle will be destroyed. Every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed. Those things will be thrown into the fire. ⁶This will happen when the special child is born. God will give a son to us. This son will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be “Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.” ⁷Power and peace will be in his kingdom. It will continue to grow for this king from David’s family. This king will use goodness and fair judgment to rule the kingdom forever and ever.

The Lord All-Powerful has a strong love* for his people. And this strong love will cause him to do these things.

God Will Punish Israel

⁸My Lord gave a command against the people of Jacob (*Israel*). That command against Israel will be obeyed. ⁹Then every person in Ephraim (*Israel*), even the leaders in Samaria, will know that God punished them.

Those people are very proud and boastful now. Those people say, ¹⁰“These bricks might fall, but we will build again. And we will build with strong stone. These small trees might be chopped down. But we will put new trees there. And the new trees will be large, strong trees.”

¹¹So the Lord will find people to fight against Israel. The Lord will bring Rezin’s* enemies against them. ¹²The Lord will bring the Syrians from the east and the Philistines from the west. Those enemies will defeat Israel with their armies. But the Lord will still be angry with Israel. The Lord will still be ready to punish the people.

¹³God will punish the people, but they will not stop sinning. They will not return to him. They will not follow the Lord All-Powerful. ¹⁴So the Lord will cut off Israel’s head and tail. The Lord will take away the branch and the stalk in one day. ¹⁵(The head means the elders* and important leaders. The tail means the prophets that speak lies.)

¹⁶The men that lead the people are leading them the wrong way. And the people that follow them will be destroyed. ¹⁷All the people are evil. So the Lord is not happy with the young men. And the Lord will not show mercy to their widows and orphans.* Why? Because all the people are evil. The people do things that are against God. The people speak lies. So God will continue to be angry with the people. God will continue to punish the people.

¹⁸Evil is like a small fire. First, the fire burns weeds and thorns. Next, the fire burns the larger bushes in the forest. And finally, it becomes a great fire—and everything goes up in smoke.

Rezin A king of Aram (Syria). He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

elders Older men that were city leaders; they helped make decisions for the people.

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

This ... Midian See Numbers 22:1ff.

strong love This Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

"The Lord All-Powerful is angry, so the land will be burned. All the people will be burned in that fire. No person will try to save his brother. ²⁰People will grab something on the right, but they will still be hungry. They will eat something on the left, but they will not be filled. Then each person will turn and eat his own body. ²¹(This means, Manasseh will fight against Ephraim, and Ephraim will fight against Manasseh. And then both of them will turn against Judah.)

The Lord is still angry against Israel. The Lord is still ready to punish his people.

10 Look at the lawmakers that write evil laws. Those lawmakers write laws that make life hard for people. ²Those lawmakers are not fair to the poor people. They take away the poor people's rights. They allow people to steal from widows and orphans.*

³Lawmakers, you will have to explain the things you have done. What will you do at that time? Your destruction is coming from a faraway country. Where will you run for help? Your money and your riches will not help you. ⁴You will have to bow down like a prisoner. You will fall down like a dead person. But that will not help you! God will still be angry. God will still be ready to punish you.

⁵God will say, "I will use Assyria* like a stick. In anger, I will use Assyria to punish Israel. ⁶I will send Assyria to fight against the people that do evil things. I am angry at those people, and I will command Assyria to fight against them. Assyria will defeat them and Assyria will take their wealth from them. Israel will become like dirt for Assyria to trample (walk on) in the streets.

⁷"But Assyria* does not understand that I will use him. Assyria does not think that he is a tool for me. Assyria only wants to destroy other people. Assyria only plans to destroy many nations. ⁸Assyria says to himself, 'All of my leaders are like kings! ⁹The city Calno is like the city Carchemish. And the city Arpad is like

the city Hamath. The city Samaria is like the city Damascus. ¹⁰I defeated those evil kingdoms and now I control them. The idols* those people worship are better than the idols of Jerusalem and Samaria. ¹¹I defeated Samaria and her idols. I will also defeat Jerusalem and the idols her people have made.'"

¹²"My Master will finish doing the things he planned to Jerusalem and Mount Zion.* Then the Lord will punish Assyria.* The king of Assyria is very proud. His pride made him do many bad things. So God will punish him.

¹³"The king of Assyria says, "I am very wise. By my own wisdom and power I have done many great things. I have defeated many nations. I have taken their wealth. And I have taken their people to be slaves. I am a very powerful man. ¹⁴"With my own hands I have taken the riches of all these people—like a person taking eggs from a bird's nest. A bird often leaves its nest and eggs. And there is nothing to protect the nest. There is no bird to chirp and fight with its wings and beak. So people take the eggs. In the same way, there was no person to stop me from taking all the people on earth."

God Controls Assyria's Power

¹"An axe is not better than the person that cuts with it. A saw is not better than the person that saws with it. But Assyria thinks he is more important and powerful than God. And this is like a stick being more powerful and important than the person that picks it up and uses it to punish someone.

²"Assyria thinks he is great. But the Lord All-Powerful will send a terrible disease against Assyria. Assyria will lose his wealth and power like a sick man loses weight. Then Assyria's glory will be destroyed. It will be like a fire burning until everything is gone. ³"Israel's Light (God) will be like a fire. The Holy One will be like a flame. He will be like a fire that first burns the weeds and thorns. ⁴"Then the fire

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

grows and burns away the great trees and vineyards.* Finally, everything is destroyed—even the people. It will be like that when God destroys Assyria. Assyria will be like a rotting log. ¹⁹There might be a few trees left standing in the forest. But even a child will be able to count them.

²⁰At that time, the people that are left living in Israel, the people from the Jacob's family, will not continue to depend on the person that beats them. They will learn to truly depend on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹The people that are left in Jacob's family will again follow the powerful God.

²²Your people are very many. They are like the sands of the sea. But only a few of the people will be left to come back to the Lord. Those people will return to God, but first, your country will be destroyed. God has announced that he will destroy the land. And then goodness will come into the land; it will be like a river flowing full. ²³My Master, the Lord All-Powerful, will surely destroy this land.

²⁴My Master, the Lord All-Powerful, says, "My people living in Zion,* don't be afraid of Assyria! He will beat you like Egypt beat you in the past. It will be like Assyria is using a stick to hurt you. ²⁵But after a short time my anger will stop. I will be satisfied that Assyria has punished you enough."

²⁶Then the Lord All-Powerful will beat Assyria with a whip. In the past, the Lord defeated Midian at Raven Rock.* It will be the same when the Lord attacks Assyria. In the past, the Lord punished Egypt—he lifted the stick over the sea,* and led his people from Egypt. It will be the same when the Lord saves his people from Assyria.

²⁷Assyria* will bring troubles to you—those troubles will be like weights you have to carry on, a pole across your shoulder. But, that pole will be taken off your neck. That pole will be broken by your strength (God).

vineyards Gardens for growing grapes.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

Midian at Raven Rock See Num. 22:1ff.

he lifted the stick ... sea See Ex. 14:1-15:21.

The Army of Assyria Invades Israel

²⁸The army will enter near the "Ruins" (Aiath). The army will walk on the "Threshing Floor" (Migron). The army will keep its food in the "Storehouse" (Micmash). ²⁹The army will cross the river at the "Crossing" (Maabarah). The army will sleep at Geba.* Ramah* will be afraid. The people at Gibeah of Saul* will run away.

³⁰Cry out, Bath Gallim!* Laishah, listen! Anathoth, answer me! ³¹The people of Madmenah are running away. The people of Gebim* are hiding. ³²This day, the army will stop at Nob. And the army will prepare to fight against the Mount Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

³³Watch! Our Master, the Lord All-Powerful, will chop down the great tree (Assyria). The Lord will do this with his great power. The great and important people will be cut down—they will become not important. ³⁴The Lord will cut down the forest with his axe. And the great trees in Lebanon* (important people) will fall.

The King of Peace Is Coming

11 A small tree (*child*) will begin to grow from the stump (*family*) of Jesse.* That branch will grow from Jesse's roots. ²The Lord's Spirit will be in that child. The Spirit gives wisdom, understanding, guidance, and power. And the Spirit will help this child, know and respect the Lord. ³This child will respect the Lord, and this will make the child happy.

This child will not judge people by the way things look. He will not judge by the things he

Verses 28-32 Isaiah uses word games to show how the Assyrian army would come and fight against Judah.

Geba, Ramah, Gibeah of Saul Towns north of Jerusalem.

Bath Gallim Gallim, a city south of Jerusalem. This name means "daughter of the waves," and might also mean "seagull." These birds make very loud noises.

Gebim An unknown city. This name is like the Hebrew word for "pit" or "cistern," a hole in the ground for storing water.

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

Jesse King David's father.

hears. ⁴He will judge the poor people fairly and honestly. He will be fair when he decides the things to do to the poor people of the land. (If he decides people should be beaten,) then he will give the command, and those people will be beaten. (If he decides people must die,) then he will give the command, and those evil people will be killed. Goodness and fairness will give this child strength. They will be like a belt he wears around his waist.

⁶At that time, wolves will live in peace with lambs. And tigers will lie down in peace with young goats. Calves, lions, and bulls will live together in peace. A little child will lead them. ⁷Cows and bears will live together in peace. All of their children will lie down together and will not hurt each other. Lions will eat hay like cows. Even snakes will not hurt people. ⁸A baby will be able to play near a cobra's* home. A baby will be able to put his hand into the home of a poisonous snake.

⁹All these things show that there will be peace,—no person will hurt any other person. People on my holy mountain will not want to destroy things. Why? Because people will truly know the Lord. They will be full of knowledge about him, like the sea is full of water.

¹⁰At that time, there will be a special person from Jesse's* family. This person will be like a flag. This "flag" will show all the nations that they should come together around him. The nations will ask him the things they should do. And the place where he is will be filled with glory.

¹¹At that time, my Master (*God*) will again reach out and take his people that are left. This will be the second time God has done this. (These are God's people that are left in countries like Assyria, North Egypt, South Egypt, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylon, Hamath, and all the faraway countries around the world.)

¹²God will raise this "flag" as a sign for all people. The people of Israel and Judah were forced to leave their country. The people were scattered to all the faraway places on earth. But God will gather them together.

¹³At that time, Ephraim (*Israel*) will not be jealous of Judah. Judah will have no enemies left. And Judah will not cause trouble for Ephraim. ¹⁴But Ephraim and Judah will attack the Philistines.* These two nations will be like birds flying down to catch a small animal. Together, they will take the riches from the people in the east. Ephraim and Judah will control Edom, Moab,* and the people in Ammon.*

¹⁵The Lord became angry and divided the sea of Egypt. In the same way, the Lord will wave his arm over the Euphrates River. He will hit the river, and the river will divide into seven small rivers. The small rivers will not be deep—people will be able to walk across those rivers with their shoes on. ¹⁶God's people that are left will have a way to leave Assyria. It will be like the time God took the people out of Egypt.

A Song of Praise to God

12 At that time, you will say:
"I praise you Lord!
You have been angry at me.
But don't be angry with me now!
Show your love to me."

- ² God saves me.
I trust him.
I am not afraid.
He saves me.
The Lord Yah is my strength.
He saves me.
And I sing songs of praise about him.*
- ³ Get your water from the spring of salvation.
Then you will be happy.
- ⁴ Then you will say,

Philistines People living on the coast of Palestine. They were one of Israel's enemies.

Edom, Moab Two countries east of Israel. They were Israel's enemies for many, many years.

Ammon A country east of Israel.

The ... him Literally, "Yah, Yahweh is my strength and praise. And he becomes my salvation." This comes from the victory song of Moses. (Exodus 15:2.)

cobra A very poisonous snake.

Jesse King David's father.

"Praise the Lord!
Worship his name!
Tell all people about the things he has
done!"
Sing songs of praise about the Lord!
Why? Because he has done great things!
Spread this news about God through the
whole world.
Let all people know these things.
People of Zion,* shout about these
things!
The Holy One of Israel is with you in a
powerful way.
So, be happy!

God's Message to Babylon

13 God showed Isaiah son of Amoz this
sad message about Babylon. ¹God
said:„

"Raise a flag on the mountain with
nothing on it.*
Call out to the men, soldiers!
Wave your arms!
Tell those men to enter through the
gates for important people!"

¹God said:„

"I have separated those men from the
people.
And I myself will command them.
I am angry.
I have gathered my best men to punish
the people.
I am proud of these happy men!

- ⁴ "There is a loud noise in the mountains.
Listen to the noise!
It sounds like many, many people.
People from many kingdoms are
gathering together.
The Lord All-Powerful is calling his
army together.
⁵ The Lord and this army are coming from
a faraway land.

They are coming from beyond the
horizon.

The Lord will use this army like a
weapon to show his anger.
This army will destroy the whole
country.

"The Lord's special day is near. So cry and
be sad for yourselves. A time is coming when
the enemy will steal your wealth. God
All-Powerful will make that happen.* ⁷People
will lose their courage. Fear will make the
people weak. ⁸Every person will be afraid.
Their fear will cause their stomachs to hurt like
a woman giving birth to a baby. Their faces
will become red like fire. The people will be
amazed because this look of fear will be on all
their neighbors' faces.

God's Judgment Against Babylon

"Look, the Lord's special day is coming! It
will be a terrible day. God will become very
angry, and he will destroy the country. God
will force all people that sin to leave the
country. ¹⁰The skies will be dark. The sun, the
moon, and the stars will not shine.

"God says,„ "I will cause bad things to
happen to the world. I will punish the evil
people for their sin. I will cause the proud
people to lose their pride. I will stop the
bragging of the people that are mean to others.
¹²There will be only a few people left. There
will not be many, the same as gold is hard to
find. And these people will be worth much
more than pure gold. ¹³With my anger, I will
make the sky shake. And the earth will be
moved from its place."

That will happen on the day the Lord
All-Powerful shows his anger. "Then the
people from Babylon will run away, like
wounded deer. They will run like sheep that
have no shepherd. Every person will turn and
run back to his own country and people. ¹⁵But
the enemy will chase the people of Babylon.
And when the enemy, catches a person, the

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
mountain ... it This probably means Babylon.

A time ... happen This is a word play in Hebrew. The
word meaning "stealing things in war" is like the word
meaning "God All-Powerful."

enemy will kill that person with a sword. ¹⁶Everything in their houses will be stolen. Their wives will be raped. And their little children will be beaten to death while the people are watching.

¹⁷God says, "Look, I will cause the armies of Media to attack Babylon. The armies of Media will not stop attacking, even if they are paid silver and gold. ¹⁸The soldiers will attack and kill the young men of Babylon. The soldiers will not show mercy to the children. The soldiers will not be kind to the little boys. Babylon will be destroyed—it will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.* God will cause this destruction, and there will be nothing left.

¹⁹"Babylon is the most beautiful of all kingdoms. The Babylonian* people are very proud of their city. ²⁰But Babylon will not continue to be beautiful. People will not continue to live there in the future. Arabs will not put their tents there. Shepherds will not bring their sheep to let them eat there. ²¹The only animals living there will be wild animals from the desert. People will not be living in their houses in Babylon. The houses will be full of owls and large birds. Wild goats* will play in the houses. ²²Wild dogs and wolves will howl in the great and beautiful buildings of Babylon. Babylon will be finished. The end of Babylon is near. I will not let Babylon's destruction wait until later."

Israel Will Return Home

14 In the future, the Lord will again show his love to Jacob. The Lord will again choose the people of Israel. At that time, the Lord will give those people their land. Then non-Jewish people* will join themselves to the Jewish people. Both people

will join and become one family—Jacob's family. ²Those nations will take the people of Israel back to Israel's land. Those men and women from the other nations will become slaves to Israel. In the past, those people forced the people of Israel to become their slaves. But at this time, the people of Israel will defeat those nations and Israel will then rule over them. ³The Lord will take away your hard work, and he will comfort you. In the past, you were slaves. Men forced you to do very hard work. But the Lord will end this hard work for you.

A Song About the King of Babylon

⁴At that time, you will begin to sing this song about the king of Babylon:

The king was mean when he ruled us.
But now his rule is finished.

⁵ The Lord breaks the scepter* of evil rulers.

The Lord takes away their power.

⁶ In anger, the king of Babylon beat people.
That evil ruler did not stop beating people.

That evil ruler ruled the people in anger.
He never stopped doing bad things to the people.

⁷ But now, the whole country rests.
The country is quiet.

Now the people begin to celebrate.

⁸ You were an evil king,
and now you are finished.
Even the pine trees are happy.

And the cedar trees of Lebanon are happy.

The trees say,

"The king chopped us down.
But now the king has fallen.
And he will never stand again."

⁹ Sheol*, the place of death, is excited
because you are coming.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

Babylonian Literally, "Chaldean."

Wild goats The Hebrew word means "hairy," "goat," or "goat-demon."

non-Jewish people Usually this means "People that live in a country, but are not yet citizens of that country." Here it is the non-Jewish people that decided to follow God.

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to show they were rulers.

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die. Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where our spirits go.

Sheol is waking the spirits of all the
leaders of the earth for you.

Sheol is making the kings stand from
their thrones.*

They will be ready for your coming.

¹⁰ All these leaders will make fun of you.

They will say,

"Now you are a dead body like us.

Now you are just like us."

¹¹ Your pride has been sent down to Sheol.*

The music from your harps* announces
the coming of your proud spirit.

Maggots (*flies*) will eat your body.

You will lie on them like a bed.

And worms will cover your body
like a blanket.

¹² You were like the morning star,
but you have fallen from the sky.

In the past, all the nations on earth bowed
down before you,

but now you have been cut down.

¹³ You always told yourself,

"I will be like God Most-High.

I will go to the skies above.

I will put my throne above God's
stars.

I will sit on the holy mountain,
Zaphon.*

I will meet with the gods, on that
hidden mountain.

¹⁴ I will go up to the altar in the clouds.

I will be like God Most-High."

¹⁵ But that did not happen.

You did not go to the sky with God.

You were brought down to the deep
pit-Sheol.*

¹⁶ The people look at you and think about
you.

"The people see that you are only a dead
body,"

and the people say;

"Is this the same man that caused great
fear

in all the kingdoms on earth?

¹⁷ Is this the same man that destroyed
cities?

Is this the same man that changed the
land into a desert?

Is this the same man that captured
people in war
and would not let those people go
home?"

¹⁸ Every king on earth has died with glory.
Every king has his own grave.

¹⁹ But you, evil king, have been thrown
from your grave.

You are like a branch cut from a tree.

That branch is cut and thrown away.

You are like a dead man that fell during
battle,

and other soldiers walked on him.

Now, you look like any other dead
person.

You are wrapped in burial clothes.

²⁰ Many other kings have died.

And they all have their own graves.

But you will not join them.

Why? Because you ruined your own
country.

You killed your own people.

Your children will not continue to destroy
like you did.

Your children will be stopped.

²¹ Prepare to kill his children.

Kill them because their father is
guilty.

His children will never again take
control of the land.

His children will never again fill the
world with their cities.

²²The Lord All-Powerful said, "I will stand
and fight against those people. I will destroy
the famous city, Babylon. I will destroy all the
people of Babylon. I will destroy their children,
their grandchildren, and their great-

thrones Special chairs kings or queens sit on.

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die.

Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where
our spirits go.

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

holy mountain Zaphon Literally, "Zaphon." This
Hebrew word means "north" or "hidden." But here it means a
special mountain where many people believed their gods met
together.

grandchildren." The Lord himself said those things.

²⁰The Lord said, "I will change Babylon. That place will be for animals,* not people. That place will be a swamp. I will use the 'broom of destruction' to sweep Babylon away." The Lord All-Powerful said those things.

God Will also Punish Assyria

¹The Lord All-Powerful has made a promise. The Lord said, "I promise, these things will happen exactly like I thought. These things will happen exactly the way I planned. ²I will destroy the king of Assyria in my country. I will trample (*walk on*) that king on my mountains. That king made my people be his slaves; he put a yoke* on their necks. That pole will be taken off Judah's neck. That burden will be removed. ³That is the thing I plan to do for my people. And I will use my arm (*power*) to punish all nations."

⁴When the Lord makes a plan, no person can stop that plan. When the Lord raises his arm to punish people, no person can stop him.

God's Message to Philistia

¹This sad message was given the year King Ahaz died.*

²Country of Philistia, you are very happy because the king that beat you is now dead. But you should not be really happy. It is true that his rule has ended. But the king's son will come and rule. And it will be like one snake giving birth to a more dangerous snake. This new king will be like a very quick and dangerous snake to you. ³But my poor people will be able to eat safely. Their children will be safe. My poor people will be able to lie down and feel safe. But I will kill your family with hunger. And all your people that are left will die.

animals Literally, "porcupines."

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

year King Ahaz died About 727 B.C.

³¹ You people near the city gates, cry!
You people in the city, cry out!
All of you people in Philistia will be frightened.
Your courage will melt like hot wax.

Look to the north!
There is a cloud of dust!
An army from Assyria* is coming!
All the men in that army are strong!*

³² That army will send messengers to their country,
What will those messengers tell their people?
They will announce:
Philistia was defeated,
but the Lord made Zion* strong.
And his poor people went there for safety.

God's Message to Moab

15 This is a sad message about Moab:*
One night, armies took the wealth from Ar, Moab.
That night, the city was destroyed.
One night, armies took the wealth from Kir, Moab.
That night, the city was destroyed.
² The king's family
and the people of Dibon*
are going to the high places of worship* to cry.
The people of Moab are crying for Nebo* and Medeba.*
All the people have shaved their heads and beards, to show they are sad.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

All ... strong Literally, "There are no stragglers in that group."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Moab A country east of Israel.

Dibon A city in the country Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "to be very sad."

high ... worship Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

Nebo A city in the country Moab. This is also the name of a false god.

Medeba A city in the country Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "to be very sad."

- ³ Everywhere in Moab,
on the housetops and in the streets,
people are wearing black clothes,
people are crying.
- ⁴ People in the cities Heshbon and El Aleh
are crying very loudly.
You can hear their voices far away in the
city Jahaz.
Even the soldiers are scared.
The soldiers are shaking from fear.
- ⁵ My heart cries with sorrow for Moab.
People are running for safety.
They run far away to Zoar.
They run to Eglath Shelishiyah.
People are going up the mountain road to
Luhith.
And the people are crying.
People are going on the road to
Horonaim.
And the people are crying very loudly.
- ⁶ But Nimrim Brook is dry like a desert.
All the plants are dead.
Nothing is green.
- ⁷ So the people gather the things they own,
and they leave Moab.
They carry those things,
and cross the border, at Poplar
Creek.*
- ⁸ Crying can be heard everywhere in Moab.
The people far away in the city Eglaim
are crying.
The people in the city Beer Elim* are
crying.
- ⁹ The water of the city Dimon* is full of
blood.
And I (the Lord) will bring even more
troubles to Dimon.
A few people living in Moab have
escaped the enemy.
But I will send lions to eat those people.

16 You people should send a gift to the
king of the land. You should send a

lamb from Sela, through the desert, to the
mountain of the Daughter of Zion*
(Jerusalem).

- ² The women of Moab* try to cross the
river Arnon.
They run from one place to another
looking for help.
They are like little birds lost on the
ground
after their nest has fallen.
- ³ They say,
"Help us!
Tell us what to do!
Protect us from our enemies,
like shade protects us from the noon
sun.
We are running from our enemies.
Hide us!
Don't give us to our enemies."
- ⁴ Those people from Moab were forced to
leave their homes.
So let them live in your land.
Hide them from their enemies.
The looting will stop.
The enemy will be defeated.
The men that hurt others will be gone
from the land.
- ⁵ Then a new king will come.
This king will be from David's family.*
He will be sincere.
He will be loving and kind.
This king will judge fairly.
He will do things that are right and
good.

⁶We have heard that the people of Moab*
are very proud and conceited. These people are
violent and they boast. But the boasts are only
empty words.

⁷The whole country of Moab will suffer
because of that pride. All the people of Moab
will cry. The people will be sad—they will want
the things they had in the past. They will want

Poplar Creek A small stream in the country Moab, also
called "Arabah Stream."

Beer Elim A city in the country Moab.

Dimon This is probably the city Dibon. Dimon is like the
Hebrew word meaning "blood."

Daughter of Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

Moab A country east of Israel.

David's family The royal family of Judah. God promised
that men from David's family would be kings in Judah.

the fig-cakes made in Kir Hareseth.* ¹The people will be sad, because the fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibmah are not able to grow grapes. Foreign rulers have cut down the grapevines. The enemy armies have, spread far to the city of Jazer and into the desert. And they have spread down to the sea.*

A Sad Song about Moab

- ⁹ "I will cry with the people of Jazer and Sibmah
because the grapes have been destroyed.
I will cry with the people of Heshbon and El Aleh
because there will be no harvest.
There will be no summer fruit.
And there will be no shouts of joy.
¹⁰ There will be no joy and singing in Carmel.*
I will stop all the happiness at harvest time.
The grapes are ready to become wine,
But they will all be wasted.
¹¹ So, I am very sad for Moab.
I am very sad for Kir Heres.*
I am very, very sad for these cities.
¹² The people of Moab will go to their high places of worship.*
The people will try to pray.
But they will see all the things that have happened,
and they will be too weak to pray."

¹³"The Lord said these things about Moab many times." And now the Lord says, "In three years (the way a hired helper counts time) all those people and the things they are proud of will be gone. There will be a few people left, but there will not be many."

Kir Hareseth A city in the country Moab.

Foreign ... sea Or, "These grapes made many foreign rulers drunk. The vines spread far to the city Jazer and into the desert. The vines have spread down to the sea."

Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for growing plants. This name means "God's vineyard."

Kir Heres This is Kir Hareseth, a city in the country of Moab. Kir Heres means "a city chosen to be destroyed."

high ... worship Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

God's Message to Syria

17 This is the sad message for Damascus.* The Lord says these things will happen to Damascus:

- "Damascus is now a city.
But Damascus will be destroyed.
Only destroyed buildings will be left in Damascus.
² People will leave the cities of Aroer.*
Flocks of sheep will wander freely in those empty towns;
There will be no person to bother them.
³ The fort cities of Ephraim (*Israel*) will be destroyed.
The government in Damascus will be finished.
The same thing that happens to Israel, will happen to Syria.*
All the important people will be taken away."

The Lord All-Powerful said those things will happen.

- ⁴ At that time, Jacob's (*Israel*'s) wealth will all be gone.
Jacob will be like a man that has lost much weight from sickness.

"That time will be like grain harvest in Rephaim Valley.* The workers gather plants that grow in the field. Then they cut the heads of grain from the plants. And they collect the grain.

"That time will also be like the time people harvest olives. People knock olives from olive trees. But a few olives are usually left at the top of the tree. Four or five olives are left on some of the top branches. It will be the same for those cities. The Lord All-Powerful said those things.

⁷At that time, people will look up to God,, the One who made them. Their eyes will see

Damascus A city in the country Syria.

Aroer A place in the country Syria.

Syria Or, "Aram," a country north of Israel.

Rephaim Valley A valley southwest of Jerusalem.

the Holy One of Israel. ⁴The people will not trust the great things they have made. They will not go to the special gardens* and altars*, they made for false gods.

⁵At that time, all the fort cities will be empty. Those cities will be like the mountains and the forests* in the land before the people of Israel came. [In the past,] all the people ran away because the people of Israel were coming. [In the future,] the country will be empty again.

⁶This will happen because you have forgotten the God who saves you. You have not remembered that God is your place of safety.

You brought some very good grapevines from faraway places. You can plant those grapevines, but those plants will not grow.

⁷You will plant your grapevines one day and try to make them grow. The next day the plants will begin to grow. But at harvest time, you will go to gather the fruit from the plants, and you will see that everything is dead. A sickness will kill all the plants.

¹² Listen to the many, many people!

They are crying loud like the noise from the sea.

Listen to the noise!

The crying is like the crashing and crashing of waves in the sea,

¹³ And the people will be like those waves—

God will speak harshly to the people, and they will run away.

The people will be like chaff* being chased by the wind.

The people will be like tumbleweeds* being chased by a storm.

The wind blows and the weeds go far

special gardens People worshiped false gods in these gardens.

altars These might be altars for burning incense or they might be altars for worshiping a special false god.

mountains ... forests This might mean "The Horite and Amorite people."

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds and let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

tumbleweeds A small plant with short roots. When a strong wind blows, the plant is pulled loose and blown away.

away.

¹⁴ That night, the people will be very frightened.

Before morning, nothing will be left.

So our enemies will get nothing.

They will come to our land, but nothing will be there.

God's Message to Ethiopia

18 Look at the land along the rivers of Ethiopia.* The land is filled with insects; you can hear their buzzing wings. ²That land sends people across the sea in reed boats.*

Fast messengers, go to the people that are tall and strong! (People in all places are afraid of these tall and strong people. They are a powerful nation. Their nation defeats other nations. They are in a country divided by rivers.) ³Warn those people that something bad will happen to them. All the people in the world will see this thing happen to that nation. People will see this thing clearly like a flag raised on a mountain. All the people living on earth will hear about the thing that happens to these tall people. They will hear it clearly like the noise from a horn before a battle.

⁴The Lord said, "I will be in the place prepared for me.* I will quietly watch these things happen: ⁵On a beautiful summer day, at noon, people will be resting. (It will be during the hot harvest time when there is no rain, but only early morning dew.) Then something terrible will happen. The time will be after the flowers have bloomed. The new grapes will be budding and growing. But before harvest, the enemy will come and cut the plants. The enemy will break the vines and throw them away. ⁶The vines will be left for the birds from the mountains and the wild animals to eat. Birds will live on the vines during the summer. And that winter, wild animals will eat the vines."

Ethiopia Also called Cush, a country in Africa, by the Red Sea.

reed boats These boats were made by tying many, many reeds (a type of water plant) together.

the ... me Probably the temple in Jerusalem.

¹At that time, a special offering will be brought to the Lord All-Powerful. The offering will come from the people that are tall and strong. (People in all places are afraid of these tall and strong people. They are a powerful nation. Their nation defeats other nations. They are in a country divided by rivers.) This offering will be brought to the Lord's place, Mount Zion.*

God's Message to Egypt

19 The sad message about Egypt:
Look! The Lord is coming on a fast cloud. The Lord will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake, with fear. Egypt was brave,¹ but that courage will melt away like hot wax.

²God says, "I will cause the people of Egypt to fight against themselves. Men will fight their brothers. Neighbors will be against neighbors. Cities will be against cities. States will be against states.*" The people of Egypt will be confused. The people will ask their false gods and wise men what they should do. The people will ask their wizards and magicians. But their advice will be worthless."

"The Master, the Lord All-Powerful, says, "I (God) will give Egypt to a hard master. A powerful king will rule over the people." The Nile River will become dry. The water will be gone from the sea. "All the rivers will smell very bad.* The canals in Egypt will become dry and the water will be gone. All the water plants will rot. "All the plants along the river banks will die and blow away. Even the plants at the widest part of the river will be dead.

"The fishermen, all the people that catch fish from the Nile River, will become sad and they will cry. They depend on the Nile River for their food, but it will be dry. "All the people that make cloth will be very, very sad. These

people need flax* to make linen.* But the river will be dry, and these plants will not grow."
"The people that make dams to save water will have no work, so they will be sad.

"The leaders of the city Zoan are fools. Pharaoh's "wise advisers" give wrong advice. Those leaders say they are wise. They say they are from the old family of the kings. But they are not wise like they think."

"Egypt, where are your wise men? Those wise men should learn what the Lord All-Powerful has planned for Egypt. They should be the people to tell you what will happen.

"The leaders of Zoan have been fooled. The leaders of Noph have believed false things. So the leaders lead Egypt the wrong way. "The Lord made the leaders confused. They wander and lead Egypt in the wrong ways. Everything the leaders do is wrong. They are like drunk people rolling with sickness on the ground. "There is nothing the leaders can do. (These leaders are "the heads and the tails.") They are "the tops and the stalks of plants.")*

"At that time, the Egyptians will be like scared women. They will be afraid of the Lord All-Powerful. The Lord will raise his arm to punish the people, and they will be afraid. "The land of Judah will be a place for all the people in Egypt to fear. Any person in Egypt that hears the name Judah will be scared. This will happen because the Lord All-Powerful has planned terrible things to happen to Egypt. "At that time, there will be five cities in Egypt where people speak the language of Canaan (*the Jewish language*). One of these cities will be named "Destruction City."*

The people will promise to follow the Lord All-Powerful. "At that time, there will be an altar* for the Lord in the middle of Egypt. At the border of Egypt there will be a monument to show honor to the Lord. "This will be a sign

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
States ... states Literally, kingdom will be against kingdom. This means Egyptians will fight other Egyptians.
smell very bad This Hebrew word is like a name for the Nile River.

flax A plant used to make linen.

linen A type of cloth.

the ... plants See Isaiah 9:14-15.

Destruction City This name is like a name meaning "Sun City." This is probably the city On (Heliopolis).

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices as gifts to God.

to show that the Lord All-Powerful does powerful things. Any time the people cry for help from the Lord, the Lord will send help. The Lord will send a person to save and defend the people. That person will rescue the people from other people that do wrong things to them.

²At that time, the people in Egypt will truly know the Lord. The people of Egypt will love God. The people will serve God and give many sacrifices.* They will make promises* to the Lord. And they will keep those promises.

³The Lord will punish the people of Egypt. And then the Lord will heal (*forgive*) them, and they will come back to the Lord. The Lord will listen to their prayers and heal (*forgive*) them.

⁴At that time, there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria.* Then people from Assyria will go to Egypt, and people from Egypt will go to Assyria. Egypt will work with Assyria.*

⁵At that time, Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will join together and control the land. This will be a blessing for the land. ⁶The Lord All-Powerful will bless these countries. He will say, "Egypt, you are my people. Assyria, I made you. Israel, I own you. You are all blessed!"

Assyria Will Defeat Egypt and Ethiopia

20 Sargon* was the king of Assyria.* Sargon sent Tarton* to Ashdod to fight against that city. Tarton went there and captured the city. ²At that time, the Lord spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. The Lord said, "Go, take the cloth of sadness off your waist. Take your shoes off your feet." Isaiah obeyed the Lord. And Isaiah walked around without clothes and without shoes.

³Then the Lord said, "Isaiah has walked around without clothes and without shoes for three years. This is a sign for Egypt and

Ethiopia. "The king of Assyria will defeat Egypt and Ethiopia. Assyria will take prisoners and lead them away from their countries. The old people and young people will be led without clothes and without shoes. They will be completely naked. The people from Egypt will be shamed. ⁴People looked to Ethiopia for help. Those people will be broken. People were amazed by Egypt's glory. Those people will be shamed."

"Those people living near the sea will say, "We trusted those countries to help us. We ran to them so they would rescue us from the king of Assyria. But look at them. Those countries have been captured, so how will we be able to escape?"

God's Message to Babylon

21 The sad message about the Desert of the Sea:*

Something is coming from the desert.

It is coming like wind blowing from the Negev.*

It is coming from a terrible country.

² I have seen something very terrible that will happen.

I see traitors* turning against you.

I see people taking your wealth.

Elam, go and fight against the people!

Media, put your armies around the city and defeat it!

I will end all the evil things in that city.

³I saw those terrible things, and now I am scared. My stomach hurts because of my fear. That pain is like the pain of giving birth. The things I hear make me very afraid. The things I see make me shake with fear. ⁴I am worried and I am shaking from fear. My pleasant evening has become a night of fear.

⁵The people say:

sacrifices Gifts to God. Sometimes these were special kinds of animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

promises A special kind of promise to God. See Leviticus 22:18ff.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

Egypt ... Assyria Or, Egypt will worship with Assyria.

Sargon A king of Assyria. He was king about 721-705 B.C.

Tarton An Assyrian military commander.

Desert ... Sea Probably Babylon.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

traitors People that turn against their country, friends, or family and do bad things to them.

"Prepare the table!
Spread the cloth over the table!
Eat!
Drink!"

But the people should say:

"Leaders, stand up and prepare for
battle!"

"Why? Because the Lord, my Master, told me these things, 'Go and find a man to guard the city. If the guard sees rows of horse soldiers, donkeys, or camels, the guard should listen carefully—very carefully. Then the guard should call out the warning, 'Lion!'"

The guard said to the Lord, "My Master, every day I have been in the watchtower* watching. Every night I have been standing and guarding, but ... 'Look! They are coming! I see rows of men and horse soldiers.'"

Then one of the men, said,

"Babylon has been defeated,
Babylon has fallen to the ground.
All the statues of her false gods
have been thrown to the ground
and have broken to pieces."

¹⁰ Isaiah said, "My people, I have told you everything that I heard from the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel. You will be crushed like grain on a threshing floor.*

God's Message to Edom

¹¹ The sad message about Dumah.*

Someone called me from Seir (*Edom*).
He said,
"Guard, how much of the night is left?
How much longer will it be night!"

¹² The guard answered,
"Morning is coming,

But then night will come again.
If you have something to ask,
then come back* and ask."

God' Message to Arabia

¹³ The sad message about Arabia.

A caravan* from Dedan spent the night
near some trees in Arabian desert.

¹⁴ They gave water to some thirsty travelers.
The people of Tema gave food
to some people that were traveling.

¹⁵ Those people were running from swords
ready to kill.

They were running from bows ready to
shoot.

They were running from a hard battle.

"The Lord, my Master, told me those things would happen. The Lord said, "In one year, (the way a hired helper counts time) all Kedar's* glory will be gone. "At that time, only a few of the archers,* the great soldiers of Kedar, will be left living." The Lord, the God of Israel, told me those things.

God's Message to Jerusalem

22 The sad message about the Valley of
Vision:*

What is wrong with you people?
Why are you hiding on your housetops?

² In the past, this city was a very busy
city.

This city was very noisy—and very
happy.

But now, things have changed.

Your people have been killed—
but not with swords.

The people died—

watchtower A tall building where guards stood and watched to see if anyone was coming near their city.

threshing floor A place where grain is walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Dumah Edom. This Hebrew word means "silence" or "destruction."

come back This can also mean "change your heart, repent."

caravan A group of traders and their animals that carry wealth from one place to another.

Kedar's A country east of Israel.

archers Soldiers that use bows and arrows in war.

Valley of Vision This probably means the valley near Jerusalem.

but not while fighting.

- ³ All of your leaders ran away together.
But they have all been captured—
and without bows.

All the leaders ran far away together.
But they have been captured.

- ⁴ So I say,

"Don't look at me!

Let me cry!

Don't rush to comfort me about the
destruction of Jerusalem."

⁵The Lord has chosen a special day. On that day there will be riots and confusion. People will trample (*walk on*) each other in the Valley of Vision.* The city walls will be pulled down. The people in the valley will be shouting at the people in the city on the mountain. "The horse soldiers from Elam will take their bags of arrows and ride to battle. The people from Kir will make noise with their shields." The armies will meet in your special valley. The valley will be filled with chariots.* Horse soldiers will be put in front of the city gates. "At that time, the people of Judah will want to use the weapons they keep at the Forest Palace.*

The enemy will pull down the walls protecting Judah. ⁶⁻¹¹The walls of the City of David will begin to crack, and you will see those cracks. So, you will count the houses, and you will use stones from the houses to fix the walls. You will make a place between the double walls for saving water from the old stream, and you will save the water.

You will do all this to protect yourselves. But you will not trust the God who made all these things. You will not see the One (*God*) who made all these things long ago.

¹²So, my Master, the Lord All-Powerful, will tell the people to cry and be sad for their dead friends. People will shave their heads and wear clothes of sadness.

¹³But look! The people are happy now. The people are rejoicing. The people are saying:

Valley of Vision This probably means the valley near Jerusalem.

chariots Small wagons used for war.

Forest Palace Or, Beth HaYar, a city built by Solomon for storing his weapons and wealth.

Kill the cattle and the sheep.

We will celebrate.

Eat your food and drink the wine.

Eat and drink because tomorrow we die.

"The Lord All-Powerful said these things to me and I heard it with my ears: "You are guilty of doing wrong things. And I promise, you will die before this guilt is forgiven." My Master, the Lord All-Powerful said those things.

God's Message to Shebna, the Palace Manager

¹⁴My Master, the Lord All-Powerful, told me these things: "Go to that servant Shebna. That servant is the palace manager. ¹⁵Ask that servant, 'What are you doing here? Is any person from your family buried here? Why are you making a grave here?'"

Isaiah said, "Look at this man! He is making his grave in a high place. This man is cutting into rock to make his grave.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸"Man, the Lord will crush you. The Lord will roll you into a small ball and throw you far away into the open arms of another country. And there you will die."

The Lord said, "You are very proud of your chariots.* But in that faraway land your new ruler will have better chariots. And your chariots will not look important in his palace.

¹⁹I will force you out of your important job here. Your new leader will take you away from your important job. ²⁰At that time, I will call for my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. ²¹I will take your robe and put it on that servant. I will give him your scepter.* I will give him the important job you have. That servant will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah's family.

²²"I will put the key to David's house around that man's neck. If he opens a door, that door will stay opened. No person will be able to close it. If he closes a door, that door will stay closed. No person will be able to open it. That servant will be like a very honored chair

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to show they were rulers.

in his father's house. ²¹I will make him strong like a nail that is hammered into a very strong board. ²²All the honored and important things of his father's house will hang on him. All the adults and little children will depend on him. Those people will be like small dishes and large water bottles hanging on him.

²³"At that time, the nail (*Shebna*) that is now hammered into a very strong board will become weak and it will break. That nail will fall to the ground and all the things hanging on that nail will be destroyed. Then everything I said in this message will happen." (Those things will happen because the Lord said them.)

God's Message To Lebanon

23 The sad message about Tyre:
You ships from Tarshish,* be sad!
Your harbor has been destroyed. (The people on these ships were told this news while on their way from the land of Kittim.)*

¹You people living near the sea should stop and be sad. Tyre was the "Merchant* of Sidon." That city by the sea sent businessmen across the seas, and those men filled you with riches. ²Those men traveled the seas looking for grain. Those men from Tyre bought the grain that grows near the Nile River, and they sold the grain to other nations.

³Sidon, you should be very sad. Why? Because now the Sea, and the Fort of the Sea* say:

I have no children.
I have not felt the pain of birth.
I have not given birth to children.
I have not raised young men and women.

⁴ Egypt will hear the news about Tyre.
And this news will make Egypt hurt with sorrow.

ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship.

Kittim This could be either the island of Cyprus or the island of Crete.

Merchant A businessman that buys and sells things for a living.

Fort of the Sea Another name for the city Tyre.

⁶ You ships should return to Tarshish.*
You people living near the sea should be sad.

⁷ In the past, you enjoyed the city of Tyre.
That city has been growing since the beginning.

People from that city have traveled far away to live.

⁸ The city of Tyre has produced many leaders.

Businessmen from that city are like princes.

And the people that buy and sell are honored everywhere.

So who made plans against Tyre?

⁹ It was the Lord All-Powerful.
He decided to make them not important.

¹⁰ You ships from Tarshish should go back to your country.

Cross the sea like it is a small river.

No person will stop you now.

¹¹ The Lord has stretched his arm over the sea.

The Lord is gathering kingdoms to fight against Tyre.

The Lord commands Canaan* to destroy Tyre,
her place of safety.

¹² The Lord says,
Virgin Daughter of Sidon,* you will be destroyed.

You will not rejoice any more."

„But the people of Tyre say,„

"Cyprus* will help us!"

But if you cross the sea to Cyprus,
you will not find a place to rest.

¹³ „So the people of Tyre say,„

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain.

Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

Canaan The land where the Canaanite people lived. This includes part of Israel, Lebanon, and Syria.

Virgin Daughter of Sidon The city Sidon.

Cyprus Literally, "Kittim." This could also mean "Crete."

"The people of Babylon will help us!"

But look at the land of the Chaldeans!*
Babylon is not a country now.

Assyria* attacked Babylon and built war
towers around it.

The soldiers took everything from the
beautiful houses.

Assyria made Babylon a place for wild
animals.

They changed Babylon to a place of
ruins.

- ¹⁴ So, be sad, you ships from Tarshish.*
Your place of safety (Tyre) will be
destroyed.

¹⁵ People will forget about Tyre for 70 years.
(That is, about the length of a certain king's
rule.) After 70 years, Tyre will be like the
prostitute* in this song:

- ¹⁶ Oh woman that men forgot,
take your harp and walk through the
city.

Play your song well.

Sing your song often.

Then people will remember you.

¹⁷ After 70 years, the Lord will review Tyre's
case, and he will give her a decision. Tyre will
again have trade. Tyre will be like a prostitute*
for all the nations on earth. ¹⁸ But Tyre will not
keep the money she earns. Tyre's profit from
her trade will be saved for the Lord. Tyre will
give that profit to the people that serve the
Lord. So the Lord's servants will eat until they
are full, and they will wear nice clothes.

God Will Punish Israel

24 Look! The Lord will destroy this land.
The Lord will completely clean
everything from the land. The Lord will force
the people to go far away.

Chaldeans The people of the land of Babylon.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of
cargo ship.

prostitute A woman that sells her body for sex. Sometimes
this also means a person that stops following God.

² At that time, the common people and the
priests will be the same. Slaves and masters
will be the same. Women slaves and their
women masters will be the same. The buyers
and sellers will be the same. The people that
borrow and the people that lend will be the
same. The bankers and the people that owe the
bank will be the same. ³ All the people will be
forced out of the land. The wealth will all be
taken. This will happen because the Lord
commanded it. ⁴ The country will be empty and
sad. The world will be empty and weak. The
great leaders of the people in this land will
become weak.

⁵ The people on the land have made the land
dirty. How did this happen? The people did
wrong things against God's teaching. The
people did not obey God's laws. The people
made an agreement with God a long time ago,
but those people broke their agreement with
God. ⁶ The people living in this land are guilty
of doing wrong. So God promised to destroy
the land. The people will be punished. Only a
few people will survive.

⁷ The grapevines are dying. The new wine is
bad. In the past, people were happy. But now
those people are sad. ⁸ People have stopped
showing their joy. All the happy sounds have
stopped. The happy music from the drums and
harps has ended. ⁹ People don't sing happy
songs while they drink their wine. The beer
now tastes bitter to the person drinking it.

¹⁰ "Total Confusion" is a good name for this
city. The city has been destroyed. People can't
enter the houses. The doors are blocked.
¹¹ People still ask for wine in the market places.
But all the happiness is gone. Joy has been
carried far away. ¹² Only destruction is left for
the city. Even the gates are crushed.

- ¹³ At harvest time, people knock olives from
olive trees.

But, a few olives are left in the trees.

It will be like that in this land among
the nations.

- ¹⁴ The people that are left will begin
shouting.

The people will be louder than the
noise from the ocean.

They will be happy because of the
Lord's greatness.

- ¹⁵ Those people will say,
"People in the east, praise the Lord!
People in faraway lands, praise the
Lord's name.
The Lord is the God of Israel."

- ¹⁶ We will hear songs of praise for God
from every place on earth.
These songs will praise the Good God.

But I say;

"Enough! I have had enough!

The things I see are terrible.

Traitors* are turning against people and
hurting them.

- ¹⁷ I see danger for the people living in the
land.

I see, fear, holes, and traps for them.

- ¹⁸ People will hear about danger
and they will be scared.
Some of the people will run away.
But they will fall into holes and be
trapped.
Some of those people will climb out of
the holes.
But they will be caught in another trap."
The flood gates in the skies above will
open;
(the floods will begin).
The foundations of the earth will begin to
shake.
¹⁹ There will be earthquakes.
And the earth will split open.
²⁰ The sins of the world are very heavy.
So the earth will fall under that weight.
The earth will shake like an old house.
The earth will fall like a drunk person.
The earth will not be able to continue.

- ²¹ At that time, the Lord will judge
the heavenly armies in heaven

and the earthly kings on earth.

- ²² Many, many people will be gathered
together.

Some of these people have been locked in
the Pit.

Some of these people have been in
prison.*

But finally, after much time, they will
be judged.

- ²³ The Lord will rule as king on Mount
Zion* in Jerusalem.
His Glory will be before the elders.*
His Glory will be so bright that,
the moon will be embarrassed,
the sun will be ashamed.

A Song of Praise to God

25 Lord, you are my God.
I honor you and praise your
name.

You have done amazing things.

The words you said long ago are
completely true.

Everything has happened the way you
said it would.

- ² You have destroyed the city.
It was a city protected by strong walls.
But now it is only a pile of rocks.
The foreign palace has been destroyed.
It will never be built again.

- ³ People from powerful nations will honor
you.
Powerful people from strong cities will
fear you.

- ⁴ Lord, you are a safe place for poor
people that have needs.
Many problems begin to defeat these
people,
but you protect them.
Lord, you are like a house protecting
people from floods and heat.

Pit ... prison This is probably "Sheol," the grave.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

elders Older men that were city leaders; they helped make
decisions for the people.

Traitors People that turn against their country, friends, or
family and do bad things to them.

Troubles are like terrible winds and rain.

The rain hits the wall and runs down,
and the people in the house are not hurt.

- ⁵ The enemy shouts and makes noise.
The terrible enemy shouts challenges.
But you, God, will stop them.
Heat makes a land weak during a hot, dry time.

In the same way, you will be stronger
than the enemy.

Thick clouds stop the summer heat.

In the same way, you will stop the
shouts of the terrible enemy.

God's Banquet for His Servants

⁶ At that time, the Lord All-Powerful will give a feast for all the people on this mountain. At the feast, there will be the best foods and wines. The meat will be tender and good.

⁷ But now, there is a veil* covering all nations and people. This veil is called, "death." ⁸ But death will be destroyed forever.* And the Lord my Master will wipe away every tear from every face. In the past, all of his people were sad. But God will take away that sadness from the earth. All of this will happen because the Lord said it would.

- ⁹ At that time, people will say,
"Here is our God!
He is the One we have been waiting for.
He has come to save us.
We have been waiting for our Lord.
So we will rejoice and be happy when
the Lord saves us."

- ¹⁰ The Lord's hand (power) is on this mountain.
And Moab* will be defeated.
The Lord will trample (walk on) the enemy.

It will be like walking on straw in a pile of waste.

- ¹¹ The Lord will spread his arms
like a person that is swimming.
Then the Lord will gather all the things
the people are proud of.
The Lord will gather all the beautiful
things they have made.
And the Lord will throw those things
down.
¹² The Lord will destroy the people's high
walls and safe places.
The Lord will throw them down into the
dust on the ground.

A Song of Praise to God

26 At that time, people will sing this song in Judah:

The Lord gives us our salvation;
we have a strong city,
and our city has strong walls and
defenses.

- ² Open the gates and the good people will enter.
Those people follow God's good way of living.

- ³ You, Lord, give true peace.
You give peace to people that depend on you.
You give peace to people that trust you.

- ⁴ So, trust the Lord always.
You must truly trust the Lord Yah,*
forever.

- ⁵ But the Lord will destroy the proud city.
And he will punish the people living there.

The Lord will throw that high city down
to the ground.
It will fall into the dust.

- ⁶ Then poor and humble people will walk
on those ruins.

veil A piece of cloth used to cover a person's face.

death ... forever This can also be translated, "death will be swallowed in victory."

Moab Or "the enemy." This name is like a Hebrew word meaning, "enemy."

Lord Yah Literally, "Yah Yahweh." The Hebrew name for God.

- ⁷ Honesty is the way of living for good people.
Good people follow the way that is straight and true.
And God, you make that way smooth and easy to follow.
- ⁸ But Lord, we are waiting for your way of justice.
Our souls want to remember you and your name.
- ⁹ My soul wants to be with you at night.
And the spirit in me wants to be with you
at the dawning of every new day.
When your way of justice comes to the land,
people will learn the right way of living.
- ¹⁰ An evil person will not learn to do good
if you show him only kindness.
An evil person will continue doing bad things,
even if he lives in a good world.
That evil person might never see the Lord's greatness.
- ¹¹ But Lord, if you punish those people,
they will see it.
Lord, show the evil people the strong love* that you have for your people.
Then evil people will become ashamed.
Your enemies will be burned in their own fire (*evil*).
- ¹² Lord, you have succeeded in doing all the things that we tried to do.
So give us peace.

God Will Give New Life to His People

- ¹³ Lord, you are our God.
But in the past, we followed other lords.*
We belonged to other masters.
But now we want people to remember only one name, your name!

- ¹⁴ Those false gods are not alive.
Those ghosts will not rise from death.
You decided to destroy them.
And you destroyed everything that makes us think about them.
- ¹⁵ You have helped the nation you love.
You stopped other people from defeating that nation.
- ¹⁶ Lord, people remember you when they are in trouble.
People say quiet prayers to you when you punish them.
- ¹⁷ Lord, when we are not with you,
we are like a woman giving birth to a baby.
She cries and has pain from birth.
- ¹⁸ In the same way, we have pain.
We give birth, but only to wind.
We don't make new people for the world.
We don't bring salvation to the land.
- ¹⁹ Your people have died,
but they will live again.
The bodies of my people will rise from death.
- Dead people in the ground,
stand and be happy!
The dew covering you is like the light of a new day;
it shows a new time is coming.
People are now buried in the ground,
but they will have new life.

Judgment: Reward or Punishment

- ²⁰ My people, go into your rooms.
Lock your doors.
Hide in your rooms for a short time.
Hide until God's anger is finished.
- ²¹ The Lord will leave his place.*
The Lord will judge the people of the world
for the bad things they have done.
The earth will show the blood of the people that have been killed.

strong love This Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

lords This word means "husbands," "lords," and "Beals" (false gods).

his place Probably the temple in Jerusalem.

The earth will not cover the dead people any more.

27 At that time, the Lord will judge Leviathan,* the crooked snake.

The Lord will use his great sword, his hard and powerful sword, and he will punish Leviathan, the coiled snake.

The Lord will kill the large creature in the sea.*

² At that time, people will sing about the pleasant vineyard.*

³ "I, the Lord, will care for that garden. I will water the garden at the right time. I will guard that garden day and night. No one will hurt that garden.

⁴ I am not angry. But if anyone builds a wall of thorn bushes* in war, then I will march to it, and burn it.

⁵ But if any person comes to me for safety and wants to make peace with me, he should come and make peace with me.

⁶ People will come to me, And those people will help Jacob to be strong, like a plant with good roots. Those people will cause Israel to grow like a plant beginning to bloom. Then the land will be filled with the children of Israel, like fruit from plants."

Leviathan The Dragon, or giant snake. Some ancient stories say the Dragon was an enemy of God.

large ... sea This is probably Rahab. Some ancient stories tell of Rahab fighting with God.

vineyard A garden for growing grapes.

a wall of thorn bushes Literally, "thorns and thistles." Farmers planted walls of thorn bushes around vineyards to protect them from animals. See Isaiah 5:3.

God "Divorces" Israel

⁷How will the Lord punish his people? In the past, enemies hurt the people. Will the Lord hurt them that same way? In the past, many, many people were killed. Will the Lord do the same thing and kill many people?

⁸The Lord will settle his argument with Israel by sending her far away. The Lord will speak harshly to Israel. His words will burn like the hot desert wind.

⁹How will Jacob's guilt be forgiven? What will happen so his sins can be taken away? [These things will happen:] The rocks of the altar will be crushed to dust; the statues* and altars* for worshiping false gods will all be destroyed.

¹⁰At that time, the great city will be empty—it will be like a desert. All the people will be gone—they will run away. That city will be like an open pasture. Young cattle will eat grass there. The cattle will eat leaves from the branches of the vines. ¹¹The vines will become dry. And the branches will break off. Women will use those branches for firewood.

The people refuse to understand. So God, their Maker, will not comfort them. Their Maker will not be kind to them.

¹²At that time, the Lord will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River.* The Lord will gather all his people from the Euphrates River to the River of Egypt.*

You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one. ¹³Many of my people are now lost in Assyria.* Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time, a great trumpet will be blown. And all those people will come back to Jerusalem. Those people will

statues Idols, statues of false gods that people worshiped.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices as gifts to God.

separating his people ... Euphrates River

Literally, "He will begin threshing at the stream of the river." This Hebrew word for stream is like the word meaning "head of grain."

Euphrates ... Egypt These are the borders of the land God promised to give to Israel.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

bow down before the Lord on that holy mountain.

Warnings to North Israel

28 Look at Samaria!

The drunk people of Ephraim are proud of that city.

That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.

The people of Samaria think their city is a beautiful crown of flowers.

But they are drunk with wine.

And this "Beautiful Crown" is just a dying plant.

- ¹ Look, my Master has a person that is strong and brave.

That person will come into the country, like a storm of hail and rain.

He will come like a storm into the country.

He will be like a powerful stream of water flooding the country.

He will throw that crown (*Samaria*) down to the ground.

- ² The drunk people of Ephraim are proud of their "Beautiful Crown."

But that city will be walked on.

- ⁴ That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.

But that "Beautiful Crown of Flowers" is only a dying plant.

That city will be like the first figs of summer.

When a person sees one of those figs, he quickly picks the fig and eats it.

⁵At that time, the Lord All-Powerful will become the "Beautiful Crown." He will be the "Wonderful Crown of Flowers" for his people that are left. ⁶Then the Lord will give wisdom to the judges that rule his people. The Lord will give strength to the people in battles at the city gates. ⁷But now those leaders are drunk. The priests and prophets are all drunk with wine and beer. They stumble and fall down. The prophets are drunk when they see their dreams. The judges are drunk when they make their

decisions. ⁸Every table is covered with vomit. There is not a clean place anywhere.

God Wants to Help His People

⁹The Lord is trying to teach a lesson to these people. The Lord is trying to make the people understand his teachings. But the people are like little babies. They are like babies that were at their mother's breast only a very short time ago. ¹⁰So the Lord speaks to them like they are babies.:

Saw lasaw saw lasaw

Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw

Ze'er sham ze'er sham.*

¹¹The Lord will use this strange way of talking and he will use other languages to speak to these people.

¹²In the past God spoke to those people, and he said, "Here is a resting place. This is the peaceful place. Let the tired people come and rest. This is the place of peace."

But the people did not want to listen to God. ¹³So the words from God were like a foreign language:*

Saw lasaw saw lasaw.

Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw.

Ze'er sham ze'er sham.*

The people did like they wanted to do. So the people fell back and were defeated. The people were trapped and captured.

No One Escapes God's Judgment

¹⁴You leaders in Jerusalem should listen to the Lord's message. But now you refuse to listen to him. ¹⁵You people say, "We have made an agreement with death. We have a contract with Sheol—the place of death. So we will not be punished. Punishment will pass us without hurting us. We will hide behind our tricks and lies."

Saw lasaw ... ze'er sham This is probably a Hebrew song to teach little children how to write. It sounds like baby talk or a foreign language, but it can also be translated, "A command here, a command there. A rule here, a rule there. A lesson here, a lesson there."

foreign language Or, "gibberish" or "baby talk."

¹⁶Because of those things, the Lord my Master says, "I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion.* This will be a very precious stone.* Everything will be built on this very important rock. Any person that trusts in that rock will not be disappointed."

¹⁷"People use, a measuring line with a weight to show a wall is straight. In the same way, I will use justice and goodness to show what is right."

"You evil people are trying to hide behind your lies and tricks. But you will be punished. It will be like, a storm or a flood is coming to destroy your hiding places. Your agreement with death will be erased. Your contract with Sheol* will not help you."

"Some person will come and punish you. He will make you like the dirt he walks on. That person will come and take you away. Your punishment will be terrible. Your punishment will come early in the morning, and it will continue late into the night."

²⁴"Then you will understand this story: A man tried to sleep on a bed that was too short for him. And he had a blanket that was not wide enough to cover him. The bed and blanket were useless, and so were your agreements."

²⁵The Lord will fight like he did at Mount Perazim. The Lord will be angry like he was in Gibeon Valley.* Then the Lord will do the things he must do. The Lord will do some strange things. But he will finish his work. His work is a stranger's job. ²⁶Now, you must not fight against those things. If you do, the ropes around you will become tighter.

The words I heard will not change. Those words came from the Lord All-Powerful, the ruler of all the earth. And those things will be done.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

very precious stone This also means a stone has been tested and shown that it has no cracks.

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die. Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where our spirits go.

Mount ... Valley See 1 Chronicles 14:8-17.

The Lord Punishes Fairly

²Listen closely to the message I am telling you. ³Does a farmer plow his field all the time? No! Does he work the soil all the time? No! ⁴A farmer prepares the ground, and then he plants the seed. A farmer plants different kinds of seeds different ways. A farmer scatters dill seeds. A farmer throws cummin seeds on the ground. And a farmer plants wheat in rows. A farmer plants barley in its special place, and he plants spelt* seeds at the edge of his field.

⁵Our God is using this to teach you a lesson. This example, shows us that God is fair when he punishes his people. ⁶Does a farmer use large boards with sharp teeth to crush dill seeds? No! Does a farmer use a wagon to crush cummin seeds? No! A farmer uses a small stick to break the hulls from these seeds of grain.

⁷When a woman makes bread, she works and presses the dough with her hands, but she does not do this forever. The Lord punishes his people in the same way. He will scare them with the wagon wheel, but he will not crush them completely. He will not allow many horses* to trample (walk on) them. ⁸This lesson comes from the Lord All-Powerful. The Lord gives wonderful advice. God is truly wise.

God's Love for Jerusalem

29 God says,

"Look at Ariel!*

Ariel, the city where David camped.

Her holidays have continued year after year.

² I have punished Ariel.

That city has been filled with sadness and crying.

But she has always been my Ariel.

³ "I have put armies all around you, Ariel.* I raised war towers against you.

⁴ You were defeated and, pulled to the

spelt A type of grain.

horses This word also means "horse soldiers."

Ariel A name for the altar at the temple in Jerusalem. This name means "hearth" or "fireplace."

ground.
Now, I hear your voice rising from the
ground
like the voice of a ghost.
Your words come like a quiet voice
from the dirt."

- ⁵ There are many strangers there—
like very small pieces of dust.
There are many cruel people—
like chaff* blowing in the wind.
⁶ The Lord All-Powerful punished you.
The Lord punished you using thunder,
earthquakes, and great noises.
The Lord used storms, strong winds,
and fire that burned and destroyed.
⁷ Many, many nations have fought against
Ariel.*

It has been like a terrible dream in the
night.

Armies have come around Ariel and
punished her.

- ⁸ But it will also be like a dream to the
armies.

Those armies will not get the things
they want.

It will be like a hungry man dreaming
about food.

When the man wakes, he is still hungry.

It will be like a thirsty man dreaming
about water.

The man wakes, and he is still thirsty.

The same thing is true about all the
nations fighting against Zion.*

Those nations will not get the things
they want.

- ⁹ Be surprised and amazed!

You will become drunk—but not from
wine.

Look and be amazed!

You will stumble and fall—but not from
beer.

- ¹⁰ The Lord will make you sleepy.
The Lord will close your eyes.
(The prophets are your eyes.)
The Lord will cover your heads.
(The prophets are your heads.)

¹¹ I tell you these things will happen, but
you don't understand me. My words, are like
the words in a book that is closed and sealed.*

¹² You can give the book to a person that can
read, and tell that person to read the book. But
that person will say, "I can't read the book. It is
closed and I can't open it." Or you can give the
book to a person that can't read, and tell that
person to read the book. That person will say,
"I can't read the book because I don't know
how to read."

¹³ My Master says, "These people say they
love me. They show honor to me with words
from their mouths. But their hearts are far from
me. The honor they show me is nothing but
human rules they have memorized. "So I will
continue to amaze these people by doing
powerful and amazing things. Their wise men
will lose their wisdom. Their wise men will not
be able to understand."

¹⁴ Those people try to hide things from the
Lord. They think the Lord will not understand.
Those people do their evil things in darkness.
Those people tell themselves, "No person can
see us. No person will know who we are."

¹⁵ You are confused. You think the clay is
equal to the potter.* You think that something
made can tell the person that made it, "You did
not make me!" This is like a pot telling its
maker, "You don't understand."

A Better Time Is Coming

¹⁶ This is the truth: After a short time,
Lebanon will have rich soil like Mount
Carmel.* And Mount Carmel will be like a

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds
of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds and let
the wind blow the useless chaff away.

Ariel A name for the altar at the temple in Jerusalem. This
name means "hearth" or "fireplace."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sealed A piece of clay or wax was put on the closed book to
show the book should not be opened.

potter A worker that makes things from clay.

Mount Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for
growing plants. This name means "God's vineyard."

thick forest. ¹⁸The deaf will hear the words in the book. The blind will see through the darkness and fog. ¹⁹The Lord will make the poor people happy. The poor people will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰This will happen when the mean and cruel people are finished. It will happen when those people that enjoy doing bad things are gone. ²¹(Those people lie about good people. They try to trap people in court. They try to destroy innocent people.)

²²So the Lord speaks to Jacob's family. (This is the Lord that made Abraham free.) The Lord says, "Now Jacob (*the people of Israel*) will not be embarrassed and ashamed. ²³He will see all his children, and he will say my name is holy. I made these children with my hands. And these children will say that the Holy One (*God*) of Jacob is very special. These children will respect the God of Israel. ²⁴Many of these people did not understand, so they did wrong things. These people did not understand, but they will learn their lesson."

Israel Should Trust God, Not Egypt

30 The Lord said, "Look at these children. They don't obey me. They make plans, but they don't ask me to help them. They make agreements with other nations, but my Spirit does not want those agreements. These people are adding more and more sins to themselves. ²These children are going down to Egypt for help, but they did not ask me if that was the right thing to do. They hope they will be saved by the Pharaoh.* They want Egypt to protect them.

³"But I tell you, hiding in Egypt will not help you. Egypt will not be able to protect you. ⁴Your leaders have gone to Zoan* and your ambassadors have gone to Hanes.* ⁵But they will be disappointed. They are depending on a nation that can't help them. Egypt is useless—Egypt will give no help. Egypt will cause only shame and embarrassment."

Pharaoh A title for the kings of Egypt.

Zoan A city in the country Egypt.

Hanes A city in the country Egypt.

God's Message to Judah

⁶The sad message about the animals in the Negev:*

The Negev is a dangerous place. This land is full of lions, and adders,* and fast snakes.* But some people are traveling through the Negev—they are going to Egypt. Those people have put their wealth on the backs of donkeys. Those people have put their treasure on the backs of camels. (This means that, the people are depending on a nation that cannot help. ⁷That useless nation is Egypt. Egypt's help will be worth nothing. So I call Egypt the "Do-Nothing Dragon."

⁸Now write this on a sign so all people can see it. And write this in a book. Write these things for the last days. This will be far, far in the future.

⁹These people are like children that refuse to obey (their parents). They lie and refuse to listen to the Lord's teachings. ¹⁰They tell the prophets, "Don't see dreams* about things we should do! Don't tell us the truth! Say nice things to us and make us feel good! See only good things for us! ¹¹Stop seeing things that will really happen! Get out of our way! Stop telling us about the Holy One of Israel."

Judah's Help Comes Only from God

¹²The Holy One (*God*) of Israel says, "You people have refused to accept this message from the Lord. You people want to depend on fighting and lies to help you. ¹³You are guilty of these things so you are like a tall wall with cracks in it. That wall will fall and break into small pieces. ¹⁴You will be like a large clay jar that breaks and becomes many, many small pieces. Those pieces are useless. You can't use those pieces to get a hot coal from the fire or to get water from a pool in the ground."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

adders Very poisonous snakes.

fast snakes Literally, "flying snakes."

dreams Or "visions." Special kinds of dreams God used to speak to his prophets.

¹⁵The Lord my Master, the Holy One of Israel, says, "If you come back to me you will be saved. The only strength you have will come if you trust me. But you must be calm."

But you don't want to do that! ¹⁶You say, "No, we need horses to run away on!" That is true—you will run away on horses. But the enemy will chase you. And the enemy will be faster than your horses. ¹⁷One enemy will make threats and a thousand of your men will run away. Five enemies will make threats and all of you will run from them. The only thing that will be left of your army will be a flagpole on a hill.

¹⁸The Lord wants to show his mercy to you. The Lord is waiting. The Lord wants to rise and comfort you. The Lord God is fair, and every person that waits for the Lord's help will be blessed (*happy*).

¹⁹The Lord's people will live in Jerusalem on Mount Zion.* You people will not continue crying. The Lord will hear your crying and he will comfort you. The Lord will hear you, and he will help you.

God Will Help His People

²⁰In the past, my Master (*God*) gave you sorrow and hurt—it was like the bread and water you ate every day. But God is your teacher, and he will not continue to hide from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. ²¹Then, if you do wrong and go (*live*) the wrong way (to the right or to the left), you will hear a voice behind you saying, "This is the right way. You should go this way!"

²²You have statues covered with silver and gold. Those false gods have made you dirty (*sinful*). But you will stop serving those false gods. You will throw away those gods like waste and dirty rags.*

²³At that time, the Lord will send rain for you. You will plant seeds in the ground, and the ground will grow food for you. You will have a

very large harvest. You will have plenty of food in the fields for your animals. There will be large fields for your sheep. ²⁴Your cattle and donkeys will have all the food they need. There will be very much food. You will have to use shovels and pitchforks* to spread all the food* for your animals to eat. ²⁵Every mountain and hill will have streams filled with water. These things will happen after many people are killed and the towers are pulled down.

²⁶At that time, the light from the moon will be bright like the sun. The light from the sun will be seven times brighter than now. The light from the sun in one day will be like a full week. These things will happen when the Lord bandages his broken people and heals the hurts from their beatings.

²⁷Look! The Lord's Name is coming from far away. His anger is like a fire with thick clouds of smoke. The Lord's mouth is filled with anger, and his tongue is like a burning fire. ²⁸The Lord's breath (*Spirit*) is like a great river—rising until it reaches the throat. The Lord will judge the nations. It will be like he shakes them through the 'Strainer of Destruction.' The Lord will control them. It will be like a bit* that controls an animal is in the mouths of the people.

²⁹At that time, you will sing happy songs. That time, will be like the nights when you begin a holiday. You are very happy while walking to the Lord's mountain. You are happy while listening to the flute on the way to worship the Lord, the Rock* of Israel.

³⁰The Lord will cause all people to hear his great voice. The Lord will cause all people to see his powerful arm come down with anger. That arm will be like a great fire that burns everything. The Lord's power will be like a great storm with much rain and hail. ³¹Assyria* will be afraid when he hears the Lord's voice.

pitchforks Tools for throwing or spreading hay.

food This was special food that had been allowed to ferment. This made the meat of the animal tender and good.

bit A piece of metal in a horse's mouth used to make the horse go the right way.

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a strong place of safety.

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

You ... rags This also means "You will throw away those gods like menstrual clothes. You will say, 'Go away!'"

The Lord will beat Assyria with a stick.²The Lord will beat Assyria, and it will be like playing music on drums and harps.* The Lord will defeat Assyria with his great arm (*power*).

³Topheth* has been made ready for a long time. It is ready for the king.* It was made very deep and wide. There is a very big pile of wood and fire there. And the Lord's breath (*Spirit*) will come like a stream of burning sulfur and burn it.

Israel Should Depend on God's Power

31 Look at the people going down to Egypt for help. The people ask for horses. They think horses will save them. The people hope the chariots* and horse soldiers from Egypt will protect them. The people think they are safe because that army is very big. The people don't trust the Holy One of Israel (*God*). The people don't ask the Lord for help.

²But, it is the Lord who is wise. And it is the Lord who will bring trouble against them. The people will not be able to change the Lord's command. The Lord will rise and fight against the evil people (*Judah*). And the Lord will fight against the people (*Egypt*) that try to help them.

³The people of Egypt are only human—not God. The horses from Egypt are only animals—not spirit. The Lord will stretch out his arm and the helper (*Egypt*) will be defeated. And the people that wanted help (*Judah*) will fall. All those people will be destroyed together.

⁴The Lord told me: "When a lion or a lion's cub catches an animal to eat, the lion stands over the dead animal and roars. At that time nothing can scare that great lion. If men come and yell at the lion, the lion will not be afraid. The men can make much noise, but the lion will not run away."

In the same way, the Lord All-Powerful will

come down to Mount Zion.* The Lord will fight on that hill.⁵The Lord All-Powerful will defend* Jerusalem—like birds flying over their nests. The Lord will save her. The Lord will "pass over" and save Jerusalem.

⁶You children of Israel turned against God. You should come back to God.⁷Then people would stop worshiping the gold and silver idols you made. You truly sinned when you made those idols. ⁸It is true that Assyria* will be defeated with a sword. But that sword will not be a man's sword. Assyria will be destroyed. But that destruction will not come from a man's sword. Assyria will run away from God's sword. But the young men will be caught and made slaves. ⁹Their place of safety will be destroyed. Their leaders will be defeated and leave their flag.

The Lord said all those things. The Lord's fireplace (*altar*) is on Zion*. The Lord's oven (*altar*) is in Jerusalem.

Leaders Should Be Good and Fair

32 Listen to the things I say! A king should rule in a way that brings goodness. Leaders should make fair decisions when they lead the people. ²If this would happen,, then the king* would be like a place to hide from the wind and rain. It would be like having streams of water in a dry land. It would be like a cool shadow from a large rock in a hot land. ³People would turn to the king for help, and people would truly listen to the things he says. ⁴People that are now confused would be able to understand. People that can't speak clearly now would be able to speak clearly and quickly. ⁵Foolish people would not be called great men. People would not respect men that make secret plans.

⁶A foolish person* says foolish things, and in his heart (*mind*), plans evil things to do. A foolish person wants to do things that are

harps Musical instruments with several strings.

Topheth Gehenna; the Valley of Hinnom. In this valley people killed their children to honor the false god, "Molech."

king This is like the name of the false god, "Molech."

chariots Small wagons used for war.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

defend Literally, "fight on" or "fight against."

Assyria This was a powerful nation northeast of Israel.

foolish person A person that does not follow God and his wise teachings.

wrong. A foolish person says bad things about the Lord. A foolish person does not let hungry people eat food. A foolish person does not let thirsty people drink water. ⁷That foolish person uses evil like a tool. He plans ways to take everything from poor people. That foolish person tells lies about the poor people. And his lies keep the poor people from being judged fairly.

⁸But a good leader plans good things to do. And those good things make him a good leader.

Hard Times Are Coming

⁹Some of you women are calm now. You feel safe. But you should stand and listen to the words I say. ¹⁰You women feel safe now, but after one year you will be troubled. *Why?* Because you will not gather grapes next year—there will be no grapes to gather.

¹¹Women, you are calm now, but you should be afraid! Women, you feel safe now, but you should be worried! Take off your nice clothes and put on your clothes of sadness. Wrap those clothes around your waist. ¹²Put those clothes of sadness over your sorrow-filled breasts.

Cry because your fields are empty. Your vineyards* once gave grapes—but now they are empty. ¹³Cry for the land of my people. Cry because only thorns and weeds will grow there. Cry for the city and for all the houses that were once filled with joy.

¹⁴People will leave the capital city. The palace and towers will be left empty. People will not live in houses—they will live in caves. Wild donkeys and sheep will live in the city—animals will go there to eat grass.

^{15,16}This will continue until God gives us his Spirit from above. Now there is no goodness in the land—it is like a desert. *But in the future,* that desert will be like the land of Carmel*—fair judgment will live there. And Carmel will be like a green forest—goodness will live there. ¹⁷That goodness will bring peace and safety forever. ¹⁸My people will live in the beautiful

field of peace. My people will live in tents of safety. They will live in calm and peaceful places.

¹⁹But before these things happen, the forest must fall. That city must be defeated. ²⁰Some of you people plant seeds near every stream of water. You let your cattle and donkeys walk around and eat freely. You people will be very happy.

Evil Causes Only More Evil

33 Look, you people make war and steal things from people, and those people never stole anything from you. You turn against people, and those people never turned against you. So when you stop stealing, other people will begin stealing from you. When you stop turning against people, other people will start turning against you. *Then you will say,*

¹ Lord, be kind to us.

We have waited for your help.

Lord, give us strength every morning.

Save us when we are in trouble.

² Your powerful voice scares people, and they run away from you.

Your greatness causes the nations to run away.

³You people stole things in war. Those things will be taken from you. Many, many people will come and take your wealth. It will be like the times when locusts* come and eat all your crops.

⁴The Lord is very great. He lives in a very high place. The Lord fills Zion* with fairness and goodness.

⁵Jerusalem, you are rich—you are rich with wisdom and knowledge of God. You are rich with salvation. You respect the Lord and that makes you rich. So you can know that you will continue.

⁶But listen! The angels are crying outside. The messengers* that bring peace are crying

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. Locusts can destroy a large crop very quickly.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

messengers This word also means "angels."

vineyards Gardens for growing grapes.

Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for growing plants.

This name means, "God's vineyard."

very hard. ⁸The roads are destroyed. No one is walking in the streets. People have broken the agreements they made. People refuse to believe the proof from witnesses.* No one respects other people. ⁹The land is sick and dying. Lebanon* is dying and Sharon Valley* is dry and empty. Bashan* and Carmel* once grew beautiful plants—but now those plants have stopped growing.

¹⁰The Lord says, "Now, I will stand and show my greatness. Now, I will become important to the people. ¹¹You people have done useless things. Those things are like hay and straw. They are worth nothing! Your spirit* will be like a fire and burn you. ¹²People will be burned until their bones are like lime.* The people will burn quickly like thorns and dry bushes.

¹³"You people in faraway lands, hear about the things I have done. You people that are near me, learn about my power."

¹⁴The sinners in Zion* are afraid. The people that do wrong things shake with fear. They say, "Can any of us live through this fire that destroys? Who can live near this fire that burns forever?"*

¹⁵Good, honest people that refuse to hurt others for money—they will live through that fire. Those people refuse to take bribes. They refuse to listen to plans to murder other people. They refuse to look at plans for doing bad things. ¹⁶Those people will live safely in high places. They will be protected in high rock fortresses. Those people will always have food and water.

witnesses Literally, "cities." The Hebrew word is like the word meaning "witnesses."

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

Sharon Valley The low land along the coast of Palestine.

Bashan An area northeast of Israel.

Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for growing plants.

This name means "God's vineyard."

spirit Or, "Spirit."

lime A white powder that is often used to make mortar or cement. It can be made by burning bones, shells, or limestone.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

fire ... forever This might mean God, the Fire (Light) of Israel.

¹⁷Your eyes will see the King (God) in his beauty. You will see the great land. ¹⁸¹⁹You will think about the troubles you had in the past. You will think, "Where are those people from other countries? Those people spoke languages we could not understand. Where are those officials and tax collectors from other lands? Where are the spies that counted our defense towers? They are all gone!"

God Will Protect Jerusalem

¹Look at Zion*, the city of our religious holidays. Look at Jerusalem—that beautiful place of rest. Jerusalem is like a tent that will never be moved. The pegs that hold her in place will never be pulled up. Her ropes will never be broken. ²³Why? Because the Powerful Lord is there. That land is a place with streams and wide rivers. But there will be no enemy boats or powerful ships on those rivers. You men that work on those boats can quit your work with the ropes. You can't make the mast* strong enough. You will not be able to open your sails. Why? Because the Lord is our judge.* The Lord makes our laws. The Lord is our king. He saves us. So the Lord will give us much wealth. Even crippled people will win great wealth in war. ⁴No person living there will say, "I am sick." The people living there are people whose sins are forgiven.

God Will Punish His Enemies

34 All you nations, come near and listen! All you people should listen closely. The earth and all the people on the earth should listen to these things. ²The Lord is angry at all the nations and their armies. The Lord will destroy them all. He will cause them all to be killed. ³Their bodies will be thrown outside. The stink will rise from the bodies, and the blood will flow down the mountains. ⁴The skies will be rolled shut like a scroll.* And the stars

mast The pole that holds the sail on a sailboat.

judge In Israel judges were leaders that judged, led, and protected the people.

rolled ... scroll This is like a person closing a book when he has finished reading it.

will die and fall like leaves from a vine or a fig tree. All the stars* in the sky will melt away. ⁷The Lord says, "This will happen when my sword in the sky is covered with blood."

Look! The Lord's sword will cut through Edom.* The Lord judged those people guilty, and they must die.* ⁸"Why? Because the Lord decided there should be a time for killing in Bozrah* and in Edom. ⁹So the rams, the cattle, and the strong bulls will be killed. The land will be filled with their blood. The dirt will be covered with their fat.

¹⁰Those things will happen, because the Lord has chosen a time for punishment. The Lord has chosen a year when people must pay for the wrong things they did to Zion.* ¹¹Edom's rivers will be like hot tar.* Edom's ground will be like burning sulfur.* ¹²The fires will burn day and night—no person will stop the fire. The smoke will rise from Edom forever. That land will be destroyed forever and ever. No people will ever travel through that land again. ¹³Birds and small animals will own that land. Owls and ravens will live there. That land will be called "Empty Desert."* ¹⁴The freemen* and leaders will all be gone. And there will be nothing left for them to rule.

¹⁵Thorns and wild bushes will grow in all the beautiful homes there. Wild dogs and owls will live in those homes. Wild animals will make their homes there. Big birds will live in the grasses that grow there. ¹⁶Wild cats will live

there with hyenas.* And wild goats* will call to their friends. Night animals* will look there and find a place to rest. ¹⁷Snakes will make their homes there. Snakes will lay their eggs there. The eggs will open, and small snakes will crawl from those dark places. Birds that eat dead things will gather like women visiting their friends.

¹⁸Look at the Lord's scroll.* Read what is written there. Nothing is missing. It is written in that scroll that those animals will be together. God said he will gather them together. So God's Spirit will gather them together.. ¹⁹God decided what he should do with them. Then God chose a place for them. God drew a line and showed them their land. So the animals will own that land forever. They will live there year after year.

God Will Comfort His People

35 The dry desert will become very happy. The desert will be glad and will grow like a flower. ²The desert will be full of growing flowers and will begin to show its happiness. It will seem like the desert is dancing with joy. The desert will be beautiful like the forest of Lebanon,* the hill of Carmel,* and Sharon Valley.* ³This will happen because all people will see God's glory. People will see our Lord's greatness.

⁴Make the weak arms strong again. Make the weak knees strong. ⁵People are afraid and confused. Say to those people, "Be strong! Don't be afraid!" Look, your God will come and punish your enemies. He will come and give you your reward. The Lord will save you.

stars Literally, "the armies of the skies."

Edom A country east of Judah.

guilty ... die The Hebrew means the people belonged completely to God, and if he does not get them, they must die.

Bozrah A city in Edom.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

tar A very thick oil that must be heated to become liquid.

sulfur A yellow chemical that looks like rock or dirt. Sulfur burns with a hot flame, and it gives a bad odor when it burns.

Empty Desert Literally, "They will measure this city with the measuring string called 'emptiness' and stone weights called 'nothingness.'" These words described the empty earth in Genesis 1:2.

freemen Important citizens of a town or country. These people came from 'good families' and had never been slaves.

hyenas A kind of wild dog that often eats the meat of dead animals that other animals killed.

wild goats This Hebrew word means "goat, or goat-demon."

Night animals Or, "Lilith, the night demon." This name is like the Hebrew word for night.

scroll A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for growing plants. This name means "God's vineyard."

Sharon Valley The low land along the coast of Palestine.

'Then the blind people will be able to see again. Their eyes will be opened. Then the deaf people will be able to hear. Their ears will be opened. 'Crippled people will dance like deer. And the people that can't talk now will use their voices to sing happy songs. This will happen when springs of water begin flowing in the desert. Springs will flow in the dry land. 'Now people see mirages* (that look like water). But at that time there will be real pools of water. There will be wells in the dry land. Water will flow from the ground. Tall water plants will grow where wild animals once ruled.

'At that time, there will be a road there. This highway will be called "The Holy Road." Evil people will not be allowed to walk on that road. No fools* will go to that road. Only good people will walk on that road. 'There will be no dangers on that road. There will be no lions on that road to hurt people. There will be no dangerous animals on that road. That road will be for the people God saves.

"God will make his people free! And those people will come back to him. The people will be happy when they come into Zion.* The people will be happy forever. Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads. Their gladness and joy will fill them completely. Sorrow and sadness will be gone far, far away.

The Assyrians Invade Judah

36 Hezekiah* was the king of Judah. Sennacherib* was the king of Assyria. During Hezekiah's 14th year as king, Sennacherib fought against the cities of Judah. And Sennacherib defeated those cities. 'Sennacherib sent his commander to fight against Jerusalem. The commander left Lachish

and went to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. That commander led his powerful army with him. The commander and his army went to the road near Laundryman's Field. This road is near the aqueduct* that comes from the upper pool.

'Three men from Jerusalem went out to talk with the commander. These men were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son of Asaph, and Shebna. Eliakim was the palace manager. Joah was the record keeper. And Shebna was the royal secretary.

'The commander told them, "You men tell King Hezekiah these things:

"The Great King, the king of Assyria says, 'What are you trusting in to help you? 'I tell you if you are trusting in power and smart plans for battle—then that is useless. Those are nothing but empty words. So, why are you fighting against me? 'Now I ask you, who are you trusting to help you? Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only hurt you and make a hole in your hand. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, can't be trusted by any of the people that depend on him for help.'

"'But maybe you will say, 'We are trusting in the Lord our God to help us.' But I say, Hezekiah destroyed the Lord's altars* and high places of worship.* This is true, right? It is true that Hezekiah told Judah and Jerusalem these things: 'You will worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem.'

"'If you still want to fight, my lord, the king of Assyria will make this agreement with you: The king says, 'I will give you 2,000 horses if you can find enough men to ride those horses into battle.' 'But even then you will not be able to defeat one of my lord's slaves,

mirages In the desert, heat rising from the ground looks like water from far away. This is a mirage.

fools Here this means people that do not follow God and his wise teachings.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Hezekiah A king of Judah. He ruled about 727-687 B.C.

Sennacherib A king of Assyria. He was king about 706-681 B.C.

aqueduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another.

altars Stone tables used for burning sacrifices as gifts to God.

high ... worship Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were usually on the hills and mountains.

not even one of his smallest officers. So why do you continue to depend on Egypt's horses and chariots?

¹⁰"Also, remember that the Lord was with me when I came and fought in this country. The Lord was with me when I destroyed the cities. The Lord told me, 'Stand up! Go to this country and destroy it!'"

¹¹The three men from Jerusalem, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, told the commander, "Please, speak to us in the Aramaic language. Don't speak to us in our Jewish language. If you use the Jewish language, the people on the city walls will understand you."

¹²But the commander said, "My master did not send me to tell these things only to you and your master Hezekiah. My master sent me to also tell these things to those people sitting on the walls. Those people will not have enough food or water either; they too will eat their waste and drink their urine just like you."

¹³Then the commander stood and spoke with a very loud voice. He spoke in the Jewish language. ¹⁴The commander said, "Listen to the words from the great king, the king of Assyria:

"Don't let Hezekiah fool you. He will not be able to save you. ¹⁵Don't believe Hezekiah when he says, 'Trust in the Lord! The Lord will save us. The Lord will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city.'

¹⁶"Don't listen to those words from Hezekiah. Listen to the king of Assyria. The king of Assyria says, 'We should make an agreement. You people should come out of the city to me. Then every person will be free to go home. Every person will be free to eat grapes from his own vine. And every person will be free to eat the figs from his own fig tree. Every person will be free to drink water from his own well. ¹⁷You can do this until I come and take each of you to a country like your own. In that new country you will have good grain and

new wine. That land will have food and fields of grapes.'

¹⁸"Don't let Hezekiah fool you. He says, 'The Lord will save us.' But I ask you, did any of the gods of other nations save their people from Assyria's power? No! We defeated every one of those people. ¹⁹Where are the gods of Hamath* and Arpad?* (They are defeated!) Where are the gods of Sepharvaim?* (They are defeated!) And did the gods* of Samaria* save those people from my power? No! ²⁰Tell me the name of one god from all those nations that saved his people from my power. I defeated them all. So, the Lord will not save Jerusalem from my power."

²¹The people in Jerusalem were very quiet. They did not answer the commander. (Hezekiah had given a command to the people. Hezekiah said, "Don't answer the commander.")

²²Then the palace manager (Eliakim son of Hilkiah), the royal secretary (Shebna), and the record keeper* (Joah son of Asaph) tore their clothes. *(This showed that they were very sad.)* The three men went to Hezekiah and told him all the things that the commander had told them.

Hezekiah Asks God to Help

37 Hezekiah listened to the message from the commander. When he heard the message, Hezekiah tore his clothes. Then Hezekiah put on the special clothes of sadness and went to the Lord's temple.* ²Hezekiah sent the palace director (Eliakim), the royal

Hamath A city in the country Syria.

Arpad A city in the country Syria.

Sepharvaim A city in the country Syria.

gods Or "God."

Samaria The capital city of north Israel.

record keeper A person that wrote about the things the king did.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

secretary (Shebna), and the elders (*leaders*) of the priests* to the prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz. These three men wore special clothes of sadness.

³These men told Isaiah, "King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day. It will be like a day when a child should be born, but is not strong enough to come from its mother. 'Maybe the Lord, your God, will listen to the things the commander said. The king of Assyria sent the commander to say very bad things about the living God. And the Lord, your God, heard those evil things. Please pray for the few people of Israel that are left.'"

⁴"Hezekiah's servants went to Isaiah. Isaiah told them, 'Tell your rulers these things: The Lord says, 'Don't be afraid of the things you heard from the commander! Don't believe the evil things those "boys" from the king of Assyria said about me. 'Look, I will send a spirit against Assyria. The king of Assyria will get a report warning him about a danger to his country. So, he will go back to his country. At that time, I will kill him with a sword in his own country.'"

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

⁵"The king of Assyria got a report. The report said, "Tirhakah,* the king of Ethiopia,* is coming to fight you." So, the king of Assyria left Lachish and went to Libnah. The commander heard this, and he went to the city Libnah, where the king of Assyria was fighting. Then the commander sent messengers to Hezekiah. The commander said, ⁶"You should tell these things to Hezekiah, the king of Judah:

Don't be fooled by the god you trust.
Don't say, 'God will not let Jerusalem be
defeated by the king of Assyria.'

⁷"Listen, you have heard about the kings of Assyria; they have defeated the people in every country. And the king of Assyria will also defeat and kill you. ⁸"Did the gods of those people save them? No! My fathers (*ancestors*) destroyed them. My people defeated the cities Gozan, Haran, Rezeph, and the people in Eden* living in Tel Assar. ⁹"Where are the kings of Hamath and Arpad? Where is the king of Sepharvaim? Where are the kings of Hena and Ivvah? 'They are finished! They were all destroyed!'"

Hezekiah Prays to God

¹⁰Hezekiah took the message from the men and read it. Then Hezekiah went to the Lord's temple.* Hezekiah opened the message and laid it before the Lord. ¹¹Hezekiah began praying to the Lord. Hezekiah said:

"Lord All-Powerful, God of Israel, you sit as king on the Cherub angels.* You, and only you, are the God that rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made the heavens and the earth. ¹²"Hear me! Open your eyes and see this message from Sennacherib. Sennacherib sent this message to me. This message says evil things about you, the living God.

¹³"Lord, the kings of Assyria really have destroyed all the countries and their lands. ¹⁴"The kings of Assyria have burned the gods of those nations. But those were not true gods. They were only statues that men made. They were only wood and rock. So they were lost and destroyed. ¹⁵"But you are the Lord our God. So please save us from the power of the king of Assyria. Then all the other

priests Special religious leaders that made sacrifices for the people.

Tirhakah This is probably Taharqa, the pharaoh of Egypt about 690-664 B.C.

Ethiopia Literally, "Cush," a country in Africa by the Red Sea.

Eden Beth Eden, an area in the country Syria.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Cherub angels Special angels God used as messengers. Statues of these angels were on the top of the Box of the Agreement.

nations will know that you are the Lord,
and you are the only Lord.

God's Answer to Hezekiah

²¹Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah. Isaiah said, "You prayed to the Lord, the God of Israel. You prayed about the message that came from Sennacherib. ²²The Lord heard your prayer and told me to come to you. This is the message from the Lord:

Bride of Zion (*Jerusalem*),
People have stolen from you.
People have made fun of you.
Daughter of Jerusalem,
People have thought bad things about you.

- ²³ King of Assyria, you have said bad things about me.
You have spoken against me!
Do you know who I am?
Raise your eyes and look up to the heavens.
You will see that you have said bad things about the Holy One (*God*) of Israel."

²⁴Isaiah also said, "You have used your servants to say bad things about my Master, the Lord. You said:

- I have many, many chariots.*
I have brought my chariots across the great mountains of Lebanon.*
I have cut down all the great trees (*armies*) of Lebanon.
²⁵ I have gone to every river of Egypt.
I filled my hands with water from all those rivers.
And I drank that water.
With my own power I have destroyed all the rivers (*power*) of Egypt."

²⁶But the Lord says, "King of Assyria, surely you heard long ago that I, the Lord, did those things. Long, long ago, I myself made

Assyria. And now, I have brought you here. I allowed you to destroy those other cities. I used you to do my work and changed those cities into piles of rocks. ²⁷The people living in those cities were weak. The people were scared and ashamed. Those people were like grass in the field. They were like grass that grows on the tops of houses. That grass is burned by a hot desert wind before it grows tall.

²⁸"I know all about your army and your battles. I know when you rested. I know when you went out to war. I know when you came home from war. I also know that you are angry at me. ²⁹You are angry at me, and you have said bad things about me. I heard the things you said. So I will punish you. I will put a hook in your nose. I will put a bit* in your mouth. Then I will force you to leave my country on the same road you came on."

³⁰Then the Lord said to Hezekiah, "Hezekiah, I will give you a sign to show you these words are true. This year you will have no grain planted to eat. So this year you will eat grain that grew wild from last year's crop. But in three years, you will eat grain that you planted. You will harvest those crops and you will have plenty to eat. You will plant grapevines and eat their fruit.

³¹Some of the people in Judah's family will be saved. (Those few people will become a very large nation. Those people will be like plants that, send their roots deep into the ground and grow strong. Then the people will have much fruit (*children*) above ground. ³²A few people will come from Jerusalem alive. There will be survivors coming from Mount Zion.*" The strong love* of the Lord All-Powerful will do this.

³³So the Lord has a message for the king of Assyria. The Lord says, "You will not enter this city. You will not even shoot an arrow at this city. You will not move to fight against this

bit A piece of metal people put in a horse's mouth to make the horse go in the right way.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

strong love This Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

chariots Small wagons used for war.

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

city with your shields. You will not build a ramp to the city walls. "You will go back to your own country on the same road you came. You will not enter this city." This message was from the Lord.

¹⁹The Lord says, "I will defend and save this city. I will do this for myself, and for David my servant."

²⁰So the angel of the Lord went and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. The people woke the next morning, and they saw the bodies of dead men all around them. ²¹So Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, went back to Nineveh and stayed there.

²²One day, Sennacherib was in the temple of his god, Nisroch, worshiping him. At that time his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, killed him with a sword. Then the sons ran away to Ararat. So Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

Hezekiah's Illness

38 At that time, Hezekiah became very sick. He almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him.

Isaiah told the king, "The Lord told me to tell you these things: 'You will die soon. So you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not become well again.'"

¹Hezekiah turned toward the temple, wall and began praying. He said: ²"Please Lord, remember that I have always lived before you with a pure and honest heart. I have done things that you call good." Then Hezekiah began crying very loudly.

³Isaiah received this message from the Lord: ⁴"Go to Hezekiah and tell him: These are the things the Lord, the God of David your father says, 'I heard your prayer, and I saw your tears of sadness. I will add 15 years to your life. I will protect you from the king of Assyria. I will save you and this city.'"

⁵But Hezekiah asked Isaiah, "What is the sign from the Lord that proves I will become

well? What is the sign that proves, I will be able to go to the Lord's temple?"

⁶This is the sign from the Lord to show you that he will do the things he says: ⁷"Look, I am causing the shadow that is on the steps of Ahaz^{*} to go back ten steps. The sun's shadow will go back up the ten steps that it has gone down."

⁸Then Isaiah told Hezekiah, "You should crush figs together and put them on your sore, then you will become well."

⁹This is the letter from Hezekiah when he became well from the sickness:

¹⁰ I told myself I would live until I was old. But then it was my time to go through the gates of Sheol.^{*}

Now I will spend all of my time there.

¹¹ So I said,
"I will not see the Lord Yah^{*} in the land of the living again.
I will not see the people living on the earth."

¹² My home, my shepherd's tent, is being pulled down and taken from me.

"I am finished
like the cloth a man rolls up,
and cuts from the loom.^{*}

In one day—from day to night,
you brought me to this end.

¹³ All night I cried loud like a lion.
But my hopes were crushed like a lion
eating bones.
In one day—from day to night,
you brought me to this end.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Ahaz A king of Judah. He ruled about 735-727 B.C.

Verse 21 This verse is at the end of the chapter in the printed Hebrew text.

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die. Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where our spirits go.

Lord Yah Literally, "Yah Yehweh." The Hebrew name for God.

loom A machine used for making cloth.

Verse 22 This verse is at the end of the chapter in the printed Hebrew text.

- ¹⁴ I cried like a dove.
I cried like a bird.
My eyes became tired, but I continued
looking to the heavens.
- "My Master, I have troubles.
Promise to help me."
- ¹⁵ What can I say?
My Master told me what will happen.
And my Master will cause that to
happen.
I have had these troubles in my soul.
So now I will be humble all my life.
- ¹⁶ My Master, use this hard time to make
my spirit live again.
Help my spirit become strong and
healthy.
Help me become well!
Help me live again!
- ¹⁷ Look! My troubles are gone!
I now have peace.
You love me very much.
You did not let me rot in the grave.
(You forgave all my sins.)
You threw my sins far away.
- ¹⁸ Dead people don't sing praises to you.
People in Sheol* don't praise you.
Dead people don't trust you to help them.
They go into a hole in the ground,
(and never speak again.)
- ¹⁹ The people that are alive—
like me today—
are the people that praise you.
A father should tell his children that you
can be trusted.
- ²⁰ So I say:
"The Lord saved me.
So we will sing and play songs
in the Lord's temple all our lives."

Messengers from Babylon

39 At that time, Baladan's son, Merodach
Baladan, was the king of Babylon.
Merodach sent letters and gifts to Hezekiah.

Merodach sent gifts because he heard that:
Hezekiah was sick and became well. ²These
gifts made Hezekiah very happy. So Hezekiah
let Merodach's men see the special things in
Hezekiah's kingdom. Hezekiah showed the
men all his wealth: the silver, gold, expensive
oils, and perfumes. Hezekiah showed them the
swords and shields used for war. Hezekiah
showed them everything he had saved.
Hezekiah showed them everything in his house
and in his kingdom.

³Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah:
and asked him, "What did these men say?"
Where did they come from?"

Hezekiah said, "These men came to me:
from a faraway country. These men came from
Babylon."

⁴So Isaiah asked him, "What did they see in
your kingdom?"

Hezekiah said, "They saw everything in my
palace.* I showed them all my wealth."

⁵Isaiah said this to Hezekiah: "Listen to the
words from the Lord All-Powerful. "In the
future, everything you have will be taken to
Babylon. All the wealth will be taken away.
Nothing will be left." The Lord All-Powerful
said this. ⁷The king of Babylon will take your
sons—the sons that will come from you. Your
sons will become officers* in the palace* of the
king of Babylon."

⁸Hezekiah told Isaiah, "These words from
the Lord are good for me to hear." (Hezekiah
said this because he thought, "There will be
peace and no trouble while I am king.")

Israel's Punishment Will End

40 Your God says,
"Comfort, comfort my people!
² Speak kindly to Jerusalem!
Tell Jerusalem,
"Your time of service is finished.
You have paid the price for your sins."
The Lord punished Jerusalem—

Sheol This is the place where all people go when they die.
Usually this means the grave, but it can mean the place where
our spirits go.

palace A large house for the king and his family.
officers Literally, "eunuchs." Sometimes their male sex
organs were removed so they could not have children.

twice for every sin she did.

- ³ Listen! You can hear the sound of a man calling loudly:

"Prepare a way for the Lord in the desert!
Make the road in the desert straight for our God!

- ⁴ Fill every valley.
Make every mountain and hill flat.
Make the crooked roads straight.
Make the rough ground smooth.

- ⁵ Then, the Lord's Glory will be seen.
All people will see the Lord's Glory together.
This will happen
because the Lord himself said these things."

- ⁶ A voice said,
"Speak!"
So the man said,
"What should I say?"
The voice said,
"Say this:

All people are like grass.
Peoples' goodness is like a new piece of grass.

- ⁷ A powerful wind from the Lord blows on the grass.
And the grass becomes dry and dies.
The truth is this:
All people are grass.

- ⁸ The grass becomes dry and dies.
But the words from our God continue forever."

Salvation: God's Good News

- ⁹ Zion,* you have good news to tell.
You should go up on a high mountain and speak very loudly.
Jerusalem, you have good news to tell.
Don't be afraid!
Speak loudly!
Tell these things to all of the cities of

Judah:

- "Look, here is your God!
¹⁰ Look, the Lord my Master is coming with power.
He will use his power to rule all the people.
The Lord will bring reward for his people.
The Lord will have their payment with him.
¹¹ The Lord will lead his people like a shepherd leads sheep.
The Lord will use his arm (*power*) and gather his sheep together.
The Lord will pick up the little sheep and hold them in his arms.
The mothers will walk beside him."

God Made the World; He Rules It

- ¹² Who measured the oceans in the palm of his hand?
Who used his hand to measure the sky?
Who used a bowl to measure all the dust of the earth?
Who used measuring scales to measure the mountains and hills?
(It was the Lord.)
¹³ No person told the Lord's Spirit what he should do.
No person told the Lord how to do the things he did.
¹⁴ Did the Lord ask for any person's help?
Did any person teach the Lord how to be fair?
Did any person teach the Lord knowledge?
Did any person teach the Lord to use wisdom?
(No! The Lord already knew these things.)
¹⁵ Look, the nations are a very small part of the Lord's world.
The nations are like a small drop in a bucket.
If the Lord took all the faraway nations, and put them on his weighing scales,

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

they would be like small pieces of dust.

- ¹⁶ All the trees in Lebanon are not enough to burn for the Lord.
And all the animals in Lebanon are not enough to kill for a sacrifice.
¹⁷ If you compare all the nations of the world to God,
the nations are nothing.
Compared to God,
all the nations are worth nothing at all.

People Can't Imagine What God Is Like

- ¹⁸ Can you compare God to anything? No!
Can you make a picture of God? No!
¹⁹ But some people make statues from rock or wood,
and they name them gods.
A worker makes a statue,
and the gold worker covers the statue with gold.
Then he makes silver chains for the statue.
²⁰ A poor man can't buy those expensive statues.
So a poor man finds a tree that will not rot
and pays a man to cut the face of a god on it.
That is the poor man's god.
And that "god" can't even move!
²¹ Surely you know the truth, don't you?
Surely you have heard!
Surely someone in the beginning told you the truth!
Surely you understand who made the earth!
²² The true God, sits above the circle of the earth,
and compared to him, people are like grasshoppers.
The true God, opened the skies like a piece of cloth.
The true God, stretched the skies like a tent to sit under.

- ²³ The true God, makes rulers not important.
He makes the judges of this world completely worthless.
²⁴ Those rulers are like plants;
they are planted in the ground,
but before they can send their roots into the ground,
God blows on the "plants,"
and they become dead and dry,
and the wind blows them away like straw.
²⁵ The Holy One (God) says:
"Can you compare me to anyone? No!
No one is equal to me.
²⁶ Look up to the skies.
Who created all those stars?
Who created all those 'armies' in the sky?
Who knows every star by name?
The true God, is very strong and powerful,
so none of these stars is lost."
²⁷ Jacob, this is true!
Israel, you should believe this!
So why do you say:
"The Lord can't see the way I live.
God will not find me and punish me."
²⁸ Surely you have heard and know
that the Lord God is very wise,
and people can't learn all the things he knows.
The Lord does not become tired and need to rest.
The Lord made all the faraway places on earth.
The Lord lives forever.
²⁹ The Lord helps weak people to be strong.
He causes the people without power to become powerful.
³⁰ Young men become tired and need to rest.
Even young boys stumble and fall.
³¹ But the people that trust and depend on the Lord
become strong again.

It is like they grow wings like an eagle.
These people run and run without needing
to rest.
These people walk without becoming
tired.

The Lord Is the Creator Who Lives Forever

- 41** The Lord says,
“Faraway countries, be quiet and
come to me!
Nations be brave.
Come to me and speak.
We will meet together,
and we will decide who is right.
Tell me the answers to these questions:
“Who woke the man that is coming, from
the east?
Goodness walks with him.
He uses his sword and defeats
nations,—
they become like dust.
He uses his bow and conquers kings—
they run away
like straw blown by the wind.
He chases armies and is never hurt.
He goes places where he has never been
before.
Who caused these things to happen?
Who did this?
Who called all people from the
beginning?
“I, the Lord, did these things,
I, the Lord, am the first.
I was here since before the beginning.
And I will be here when all things are
finished.
All you faraway places,
look, and be afraid!
All you places far away on the earth,
shake with fear!
All of you, come close, and listen to
me,!

“Workers help each other. They encourage
each other to be strong. One worker cuts
wood to make a statue. That person
encourages the man that works with gold.

Another worker uses a hammer and makes the
metal smooth. Then that worker encourages the
man at the anvil.* This last worker says, ‘This
work is good; the metal will not come off.’ So
he nails the statue to a base. The statue can’t
fall over. And it never moves!”

Only The Lord, The True God, Can Save Us

- The Lord says:
“You, Israel, are my servant.
Jacob, I chose you.
You are from Abraham’s family.
And I loved Abraham.
You were far away on the earth.
You were in a faraway country,
but I called you and said,
‘You are my servant.’
I chose you.
And I have not turned against you.
“Don’t worry, I am with you.
Don’t be afraid, I am your God.
I have made you strong.
I will help you.
I will support you with my right hand of
goodness.
Look, some people are angry with you.
But they will be shamed.
Your enemies will disappear and be lost.
You will look for the people that were
against you.
But you will not be able to find them.
The people that fought against you will
disappear completely.
I am the Lord your God.
I am holding your right hand.
And I tell you:
Don’t be afraid!
I will help you.
Precious Judah, don’t be afraid!
My dear* people of Israel, don’t be
scared!

anvil A heavy metal block. A worker puts hot metal on an
anvil and beats the hot metal to change its shape.

Precious ... dear Literally, “worm ... men.” These are
like Aramaic words meaning “scarlet ... silk: very expensive
pieces of cloth.”

Truly, I will help you.”

The Lord himself said those things.

The Holy One (*God*) of Israel,
the One who saves you,
said these things:

- ¹⁵ “Look, I have made you like a new
threshing board.

This tool has many sharp teeth,
and farmers use it, to crush hulls
from grain.

You will trample (*walk on*) mountains
and crush them.

You will make hills to be like those
hulls.

- ¹⁶ You will throw them into the air,
and the wind will blow them away and
scatter them.

Then you will be happy in the Lord.

You will be very proud of the Holy One
(*God*) of Israel.

- ¹⁷ “The poor and needy people look for
water,
but they can’t find any.

They are thirsty.
Their tongues are very dry.

I will answer their prayers.
I will not leave them and let them die.

- ¹⁸ I will cause rivers to flow on the dry hills.
I will cause springs of water to flow
through the valleys.

I will make the desert become a lake
filled with water.

Dry lands will have springs of water.

- ¹⁹ Trees will grow in the desert.
There will be cedar trees, acacia trees,
olive trees, cypress trees, fir trees, and
pine trees.

- ²⁰ People will see these things happen,
and they will know the Lord’s power
did this.

The people will see these things,
and they will begin to understand.

The people will know
that the Holy One (*God*) of Israel did
these things.”

The Lord Challenges the False Gods

²¹ The Lord, the king of Jacob, says, “Come,
tell me your arguments. Show me your proof,
and we will decide the things that are right.
²² Your statues (false gods) should come and
tell us what is happening.

“What happened in the beginning? What
will happen in the future? Tell us! We will
listen closely. Then we will know what will
happen next. ²³ Tell us the things we should
look for to know what will happen. Then we
will believe that you really are gods. Do
something! Do anything, good or bad! Then we
will see that you are alive. And we will follow
you.

²⁴ “Look, you false gods are less than
nothing! You can’t do anything! Only a
worthless person would want to worship you!”

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

- ²⁵ “I woke a person in the north.*

He is coming from the east where the
sun rises.

He worships my name.

A man that makes pots walks on wet clay.

In the same way, this special man will
trample (*walk on*) kings.”

- ²⁶ Who told us about this before it
happened?

We should call him God.*

Did one of your statues tell us these
things? No!

None of those statues told us anything.
Those statues did not say a word—
and those false gods can’t hear the
words you say.

- ²⁷ I, the Lord, was the first to tell Zion*
about these things.

I sent a messenger to Jerusalem with
this message:

“Look, your people are coming back!”

person ... north This probably means Cyrus, a king of
Persia. He ruled about 550-530 B.C.

God Literally, “the Good One.”

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

- ²⁸ I looked at those false gods.
None of them were wise enough to say
anything.
I asked them questions,
and they did not say a word!
²⁹ All of those gods are less than nothing!
They can't do anything!
Those statues are absolutely worthless!

The Lord's Special Servant

- 42** "Look at my Servant!
I support him.
He is the one I chose.
And I am very pleased with him.
I put my Spirit in him.
He will bring fairness to all nations.
² He will not speak loudly in the streets.
He will not cry out or yell.
³ He will be gentle.
He will not break a crushed piece of
grass.*
He will not stop even a very weak
flame.
He will use fairness
and find what is true.
⁴ He will not become weak or be crushed
until he brings justice to the world.
And people in faraway places will
trust his teachings."

The Lord Is the Ruler and Maker of the World

⁵The Lord, the true, God, said these things.
(The Lord made the skies. The Lord spread the
skies over the earth. He also made everything
on the earth. The Lord breathes life into all
people on earth. The Lord gives a spirit to
every person that walks on the earth):

- ⁶ "I, the Lord, called you to do right.
I will hold your hand.
And I will protect you.
You will be the sign that shows
I have an Agreement with the people.
You will be a light to shine for all people.

- ⁷ You will open the eyes of the blind
people,
and they will be able to see.
Many people are in prison;
you will free those people.
Many people live in darkness;
you will lead them out of that prison.
⁸ "I am the Lord.
My name is Yahweh.
I will not give my glory to another.
I will not let statues (*false gods*)
take the praise that should be mine.
⁹ In the beginning, I said some things
would happen,
and those things happened!
And now, before it happens,
I tell you about things that will happen
in the future."

A Song of Praise to God

- ¹⁰ Sing a new song to the Lord.
All you people that are far away on the
earth,
All you people that sail on the seas,
All you animals in the oceans,
All you people in faraway places,
Praise the Lord!
¹¹ Deserts and cities,
Fields of Kedar,*
praise the Lord!
People living in Sela, sing for joy!
Sing from the top of your mountain.
¹² Give glory to the Lord.
People in all the faraway lands should
praise him!
¹³ The Lord will go out like a strong soldier.
He will be like a man ready to fight a
war.
He will become very excited.
He will cry out and shout loudly,
and he will defeat his enemies.

God Is Very Patient

- ¹⁴ "For a long time I have said nothing.

grass Literally, "reed," a plant that grows near water.

Kedar A country east of Israel.

- I have continued to be quiet and control myself.
 But now I will cry out
 like a woman giving birth to a child.
 I will breath very hard and loud.
 15 I will destroy the hills and mountains.
 I will dry up all the plants that grow there.
 I will make the rivers to become dry land.
 I will make the pools of water become dry.
 16 Then I will lead the blind people in a way they never knew.
 I will lead the blind people on paths they have never been.
 I will make the darkness become light for them.
 And I will make the rough ground smooth.
 I will do the things I promise!
 I will not leave my people.
 17 But some people have stopped following me.
 Those people have statues that are covered with gold.
 They tell those statues,
 'You are my gods.'
 And those people trust their false gods.
 But those people will be disappointed!"

Israel Refused to Listen to God

- 18 "You deaf people should hear me!
 You blind people should look and see me!
 19 In all the world, my servant* is the most blind!
 The messenger I send to the world, is the most deaf.
 The person I own
 -the servant of the Lord-
 is the most blind.
 20 This servant sees what he should do,
 but he does not obey me.
 He can hear with his ears,

but he refuses to listen to me."

- 21 The Lord wants to be fair to his servant.
 So the Lord gives wonderful teachings to the people.*
 22 But look at the people.
 Other people have defeated them and have stolen from them.
 All the young men are afraid.
 They are locked in the prisons.
 People have taken their money from them.
 And there is no person to save them.
 Other people took their money.
 And there was no person to say,
 "Give it back!"

23 Did any of you people listen to God's words? No! But you should listen very closely to his words, and think about what happened.
 24 Who let people take the wealth from Jacob and Israel? The Lord allowed them to do this! We sinned against the Lord. So the Lord allowed people to take away our wealth. The people of Israel did not want to live the way the Lord wanted. The people of Israel did not listen to his teaching. 25 So the Lord became angry at them. The Lord caused powerful wars against them. It was like the people of Israel had fire all around them. But they did not know what was happening. It was like they were burning. But they did not try to understand the things that were happening.

God Is Always with His People

43 Jacob, the Lord made you! Israel, the Lord made you! And now the Lord says, "Don't be afraid! I saved you. I named you. You are mine. 2 When you have troubles, I am with you. When you cross rivers, you will not be hurt. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not hurt you. 3 Why? Because I, the Lord, am your God. I, the Holy One of Israel, am your Savior. I gave Egypt to pay for you. I gave Ethiopia and Seba to make you mine. 4 You are very important to

me, so I will honor you. I love you, and I will give all people and nations so you can live."

God Will Bring His Children Home

"So don't be afraid! I am with you. I will gather your children and bring them to you. I will gather them from the east and from the west. "I will tell the north: Give my people to me! I will tell the south: Don't keep my people in prison! Bring my sons and daughters to me from the faraway places! "Bring to me all the people that are mine—the people that have my name. I made those people for myself. I made those people, and they are mine."

Israel Is God's Witness to the World

"Bring out the people that have eyes but are blind. Bring out the people that have ears but are deaf.* "All people and all nations should also be gathered together. Maybe one of their false gods wants to tell about what happened in the beginning. They should bring their witnesses. The witnesses should speak the truth. This will show they are right."

"The Lord says, "You people are my witnesses. You are the servant that I chose. I chose you so you would help people to believe me. I chose you so you would understand that 'I Am He'—I am the true God. There was no God before me, and there will be no God after me. "I myself am the Lord. And there is no other Savior—I am the only One. "I am the One who spoke to you. I saved you. I told you those things. It was not some stranger that was with you. You are my witnesses, and I am God." (The Lord himself said these things.) "I have always been God. When I do something, no person can change what I have done. And no person can save people from my power."

"The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, saves you. And the Lord says, "I will send armies to Babylon for you. Many people will be captured. Those people, the Chaldeans, will be taken away in their own boats. (The Chaldeans

are very proud of those boats.) "I am the Lord your Holy One. I made Israel. I am your king."

God Will Save His People Again

"The Lord will make roads through the sea. Even through rough waters he will make a path for his people. And the Lord says, "The people that fight against me with their chariots,* horses, and armies will be defeated. They will never rise again. They will be destroyed. They will be stopped like the flame of a candle* is stopped. "So don't remember the things that happened in the beginning. Don't think about the things that happened a long time ago. "Why? Because I will do new things! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I really will make a road in the desert. I really will make rivers in the dry land. "Even the wild animals will be thankful to me. The large animals and birds will honor me. They will honor me when I put water in the desert. They will honor me when I make rivers in the dry land. I will do this to give water to my people—the people I chose. "These are the people I made. And these people will sing songs to praise me."

"Jacob, you have not called to me. Why? Because you, Israel, have become tired of me. "You people have not brought your sacrifices* of sheep to me. You have not honored me. You have not given sacrifices to me. I did not force you to give sacrifices to me. I did not force you to burn incense* until you became tired. "So you did not use your money to buy things to honor me. But you did force me to be like your slave. You sinned until all your wrong-doings made me very tired."

"I, I am the One who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself. I will not remember your sins. "But you should

chariots Small wagons used for war.

candle Literally, "lamp." These were small clay bowls filled with oil. A string or strip of cloth was placed in the bowl and lit to produce light.

sacrifices Gifts to God. Sometimes these were special kinds of animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

blind ... deaf This probably means the people of Israel that would not believe God. See Isaiah 6:9-10.

remember me. We should meet together and decide what is right. You should tell the things you have done, and show you are right. "Your first father sinned. And your lawyers have done things against me. "I will make your holy rulers not holy. I will cause Jacob to be completely mine.* Bad things will happen to Israel."

The Lord Is the Only God

44 "Jacob, you are my servant. Listen to me! Israel, I chose you. Hear the things I say! "I am the Lord, and I made you. I am the One who made you to be what you are. I have helped you since the time you were in your mother's body. Jacob, my servant, don't be afraid. Jeshurun,* I chose you.

"I will pour water for thirsty people. I will make streams flow on dry land. I will pour my Spirit on your children—it will be like a stream of water flowing over your family. "They will grow among the people in the world. They will be like trees growing beside streams of water.

"One person will say, 'I belong to the Lord.' Another person will use the name 'Jacob.' Another person will sign his name 'I am the Lord's.' And another person will use the name 'Israel.'"

"The Lord is the king of Israel. The Lord All-Powerful saves Israel. The Lord says, "I am the only God. There are no other gods. I am the Beginning and the End. "There is no other God like me. If there is, then that god should speak now. That god should come and show proof that he is like me. That god should tell me what has happened since the time I made these people that continue forever. That god should give signs to show that he knows what will happen in the future. "Don't be afraid! Don't worry! I have always told you what will happen. You are my witnesses. There is no other God—I am the only One. There is no other 'Rock*—I know I am the only One."

cause ... mine This means that only God can have this special thing. He gets it, or it must die so no one else will.

Jeshurun Another name for Israel. This name means "good" or "honest."

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a strong place of safety.

False Gods Are Useless

"Some people make statues (*false gods*)—but they are worthless. People love those statues—but the statues are useless. Those people are the witnesses of the statues—but they can't see. They know nothing—they don't know enough to be ashamed of the things they do."

"Who made these false gods? Who made these useless statues? "Workers made those gods! And all those workers are people—not gods,. If all of those people would come together and discuss these things,, then they would all be ashamed and afraid.

"One worker uses his tools to heat iron over hot coals. This man uses his hammer to beat the metal, and the metal becomes a statue. This man uses his own powerful arms. But when the man becomes hungry, he loses his power. If the man does not drink water, he becomes weak.

"Another worker uses his stringline* and compass* to draw lines on the wood. This shows where he should cut,. Then the man uses his chisels* and cuts a statue from the wood. He uses his calipers* to measure the statue. This way, the worker makes the wood look exactly like a man. And this statue of a man does nothing but sit in the house.

"A man cuts down cedar, cypress, or maybe oak trees. (That man did not make the trees grow—those trees grew by their own power in the forest. If a man plants a pine tree, the rain makes the tree grow.) "Then that man uses the tree to burn in his fire. The man cuts the tree into small pieces of wood. And he uses the wood to cook and keep him warm. The man starts a fire with some of the wood and bakes his bread. But the man still uses part of that wood to make a god—and the man worships that god! That god is a statue that the man made—but the man bows down before the statue! "The man burns half of the wood in the

stringline In ancient times, this was a piece of string with wet paint on it. This was used to make straight lines on wood or stone.

compass A tool used to draw circles and copy measurements.

chisels Sharp tools used to carve wood or stone.

calipers A special measuring tool, like a compass

fire. The man uses the fire to cook his meat and eats the meat until he is full. The man burns the wood to keep himself warm. The man says, "Good! Now I am warm, and I can see because there is light from the fire." ¹⁷But a little wood is left, so the man makes a statue from that wood and calls it his god. He bows down before this god and worships it. The man prays to the god and says, "You are my god, save me!"

¹⁸Those people don't know what they are doing. They don't understand! It is like their eyes are covered so they can't see. Their hearts (*minds*) don't try to understand. ¹⁹Those people have not thought about these things. The people don't understand, so they have never thought to themselves, "I burned half of the wood in the fire. I used the hot coals to bake my bread and cook my meat. Then I ate the meat. And I used the wood that was left to make this terrible thing. I am worshiping a block of wood!"

²⁰That man does not know what he is doing. He is confused, so his heart leads him the wrong way. That man can't save himself. And he can't see that he is doing wrong. That man will not say, "This statue I am holding is a false god."

The Lord, the True God, Helps Israel

- ²¹ "Jacob, remember these things!
Israel, remember that you are my servant.
I made you.
You are my servant.
So Israel, don't forget me.
²² Your sins were like a big cloud.
But I wiped away those sins.
Your sins are gone,
like a cloud that disappeared into the air.
I rescued and protected you,
so come back to me!"
- ²³ The skies are happy because the Lord did great things.
The earth is happy, even deep down under the earth!

The mountains sing with thanks to God.
All the trees in the forest are happy!
Why? Because the Lord saved Jacob.
The Lord did great things for Israel.

- ²⁴ The Lord made you what you are.
The Lord did this while you were still in your mother's body.
The Lord says,
"I, the Lord, made everything!
I put the skies there myself!
I spread the earth before me."

²⁵False prophets* tell lies. But the Lord shows their lies are false. The Lord makes foolish people of the men that do magic. The Lord confuses even wise men. They think they know much, but the Lord makes them look foolish. ²⁶The Lord sends his servants to tell messages to the people. And the Lord makes those messages true. The Lord sends messengers to tell the people the things they should do. And the Lord shows their advice is good.

God Chooses Cyrus to Rebuild Judah

The Lord says to Jerusalem,
"People will live in you again!"
The Lord says to the cities of Judah,
"You will be built again!"
The Lord says to the cities that were destroyed,
"I will make you cities again!"

²⁷ The Lord tells the deep waters,
"Become dry!
I will make your streams become dry!"

²⁸ The Lord says to Cyrus,*
"You are my shepherd.
You will do the things I want.
You will say to Jerusalem,
'You will be built again!'
You will tell the temple,*

false prophets People that lie, saying they received a special message from God.

Cyrus A king of Persia. He ruled about 550-530 B.C.

temple A special building for worshipping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

"Your foundations will be built again!"

God Chooses Cyrus to Make Israel Free

45 These are the things the Lord says to Cyrus,* his chosen king:*

"I will hold Cyrus's right hand.
I will help him take power away from kings.
City gates will not stop Cyrus.
I will open the city gates,
and Cyrus will go in."

- ² "Cyrus, your armies will march,
and I will go in front of you.
I will make the mountains flat.
I will break the bronze city gates.
I will cut the iron bars on the gates.
- ³ I will give you the wealth that is saved in darkness.
And I will give you the hidden riches.
I will do this so that you will know that I am the Lord.
I, the God of Israel, am calling you by name!
- ⁴ I do these things for my servant-Jacob.
And I do these things for my chosen people-Israel.
(Cyrus,) I am calling you by name.
You don't know me,
but I am calling you by name.
- ⁵ I am the Lord!
I am the only God.
There is no other God.
I put your clothes on you,*
but still you don't know me.
- ⁶ I do these things so all people will know that I am the only God.
From the east to the west
people will know that I am the Lord,
and there is no other God.
- ⁷ I made the light,
and I made darkness.

I make peace,
and I make troubles.
I am the Lord—
and I do all these things.

- ⁸ "May the clouds in the skies above
make goodness fall on the earth like rain!
May the earth open
and let salvation grow!
And may goodness grow with it!
I, the Lord, made him.*

God Controls His Creation

"Look at these people! They are arguing with the One who made them. Look at them argue with me! They are like pieces of clay from a broken pot. A man uses soft, wet clay to make a pot. And the clay does not ask, 'Man, what are you doing?' Things that are made don't have the power to question the one who makes them. People are like this clay. 'A father gives life to his children. And the children can't ask, 'Why are you giving me life?' The children can't question their mother and ask, 'Why are you giving birth to me?'"

"The Lord God is the Holy One of Israel. He made Israel. And the Lord says,

"You asked me to show you a sign, my sons.

You commanded me to show you the things I have done.

- ¹² So, look!
I made the earth.
And I made all the people living on it.
I used my own hands
and made the skies.
And I command all the armies in the sky.*

- ¹³ I gave Cyrus his power
so he would do good things.*

him This probably means Cyrus. Cyrus was a king of Persia.

Cyrus lived about 150 years after Isaiah died.

armies in the sky Sometimes this means the angels, and sometimes it means the stars.

I gave ... things This might also mean "I did what was right when I woke him."

Cyrus A king of Persia. He ruled about 550-530 B.C.
chosen king Literally, "messiah, the anointed one."
I put ... you This also means "I made you strong."

And I will make his work easy.
Cyrus will build my city again.
And he will make my people free.
Cyrus will not sell my people to me.
I will not have to pay him to do these things.
The people will be freed,
and the cost to me will be nothing."
The Lord, All-Powerful, said these things.

- ¹⁴ The Lord says,
"Many things were made in Egypt and Ethiopia,
but you people of Israel will get those things.
The tall people from Seba will be yours.
They will walk behind you with chains around their necks.
Those people will bow down before you.
Those people will pray to you."
Israel, God is with you.
And there is no other God.

- ¹⁵ God, you are the God people can't see.
You are the Savior of Israel.
¹⁶ Many people make false gods.
But those people will be disappointed.
All of those people will go away ashamed.
¹⁷ But Israel will be saved by the Lord.
That salvation will continue forever.
Never, never again will Israel be shamed.

- ¹⁸ The Lord is God.
He made the skies and the earth.
The Lord put the earth in its place.
The Lord did not want the earth to be empty when he made it.
The Lord wanted life to be on the earth.

The Lord says,
"I am the Lord.

- There is no other God.
¹⁹ I did not speak in secret.
I have spoken freely.
I did not hide my words in a dark place of the world.
I did not tell the people of Jacob to look for me in empty places.

I am the Lord, and I speak the truth.
When I speak, I say right things."

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

²⁰"You people have escaped from other nations. So gather together and come before me. (These people carry statues of false gods. These people pray to those useless gods. But the people don't know what they are doing. "Tell these people to come to me. Let them talk about these things together.)

"Who told you about the things that happened a long time ago? Who has continued to tell you these things since long, long ago? I, the Lord, am the One who said these things. I am the only God. Is there another God like me? Is there another good God? Is there another God who saves his people? No! There is no other God! ²¹All you people in faraway places should stop following those false gods. You should follow me and be saved. I am God. There is no other God. I am the only God.

²²"I will make a promise by my own power. And if I promise to do something, then that promise is a command. And if I command something to happen, that thing happens. And I promise that every person will bow before me (God). Every person will promise to follow me. ²³People will say, 'Goodness and power come only from the Lord.'"

Some people are angry at the Lord. But the Lord's witnesses will come and tell about the things the Lord has done. So those angry people will be ashamed. ²⁴The Lord will help the people of Israel do good, and the people will be very proud of their God.

False Gods Are Useless

46 Bel* and Nebo,* will bow down before me.

False gods are only statues. Men put those statues on the backs of animals—those statues are only heavy burdens that must be carried. The false gods do nothing but make people

Bel A false god.
Nebo A false god.

tired. ²Those false gods will all bow down—they will all fall. Those false gods can't escape—they will all be carried away like prisoners.

³"Family of Jacob, listen to me! All you people from Israel that are still alive, listen! I have been carrying you. I have carried you since the time you were in your mother's body. 'I carried you when you were born, and I will carry you when you become old. Your hair will become gray, and I will still carry you, because I made you. I will continue to carry you and I will save you.

⁴"Can you compare me to anyone? No! No person is equal to me. You can't understand everything about me. There is nothing like me. ⁵'Some people are rich with gold and silver. Gold falls from their purses, and they weigh their silver on scales. Those people pay an artist to make a false god from wood. Then those people bow down and worship that false god. ⁶'Those people put their false god on their shoulders and carry it. That false god is useless—people have to carry it! People set the statue on the ground; and that false god can't move. That false god never walks away from its place. People can yell at it, but it will not answer. That false god is only a statue—it can't save people from their troubles.

⁷"You people have sinned. You should think about these things again. Remember these things and be strong. ⁸'Remember the things that happened long ago. Remember that I am God. There is no other God. Those false gods are not like me.

⁹"In the beginning, I told you about the things that will happen in the end. A long time ago, I told you things that had not yet happened. When I plan something—that thing happens. I do the things I want to do. ¹⁰"And I am calling a man from the east. That man will be like an eagle. He will come from a faraway country, and he will do the things I decide to do. I am telling you that I will do this, and I will do it. I made him, and I will bring him!

¹¹"Some of you think that you have great power—but you don't do good things. Listen to me! ¹²I will do good things! Soon, I will save

my people. I will bring salvation to Zion* and to my wonderful Israel.

God's Message to Babylon

47 "Fall down in the dirt and sit there!

Virgin daughter of the Chaldeans,* sit on the ground!

You are not the ruler now!

People will not continue calling you nice or beautiful.

² "Now you must work very hard. Take off your nice skirts.

Take the special stones and crush grain to make flour.

Raise your skirts until men can see your legs, and cross the rivers.*

Leave your country!

³ Men will see your body, and men will use you for sex.

I will make you pay for the bad things you did.

And no man will come and help you."

⁴ "My people say, 'God saves us.

His name is:
The Lord All-Powerful,
The Holy One of Israel.'

⁵ "So Babylon, you should sit and say nothing.

Daughter of the Chaldeans,* go into the darkness.

Why? Because you will no longer be 'The Queen of the Kingdoms.'

⁶ "I was angry at my people.

These people belong to me, but I was angry, so I made them not important.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
daughter of the Chaldeans This is another name for the city Babylon.

rivers The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Babylon was between these two rivers.

- I gave them to you,
and you punished them.
You showed no mercy to them.
You made the work very hard for older people.
- ⁷ You said,
'I will live forever.
I will always be The Queen.'
You did not notice the bad things you did to those people.
You did not think about what would happen.
- ⁸ So now, 'nice lady' listen to me!
You feel safe and you tell yourself,
'I am the only important person.
No one else is important like me.
I will never be a widow.
I will always have children.'
- ⁹ These two things will happen to you:
First, you will lose your children
(people).
And then you will lose your husband
(kingdom).
These things will truly happen to you.
All your magic and all your powerful tricks will not save you.
- ¹⁰ You do bad things,
but you still feel safe.
You say,
'No one sees the wrong things I do.'
You do wrong,
but you think your wisdom and knowledge will save you.
You say,
'I am the only one.
No one is important like me.'
- ¹¹ "But troubles will come to you.
You don't know when it will happen,
but disaster is coming.
You will not be able to do anything to stop those troubles.
You will be destroyed quickly!
You will not know what happened to you!
- ¹² You worked hard all your life
learning tricks and magic.
So, start using your tricks and magic!

- Maybe those tricks will help you.
Maybe you will be able to scare someone.
- ¹³ You have many, many advisers.
Are you tired of the advice they give you?
Then send out your men that read the stars.
They are able to tell when the month starts.
So maybe they can tell you when your troubles will come.
- ¹⁴ "But those men will not even be able to save themselves.
They will burn like straw.
They will burn so fast that there will be no coals left to cook bread with;
there will be no fire left to sit near.
- ¹⁵ That will happen to everything you worked hard for.
The people you did business with all your life will leave you.
Every person will go his own way.
And there will be no person left to save you."

God Rules His World

- 48** The Lord says,
"Family of Jacob, listen to me!
You people call yourself 'Israel.'
You are from Judah's family.
You use the Lord's name to make promises.
You praise the God of Israel.
But you are not honest and sincere when you do these things.
- ² "You people are called members of the Holy City.
You depend on the God of Israel.
The Lord All-Powerful is his Name.
- ³ "Long ago I told you about the things that would happen.
I told you about those things,
and then, suddenly, I made those things happen.

- 4 I did that because I knew you were stubborn.
 You refused to believe anything I said.
 You were very stubborn—
 like iron, that does not bend.
 It was like your head was made of bronze.
- 5 So, a long time ago I told you about things that would happen.
 I told you about those things long before they happened.
 I did this so that you would not be able to say,
 ‘We did these things using our own power.’
 I did this so you could not say,
 ‘Our idols—our statues—made these things happen.’”

God Punishes Israel to Make Them Pure

- 6 “You saw and heard all the things that happened.
 So you should tell this news to other people.
 Now I will begin telling you about new things—
 things that you don’t know yet.
- 7 These are not things that happened long ago.
 These are things that are beginning to happen now.
 You have never heard about these things before today.
 So you can’t say,
 ‘We already knew that.’
- 8 But even if I tell you about what will happen in the future,
 you will still refuse to listen to me.
 You will learn nothing.
 You never listened to anything I told you.
 I have known since the beginning that you would be against me.
 You have done wrong things since the time you were born.
- 9 But, I will be patient.
 I will do this for myself.

- People will praise me for not becoming angry
 and destroying you.
 You will praise me for waiting.
- 10 Look, I will make you pure.
 People use a hot fire to make silver pure.
 But I will make you pure by giving you troubles.
- 11 I will do this for myself—
 for me!
 You will not make me not important!
 I will not let some false god take my glory and praise!
- 12 Jacob, listen to me!
 People of Israel, I called you to be my people.
 So listen to me!
 I am the Beginning!
 And I am the End!
- 13 I made the earth with my own hands
 (power).
 My right hand made the sky.
 And if I call them,
 they will come together before me.
- 14 So, all of you should gather together and listen to me!
 Did any of the false gods say these things would happen? “No!”
- The Lord loves Israel.
 The Lord will do anything he wants to
 Babylon and to the Chaldeans.
- 15 The Lord says,
 “I told you I would call him.*
 And I will bring him!
 I will make him succeed!
- 16 Come to me and listen to me!
 In the beginning, I spoke clearly so
 people could hear me.
 And I was there when Babylon began
 as a nation.”

Then Isaiah said, “Now, the Lord my Master sends me and his Spirit to tell you these things.” The Lord, the Savior, the Holy One of Israel, says,

him *This is probably talking about Cyrus. Cyrus was a king of Persia that lived about 150 years after Isaiah died.

I am the Lord your God.

I teach you to do good things.

I lead you in the way you should go.

- ¹⁸ If you had obeyed me,
then you would have had peace like a
full flowing river.

Good things would have flowed to you
like the waves of the sea.

- ¹⁹ If you had obeyed me,
then you would have had many, many
children.
They would have been as many as the
grains of sand.
If you had obeyed me,
then you would not have been
destroyed.

You would have continued with me."

- ²⁰ My people, leave Babylon!
My people, run from the Chaldeans!
Tell this news with joy to the people!
Spread this news to the faraway places
on earth!

Tell the people,

"The Lord has rescued his servant
Jacob!

- ²¹ The Lord has led his people through the
desert,
and the people never became thirsty!
Why? Because he made water flow
from a rock for his people!
He split the rock,
and water flowed out!"

"But the Lord says, "There is no peace for
evil people!"

God Calls His Special Servant

49 All you people in faraway
places, listen to me!

Listen all of you people living on earth!

Before I was born, the Lord called me
to serve him.

The Lord named me while I was still in
my mother's body.

- ¹ The Lord uses me to speak for him.
He uses me like a soldier uses a sharp
sword,

but he also protects me, hiding me in
his hand.

The Lord uses me like a sharp arrow,
but he also hides me in his arrow bag.

- ³ The Lord, told me,
"Israel, you are my servant.
I will do wonderful things with you."

- ⁴ I said,
"I worked hard for nothing.
I became very tired,
but I did nothing useful.
I used all my power,
but did not really do anything.
So, the Lord must decide what to do with
me.

God must decide my reward.

- ⁵ The Lord made me in my mother's body.
He made me so I would be his servant.
He made me so I would lead Jacob and
Israel back to him.
The Lord will honor me.
I will get my strength from my God."

The Lord told me,

- ⁶ "You are a very important servant to me.
The people of Israel are prisoners,
and they will be brought back to me.
Then Jacob's family groups will come
back to me.

But, you have another job;
it is even more important than this!
I will make you a light for all nations.
You will be my way to save all the
people on earth."

- ⁷ The Lord, the Holy One of Israel, protects
Israel.

And the Lord says,

"My Servant is humble.

He serves rulers.

And people hate him.

But, kings will see him, and stand to
honor him.

Great leaders will bow down before
him."

This will happen because the Lord, the
Holy One of Israel, wants it.

And the Lord can be trusted.
He is the One who chose you.

The Day of Salvation

⁸ The Lord says,

“At the right time I will answer your prayers.

On the day of salvation, I will help you.

I will protect you.

And you will be the proof that I have an Agreement with the people.

The country is destroyed now,
but you will give the land back to its owners.

⁹ You will tell the prisoners,
‘Come out of your prison!’

You will tell the people that are in darkness,

‘Come out of the dark!’

The people will eat while traveling.

They will have food even on empty hills.

¹⁰ The people will not be hungry.
They will not be thirsty.

The hot sun and wind will not hurt them.

Why? Because the One who comforts them (*God*) will lead them.

He will lead the people near springs of water.

¹¹ “I will make a road for my people.
The mountains will be made flat,
and the low roads will be raised.

¹² “Look!

People are coming to me from faraway places.

People are coming from the north and from the west.

People are coming from Aswan in Egypt.”

¹³ Heavens and Earth, be happy!
Mountains, shout with joy!

Why? Because the Lord comforts his people.

The Lord is good to his poor people.

Zion: A Woman Left Alone

¹⁴ But now Zion* says,

“The Lord left me.

My Master forgot me.”

¹⁵ But I say,

“Can a woman forget her baby? No!

Can a woman forget the child that came from her body? No!

A woman can't forget her children.

And I (*the Lord*) can't forget you.

¹⁶ Look, I have written your name on my hand.

I always think about you!

¹⁷ Your children will come back to you.

People defeated you,
but those people will leave you alone.”

Israel's People Return

¹⁸ Look up!

Look around you!

All of your children are gathering together and coming to you.

The Lord says,

“I am alive, and I promise you this:

Your children will be like jewels you tie around your neck.

Your children will be like the necklace a bride wears.

¹⁹ You are destroyed and defeated now.
Your land is useless.

But after a short time, you will have many, many people in your land.

And those people that destroyed you will be far, far away.

²⁰ You were sad for the children you lost,
but those children will tell you,

‘This place is too small!
Give us a bigger place to live!’

²¹ Then you will say to yourself,
‘Who gave me all these children?’

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

This is very good!
I was sad and lonely.
I was defeated and away from my people.

So who gave me these children?

Look, I was left alone.

Where did all these children come from?"

y Master, the Lord says,

"Look, I will wave my hand to the nations.

I will raise my flag for all people to see.
Then those people will bring your children to you.

Those people will carry your children on their shoulders,
and they will hold them in their arms.

Kings will be teachers to your children.
Kings' daughters will care for those children.

Those kings and their daughters will bow down before you.

They will kiss the dirt at your feet.

Then you will know that I am the Lord.

You will know that any person that trusts in me
will not be disappointed."

When a strong soldier wins wealth in war,
you can't take that wealth from him.

When a powerful soldier guards a prisoner,
that prisoner can't escape.

But the Lord says,

"The prisoners will be taken from the strong soldier.

Those prisoners will escape.

How will this happen?

I will fight your fights.

I will save your children.

I will force those people that trouble you to eat their own bodies.

Their blood will be the wine that makes them drunk.

Then every person will know that

I am the Lord—the One who saves you.

All people will know that

the Powerful One of Jacob saves you."

Israel Was Punished Because the People Sinned

50 The Lord says,
"People of Israel, you say I divorced your mother, Jerusalem.
But where is the legal paper that proves I divorced her?

My children, did I owe money to someone?

Did I sell you to pay a debt? No!

Look, I gave you away because of the wrong things you did.

I sent your mother (*Jerusalem*) away because of the wrong things she did.

² I came home and found no one there.

I called and called,
but no one answered.

Do you think I am not able to save you?

I have the power to save you from your troubles.

Look, if I command the sea to become dry,

then it will become dry!

The fish will die because there is no water,
and their bodies will rot.

³ I can make the skies dark.

The skies will be black like clothes of sadness."

God's Servant Truly Depends on God

"The Lord my Master gave me the ability to teach. So now I teach these sad people. Every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student. The Lord my Master helps me learn, and I have not turned against him. I will not stop following him. I will let those people beat me. I will let them pull the hair from my beard. I will not hide my face when they say bad things to me and spit at me. The Lord my Master will help me. So the bad things they say will not hurt me. I will be strong. I know I will not be disappointed.

The Lord is with me. He shows I am innocent. So no person will be able to show I

am guilty. If someone wants to try to prove I am wrong, that person should come to me, and we will have a trial. ⁹But look, the Lord my Master helps me. So no person can show me to be evil. All those people will become like worthless old clothes. Moths will eat them.

¹⁰The people that respect the Lord also listen to his servant. That servant lives completely trusting in God without knowing what will happen. He truly trusts in the Lord's name, and that servant depends on his God.

¹¹"Look, you people want to live your own ways. You light your own fires and torches (*lights*). So, live your own way. But, you will be punished! You will fall into your fires and torches and you will be burned. I will make that happen."

Israel Should Be Like Abraham

51 "Some of you people try hard to live good lives. You go to the Lord for help. Listen to me. You should look at Abraham your father. He is the rock you were cut from. ²Abraham is your father, and you should look at him. You should look at Sarah—the woman that gave birth to you. Abraham was alone when I called him. Then I blessed him, and he began a great family. Many, many people came from him."

³In the same way, the Lord will bless Zion. ⁴The Lord will feel sorry for her and her people, and he will do a great thing for her. The Lord will change the desert. The desert will become a garden like the garden of Eden. That land was empty, but it will become like the Lord's Garden. People there will be very, very happy. People there will show their joy. They will sing songs about thanks and victory.

⁴ "My people, listen to me!
My decisions will be like lights
showing people how to live.

⁵ I will soon show I am fair.
I will soon save you.

I will use my power and judge all nations
All the faraway places are waiting for me.

They wait for my power to help them.

⁶ Look up to the heavens!
Look around you at the earth below!
The skies will disappear like clouds of smoke.

The earth will become like worthless old clothes.

The people on earth will die,
but my Salvation will continue forever.
My goodness will never end.

⁷ You people that understand goodness
should listen to me.

You people that follow my teachings
should hear the things I say.

Don't be afraid of evil people.
Don't be afraid of the bad things they
say to you.

⁸ Why? Because they will be like old clothes.

Moths will eat them.

They will be like wood.

Worms will eat them.

But my goodness will continue forever.
My salvation will continue forever and
ever."

God's Own Power Will Save His People

⁹ Arm (*power*) of the Lord, wake up!
Wake up!

Prepare your strength!

Use your strength
like you did a long time ago;
like you have from ancient times.

You are the power that defeated Rahab. ^{*}
You defeated the Dragon.

¹⁰ You caused the sea to become dry!
You dried the waters of the great deep!
You made the deepest parts of the sea
into a road.

Your people crossed over that road and
were saved.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Rahab ... Dragon. This is Rahab the great sea monster.
Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.

- ¹¹ The Lord will save his people.
They will return to Zion* with joy.
They will be very, very happy.
Their happiness will be like
a crown on their heads forever.
They will be singing with joy.
All sadness will be gone far away.
- ¹² The Lord says,
"I am the One who comforts you.
So why should you be afraid of other
people?
They are only people that live and die.
They are only humans—they die the
same as grass."
- ¹³ The Lord made you.
With his power he made the earth!
With his power he spread the skies
across the earth!
But you forget him and his power.
So you are always afraid of angry men
that hurt you.
Those men planned to destroy you.
But where are they now?
(They are all gone,)
- ¹⁴ People in prison will soon be made free.
Those people will not die and rot in
prison.
Those people will have enough food.
- ¹⁵ "I, the Lord, am your God.
I stir up the sea and make the waves."
(The Lord All-Powerful is his name.)
- ¹⁶ "My servant, I will give you the words I
want you to say. And I will cover you with my
hands and protect you. I will use you to make
the new heaven and earth. I will use you to tell
Israel, 'You are my people.'"

God Punished Israel

- ¹⁷ Wake up! Wake up!
Jerusalem, get up!
The Lord was very angry at you.

So you were punished.
(This punishment was like, a cup of
poison you had to drink.
And you drank it.

"Jerusalem had many people, but none of
those people became leaders for her. None of
the children she raised became guides to lead
her. "Troubles came to Jerusalem in groups of
two; stealing and breaking, great hunger and
fighting.

No person helped you when you were
suffering. No person was kind to you. ²⁰Your
people became weak. They fell on the ground
and lay there. Those people were lying on
every street corner. They were like animals
caught in a net. They were punished from the
Lord's anger until they could not accept any
more punishment. When God said he would
give them more punishment, they became very
weak.

²¹Listen to me, poor Jerusalem. You are
weak like, a drunk person, but you are not
drunk from wine. (You are weak from that "cup
of poison.")

²²Your God and Master, the Lord, will fight
for his people. He says to you, "Look, I am
taking this 'cup of poison' (*punishment*) away
from you. I am taking my anger away from
you. You will not be punished by my anger any
more. ²³I will now use my anger to punish the
people that hurt you. Those people tried to kill
you. They told you, 'Bow down before us, and
we will walk on you!' They forced you to bow
down before them. Then those people made
your back like dirt for them to walk on. You
were like a road for them to travel on."

Israel Will Be Saved

52 Wake up!
Wake up Zion!*
Dress yourselves!
Put on your strength!
Holy Jerusalem, stand up!
The people that have not agreed to follow
God*

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

have ... God Literally, "People that are not circumcised
and that are not pure."

—the people that are not clean—
will not enter you again.

² Shake off the dust!

Put on your wonderful clothes!
Jerusalem, Daughter of Zion,* you were a
prisoner.

But now, free yourself from the chains
around your neck!

³ The Lord says,

"You were not sold for money.
So you will be saved without using
money."

"The Lord my Master says, "My people first
went down to Egypt to stay—and then they
became slaves. Later, Assyria made them
slaves. Now look what has happened! Another
nation has taken my people. Who is this
country that has taken my people like slaves?
This country did not pay to take my people.
This nation rules my people and laughs at them.
Those people always say bad things about me."

"The Lord says, "This has happened, so my
people will learn about me. My people will
know who I am. My people will know my
name, and they will know that I Am He* is
speaking to them."

"It is a wonderful thing to see a messenger
come over the hills with good news. It is
wonderful to hear a messenger announce,
"There is peace! We have been saved! Your
God is king!"

⁴ The city guards* begin shouting.

They are all rejoicing together!
Why? Because every one of them sees
the Lord returning to Zion.*

⁵ Jerusalem, your destroyed buildings will
be happy again.

Daughter of Zion This means Jerusalem, the city built
on Mount Zion.

I Am He This is like the Hebrew name for God. It shows
God lives forever, and that he is always with his people. See
Exodus 3:13-17.

guards Men that stand on the city walls and watch for
messengers or trouble coming to the city. Here this probably
means the prophets.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

You will all rejoice together.

Why? Because the Lord will be kind to
Jerusalem.

The Lord will rescue his people.

¹⁰ The Lord will show his holy strength to
all the nations.

And all the faraway countries will see
how God saves his people.

¹¹ You people should leave Babylon!
Leave that place!

You men that carry the things used in
worship,
make yourselves pure.

Don't touch anything that is not pure.

¹² You will leave Babylon.

But you will not be forced to leave in a
hurry.

You will not be forced to run away.

You will walk out,
and the Lord will walk with you.

The Lord will be in front of you,
and the God of Israel will be behind
you.*

God's Suffering Servant

¹³"Look at my Servant. He will be very
successful.* He will be very important. In the
future, people will honor and respect him.

"But many people were shocked when
they saw my Servant. He was hurt so badly that
they could hardly recognize him as a man.
¹⁵But even more people will be amazed. Kings
will look at him amazed and not say a word.
These people did not hear the story about my
Servant—they saw what happened. These people
did not hear that story, but they understood."

53 Who really believed the things we
announced? Who really accepted the
Lord's punishment?

¹⁶He grew up like a small plant before the
Lord. He was like a root growing in dry
ground. He did not look special. He had no
special glory. If we looked at him, we would

The Lord ... behind you This shows God will protect
the people. Compare Exodus 14:19,20.

He will ... successful Or, "He is very wise." Or "He
will teach people—making them wise."

see nothing special that would cause us to like him. ¹He was shamed and his friends left him. He was a man that had much pain. He knew sickness very well. People did not give him the honor of even looking at him. We did not even notice him.

²But he took our troubles and made them his. He took away our pain, and we thought God was punishing him. We thought God beat him ³for something he did. ⁴But he was given pain to suffer for the wrong things we did. He was crushed for our guilt. A debt we owed—our punishment—was given to him. We were healed *(forgiven)* because of his pain. ⁵But ⁶even after he did this, ⁷all of us wandered away like sheep. Each of us went our own way. ⁸We did this after ⁹the Lord ¹⁰freed us from our guilt and, ¹¹put all our guilt on him.

¹²He was hurt and punished. But he never protested. He said nothing—like a sheep being carried to be killed. He was quiet like a lamb is quiet while the wool is being cut from him. He never opened his mouth ¹³to defend himself. ¹⁴Men used force and took him—and they did not judge him fairly. No person can tell about his future family, because he was taken from the land of living people. He was punished to pay for the sins of my people.

¹⁵He died and was buried with the rich. He was buried with evil men. He did nothing wrong—he never spoke lies—but still these things happened to him.

¹⁶The Lord decided to crush him. The Lord decided that he must suffer. So the Servant gave himself to be the One to die. But he will live a new life for a long, long time. He will see his people. He will complete the things the Lord wants him to do.

¹⁷He will suffer many things in his soul. But, he will see the good things that happen. He will be satisfied with the things he learns. My Good Servant will make many people free from guilt; he will carry away their sins. ¹⁸For this reason, I will make him a great man among people. He will have a share of all things with the people that are strong. I will do this for him, because he gave his life for the people, and he died.

People said he was a criminal. But ¹the truth is that, ²he carried away the sins of many, many people. And now he speaks for people that have sinned.

God Brings His People Home

54 Woman, be happy!
You have not given birth to children.

But you should be very happy!

The Lord says,

¹"The woman that is alone* will have more children than the woman with a husband."

² Make your tent bigger.

Open your doors wide.

Don't stop adding to your home.

Make your tent large and strong.

³ Why? Because you will begin growing very much.

Your children will get people from many nations,
and those children will again live in the cities that were destroyed.

⁴ Don't be afraid!

You will not be disappointed.

People will not say bad things against you.

You will not be embarrassed.

When you were young, you felt shame.

But you will forget that shame now.

You will not remember the shame that you felt when you lost your husband.

⁵ Why?

Because your husband is the One who made you.

His name is the Lord All-Powerful.

He is the One who saves Israel.

He is the Holy One of Israel.

And he will be called the God of all the earth!

⁶ You were like a woman with a husband that left her.

The woman ... alone This Hebrew word is like the word, "destroyed." This probably means "Jerusalem, the city that is destroyed."

You were very sad in your spirit,
but the Lord called you to be his.
You were like a woman that married
young,
and her husband left her.
But God called you to be his.

⁷ God says,
"I left you,
but only for a short time.
I will gather you to me again.
And I will show you great kindness.

⁸ I became very angry
and hid from you for a short time.
But I will comfort you with kindness
forever."
The Lord your Savior said this.

God Always Loves His People

¹ God says,
"This is like I punished the world with the
flood in Noah's time.
I promised Noah I would never flood
the world again.
In the same way,, I promise I will never
become angry and say bad things to
you again."

¹⁰ The Lord says,
"The mountains may disappear,
and the hills may become dust.
But my kindness will never leave you.
I will make peace with you,
and it will never end."
The Lord shows mercy to you.
And he is the One that said these things.

¹¹ "You poor city!
Storms have hurt you,
and you have not been comforted.
I will build you again.
I will lay your foundations using
precious stones.
I will use turquoise and sapphire.

¹² I will use rubies to build your walls.
I will use shiny jewels for the gates.
I will use precious stones to build all
your walls.

¹³ Your children will follow God,
and he will teach them.
Your children will have much peace.
¹⁴ I will build you using fairness.
So, you should stay far away from being
cruel and not fair.
Then you will have nothing to fear.
Nothing will come to hurt you.
¹⁵ None of my armies will fight against you.
And if any army tries to attack you,
you will defeat that army."

¹⁶"Look, I made the blacksmith.* He blows
on fire to make it hotter. Then he takes the hot
iron and makes the kind of tool he wants to
make. In the same way, I made the 'Destroyer'
that destroys things.

"People will make weapons to fight
against you, but those weapons will not defeat
you. Some people will say things against you.
But every person that speaks against you will
be shown to be wrong."

The Lord says, "What do the Lord's
servants get? They get the good things that
come from me!"

God Gives the "Food" That Really Satisfies

55 "All you thirsty people,
Come drink water!
Don't worry if you do not have money.
Come, eat and drink until you are full!
You do not need money;
eat and drink until you are full.
The food and wine cost nothing!
² Why waste your money on something
that is not real food?
Why should you work for something
that does not really satisfy you?
Listen very closely to me,
and you will eat the good food.
You will enjoy the food that satisfies your
soul.
³ Listen closely to the things I say.
Listen to me so your souls will live.
Come to me!

And I will make an agreement with you
that will continue forever.

It will be like the agreement I made with
David.

I promised David that I would be kind
to him forever.

And you can trust that agreement.

⁴ I made David a witness of my power for
all nations.

I promised David that he would become
a ruler
and a commander of many nations."

⁵ There are nations in places you don't
know,
but you will call for those nations.

Those nations don't know you,
but they will run to you.

This will happen because the Lord, your
God, wants it.

This will happen because the Holy One of
Israel honors you.

⁶ So you should look for the Lord
before it is too late.

You should call to him now,
while he is near.

⁷ Evil people should stop living their evil
way.

They should stop thinking bad thoughts.

They should come to the Lord again.

Then the Lord will comfort them.

Those people should come to the Lord
because our God forgives.

**People Are Not Wise Enough to Understand
God**

⁸ The Lord says,
"Your thoughts are not like my
thoughts.

Your ways are not like my ways.

⁹ The heavens are higher than the earth.
In the same way, my ways are higher than
your ways.

And my thoughts are higher than your
thoughts."

The Lord himself said these things.

¹⁰ "Rain and snow fall from the sky.

And they don't go back to the sky
until they touch the ground
and make the ground wet.

Then the ground makes plants sprout and
grow.

These plants make seeds for the farmer.

And people use these seeds to make
bread to eat.

¹¹ In the same way, my words leave my
mouth,
and they don't come back until they
make things happen.

My words make the things happen that I
want to happen.

My words succeed in doing the things I
send them to do.

¹² My words will go out with happiness,
and they will bring peace.

Mountains and hills will begin dancing
with happiness.

All the trees in the fields will clap their
hands.

¹³ Large cypress trees will grow where
bushes were.

Myrtle trees will grow where weeds
were.

These things will make the Lord famous.

These things will be proof that the Lord
is powerful.

This proof will never be destroyed."

All Nations Will Follow the Lord

56 The Lord said these things, "Be fair to
all people. Do things that are right!
Why? Because soon my salvation will come to
you. My goodness will soon be shown to the
whole world."

²The person that obeys God's law about the
Sabbath* will be blessed. And the person that
does no evil will be happy. ³Some people that
are not Jews will join themselves to the Lord.
Those people should not say, "The Lord will
not accept me with his people." A eunuch*

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the
Jews.

eunuch(s) Special servants. Sometimes their male sex
organs were removed so they could not have children.

should not say, "I am a dry piece of wood—I can't make any children." "These people should not say those things," because the Lord says, "I will give power and fame to the eunuchs that obey the laws about the Sabbath. I will give power and fame to the eunuchs that do the things I want. They will be in my temple* and in my city. I will do these things for all my people that follow my Agreement.* I will give those people something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a name that continues forever."

"Some people that are not Jews will join themselves to the Lord. They will do this so they can serve him and love the Lord's name. They will join themselves to the Lord to become his servants. They will keep the Sabbath*, as a special day of worship, and they will continue to closely follow my Agreement (Law).

"The Lord says, "I will bring those people to my holy mountain. I will make them happy in my house of prayer. The offerings and sacrifices they give me will please me. Why? Because my temple* will be called a house of prayer for all nations." "The Lord my Master said these things.

The people of Israel were forced to leave their country. But the Lord will gather them together again. The Lord says, "I will again gather these people together."

God Invites All People to Serve Him

¹ All you wild animals in the forest, come to eat!

¹⁰ The guards (*prophets*) are all blind. They don't know what they are doing. They are like dogs that don't know how to bark.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Agreement Usually, this means the agreement God made with Israel through Moses. Here it might mean the agreement of Isaiah 55:3.

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

They lie on the ground and sleep.

Oh, they love to sleep.

¹¹ They are like hungry dogs.

They are never satisfied.

Those shepherds don't know what they are doing.

They are like their sheep, that have all wandered away.

They are greedy.

All they want to do is satisfy themselves.

¹² They come and say,

"I will drink some wine.

I will drink some beer.

I will also do this tomorrow.

And later, I will drink even more."

Israel Does Not Follow God

57 The good people are gone, but no person noticed it. People don't understand what is happening, but they have gathered the good people together.

People don't understand that troubles are coming.

They don't know that good people have been gathered together for protection.

² But peace will come, and the people will rest in their own beds, and people will live the way God wants them to.

³ "Come here you children of witches. Your father is guilty of sexual sins, and your mother sells her body for sex. Come here!

⁴ You are evil and lying children. You make fun of me. You make faces at me.

You stick your tongues out at me.

⁵ All you want is to worship false gods under every green tree.

You kill children by every stream, and sacrifice them in the rocky places.

- ⁶ You love to worship the smooth rocks in the rivers.
 You pour wine on them to worship them.
 You give sacrifices* to them,
 but those rocks are all you get.
 Do you think this makes me happy?
 No! It does not make me happy.
 You make your bed on every hill and high mountain.*
- ⁷ You go up to those places and offer sacrifices.*
- ⁸ Then you get in those beds and sin against me by loving those gods.
 You love those gods,
 and you enjoy looking at their naked bodies.
 You were with me,
 but you left me to be with them.
 You hide the things that help you remember me.
 You hide those things behind the doors and behind the door posts.*
 And you go and make agreements with those false gods.
- ⁹ You use your oils and perfumes to look nice for Molech.*
 You have sent your messengers to faraway lands.
 And this will bring you down to Sheol,
 the place of death.

Israel Should Trust God, Not Statues

- ¹⁰ "You have worked hard to do these things,
 but you never became tired.
 You found new strength,

- because you enjoyed these things.
- ¹¹ You did not remember me.
 You did not even notice me!
 So, who were you worrying about?
 Who were you afraid of?
 Why did you lie?
 Look, I have been quiet for a long time—and you did not honor me.
- ¹² I could tell about your 'goodness' and all the 'religious' things you do; but those things are useless!
- ¹³ When you need help,
 you cry to those false gods you have gathered around you.
 But I tell you, the wind will blow them all away.
 A puff of wind will take them all away from you,
 but the person that depends on me will get the earth.
 That person will have my holy mountain.*

The Lord Will Save His People

- ¹⁴ "Clear the road!
 Clear the road!
 Make the way clear for my people!
- ¹⁵ The One who is high and lifted up,
 the One who lives forever,
 the One whose name is holy,
 he says:
- I live in a high and holy place,
 but also with people that are sad and humble.
 I will give new life to the people that are humble in spirit.
 I will give new life to the people that are sad in their hearts.
- ¹⁶ I will not continue fighting forever.
 I will not always be angry.
 If I continued to be angry,
 then man's spirit
 —the life I gave them—

sacrifices Gifts to God. Sometimes these were special kinds of animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

every ... mountain The people worship false gods in these places. The people thought these false gods would give them good crops and more children.

door posts The people of Israel were supposed to put special things on their door frames to help them remember God. See Deuteronomy 6:9.

Molech A false god. This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "king."

holy mountain This is the mountain the temple in Jerusalem is built on."

would die in front of me.

- ¹⁷ These people did evil things,
and it made me angry.

So, I punished Israel.

I turned away from him because I was
angry.

And Israel left me.

Israel went any place he wanted.

- ¹⁸ I saw where Israel went.

So, I will heal (*forgive*) him.

I will comfort him

and say words to make him feel better.

Then he and his people will not feel
sad.

- ¹⁹ I will make a new word for those people,
peace.

I will give peace to the people near me
and to the people that are far away.

I will heal (*forgive*) those people!"

The Lord said those things.

²⁰But evil people are like the angry ocean.
They can't be quiet and peaceful. They are
angry, and like the ocean, they stir up mud. My
God says, ²¹"There is no peace for evil people."

People Must Be Told to Follow God

58 Shout as loud as you can!
Don't stop yourself!

Shout loud like a trumpet!

Tell the people about the wrong things
they have done!

Tell Jacob's family about their sins!

- ² Then they will come every day to
worship me.

And the people will want to learn my
ways.

Those people will become a nation that
does things that are right.

Those people will not quit following
God's good commands.

Those people will ask me to judge them
fairly.

They will want to go to God, for his fair
decisions.

³Now those people say, "We stop eating
food to show honor to you. Why don't you see
us? We hurt our bodies to show honor to you.

Why don't you notice us?"

But the Lord says, "You do things to please
yourselves on those special days for not eating
food. And you punish your servants—not your
own bodies. 'You are hungry; but not for food.
You are hungry for arguing and fighting, not
bread. You are hungry to hit people with your
evil hands. When you stop eating food, it is not
for me. You don't want to use your voice to
praise me. 'Do you think on those special days
for not eating food that all I want is to see
people punish their bodies? Do you think I
want people to look sad? Do you think I want
people to bow their heads like dead plants and
wear clothes of sadness? Do you think I want
people to sit in ashes to show their sadness?
That is what you do on your special days for
not eating food. Do you think that is what the
Lord wants?"

"I will tell you the kind of special day I
want—a day to make people free. I want a day
that you take the burdens off people. I want a
day when you make the troubled people free. I
want a day when you take the burdens from
their shoulders. 'I want you to share your food
with the hungry people. I want you to find poor
people that don't have homes, and I want you
to bring them into your own homes. When you
see a man that has no clothes—give him your
clothes! Don't hide from helping those
people.; they are just like you."

"If you do these things, your light will begin
shining like the light of dawn. Then your
wounds will heal. Your "Goodness" (*God*) will
walk in front of you, and the Lord's Glory will
come following behind you. 'Then you will call
to the Lord, and the Lord will answer you. You
will shout to the Lord, and he will say, "Here I
am."

God's People Must Do Right

You should stop making troubles and
burdens for people. You should stop using
bitter words and blaming people for things.

¹⁰You should feel sorry for hungry people and
give them food. You should help the people
that are troubled—satisfy their needs. Then your
light will shine in the darkness. And you will

have no sadness. You will be bright like sunshine at noon.

¹¹The Lord will always lead you. He will satisfy your soul in dry lands. The Lord will give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that has much water. You will be like a spring that always has water.

¹²Your cities have been destroyed for many, many years. But new cities will be built, and the foundations of these cities will continue for many, many years. You will be called "The One Who Fixes Fences." And you will be called, "The One Who Builds Roads and Houses."

¹³That will happen when you stop sinning against God's law about the Sabbath.* And that will happen when you stop doing things to please yourself on that special day. You should call the Sabbath a happy day. You should honor the Lord's special day. You should honor that special day by not doing and saying those things you do every other day. ¹⁴Then you will please the Lord, and the Lord will say,

"I will carry you to the High Places above the earth.

I will feed you.

I will give you the things that Jacob your father had."

The Lord said these things, so they will happen.

Evil! People Should Change Their Lives

59 Look, the Lord's power is enough to save you. He can hear you when you ask him for help. ²But your sins separate you from your God. The Lord sees your sins, and he turns away from you.

³Your hands are dirty; they are covered with blood. Your fingers are covered with guilt. You tell lies with your mouth. Your tongue says evil things. ⁴No person tells the truth about other people. People sue each other in court, and they depend on false arguments to win their cases. They tell lies about each other. They are full of

trouble, and they give birth to evil. ⁵They hatch evil, like, eggs from poison snakes. If you eat one of those eggs you will die. And if you break one of those eggs, a poison snake will come out.

People tell lies, these lies are like spider webs. ⁶The webs they make can't be used for clothes. You can't cover yourself with those webs.

Some people do evil things and use their hands to hurt other people. ⁷Those people use their feet to run to evil. They hurry to kill people that have done nothing wrong. They think evil thoughts. Rioting and stealing is their way of living.

⁸Those people don't know the way of peace. There is no goodness in their lives. Their ways are not honest. Any people that live like they live, will never have peace in their lives.

Israel's Sin Brings Trouble

⁹ All fairness and goodness is gone.

There is only darkness near us,
so we must wait for the light.

We hope for a bright light,
but all we have is darkness.

¹⁰ We are like people without eyes.

We walk into walls like blind people.

We stumble and fall like it is night.

Even in the daylight we can't see.

At noontime we fall like dead men.

¹¹ We are all very sad.

We make sad sounds like doves and bears.

We are waiting for a time when people are fair.

But there is no fairness yet.

We are waiting to be saved,
but salvation is still far away.

¹² Why? Because we have done many,
many wrong things against our God.

Our sins show we are wrong.

We know we are guilty of doing these things.

¹³ We have sinned and turned against the Lord.

We have turned away from the Lord
and left him.

We have planned evil things.
We have planned things that are against God.

We have thought of these things and planned them in our hearts.

- ¹⁴ Justice has turned away from us.
Fairness stands far away.
Truth has fallen in the streets.
Goodness is not allowed to enter the city.

- ¹⁵ Truth is gone.
And people that try to do good are robbed.

The Lord looked,
and he could not find any goodness.
The Lord did not like this.

- ¹⁶ The Lord looked,
and could find no person to stand and help the people.
So the Lord used his own power and his own goodness,
and the Lord saved the people.
¹⁷ The Lord covered himself with goodness like armor.
The Lord put on the helmet of salvation.
The Lord put on the clothes of punishment.
The Lord put on the coat of strong love.*

- ¹⁸ The Lord is angry at his enemies.
So the Lord will give them the punishment they deserve.
The Lord is angry with his enemies.
So the Lord will punish the people in all the faraway places.
The Lord will give them the punishment they deserve.

- ¹⁹ Then people in the west will respect the Lord's name.
People in the east will be afraid of the Lord's Glory.
The Lord will come quickly like a fast flowing river.
It will be like a powerful wind from the Lord blowing this river.

Then a Savior will come to Zion. He will come to the people of Jacob that sinned but came back to God.

²The Lord says, "I will make an Agreement with those people. I promise, my Spirit and my words that I put in your mouth will never leave you. They will be with your children and your children's children. They will be with you for now and forever."

God Is Coming!

60 "Jerusalem, my light, get up!
Your Light (God) is coming!

The Lord's Glory will shine on you.

- ² Darkness now covers the earth and her people.

But the Lord will shine on you,
and people will see his Glory around you.

- ³ At that time, the nations will come to your Light (God).

Kings will come to your bright Light.

- ⁴ Look around you!

See, people are gathering around and coming to you.

Those people are your sons coming from far away.

And your daughters are coming with them.

- ⁵ This will happen in the future,.

And at that time, you will see your people,

and your faces will shine with happiness,.

First, you will be afraid,

but then, you will be excited!

All the riches of the nations from across the seas will be put before you.

The riches of the nations will come to you.

- ⁶ Herds of camels from Midian and Ephah will cover your land.

Long lines of camels will come from Sheba.

strong love This Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

They will bring gold and incense.
People will sing praises to the Lord.

- ⁷ All the sheep from Kedar will be collected and given to you.

Rams* from Nebaioth will be brought to you.

They will be acceptable sacrifices on my altar.*

And I will make my wonderful temple* more beautiful.

- ⁸ "Look at the people!

They are hurrying to you like clouds that cross the sky quickly.

They are like doves flying to their nests.

- ⁹ The faraway lands are waiting for me.
The great ships from Tarshish* are ready to go.

Those ships are ready to bring your children from faraway lands.

And those ships will bring their silver and gold with them.

This will happen to honor the Lord your God.

This will happen because the Holy One of Israel does wonderful things.

- ¹⁰ Children from other lands will build your walls again.

Their kings will serve you.

When I was angry, I hurt you.

But now, I want to be kind to you.

So I will comfort you.

- ¹¹ Your gates will always be open.

They will not be closed night or day.

Nations and kings will bring their wealth to you.

- ¹² Some nations and kingdoms will not serve you,

but those nations and kingdoms will be lost and destroyed.

- ¹³ "All the great things of Lebanon* will be given to you.

People will bring pine, fir, and cypress trees to you.

You will use these trees to make my holy place* more beautiful.

(This place is like a stool in front of my throne,
and I will give it much honor.)

- ¹⁴ In the past, people hurt you.

Those people will bow down before you.

In the past, people hated you.

Those people will bow down at your feet.

Those people will call you

'The Lord's City.'

'The Zion* of the Holy One of Israel.'

The New Israel: Land of Peace

- ¹⁵ "You will never again be left alone.

You will never again be hated.

You will never again be empty.

I will make you great forever.

You will be happy forever and ever.

- ¹⁶ Nations will give you things you need.

It will be like a child drinking milk from

its mother,

but you will 'drink' riches from kings.
Then you will know that it is I, the Lord,

who saves you.

You will know that the Great One of Jacob protects you.

- ¹⁷ You now have copper,

I will bring you gold.

You now have iron,

I will bring you silver.

I will change your wood into copper.

I will change your rocks into iron.

I will change your punishment into peace.

ram(s) A male sheep.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices as gifts to God.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship.

Lebanon A country north of Israel. It was famous for its great cedar and pine trees.

my holy place This probably means the temple in Jerusalem.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

- People now hurt you,
but people will do good things for you.
- ¹⁸ People will never again be mean to you.
People will never again steal from you
in your country.
You will name your walls,
'Salvation.'
You will name your gates,
'Praise.'
- ¹⁹ The sun will no longer be your light
during the day.
The light from the moon will no longer
be your light.
Why? Because the Lord will be your light
forever.
Your God will be your glory.
- ²⁰ Your 'sun' will never go down again.
Your 'moon' will never be dark again.
Why? Because the Lord will be your light
forever.
And your time of sadness will end.
- ²¹ All of your people will be good.
Those people will get the earth forever.
I made those people.
They are the wonderful plant I made
with my own hands.
- ²² The smallest person will become a large
family,
and the youngest person will become a
powerful nation.
When the time is right, I, the Lord, will
come quickly.
I will make these things happen."

The Lord's Message of Freedom

61 The Lord's servant says, "The Lord
my Master put his Spirit in me. The
Lord is with me because he chose me to do
some special things. The Lord chose me to:

- Announce good news to the poor
people;
comfort the sad people;
announce freedom to the people that are
not free;
give new strength to the weak people;
² announce the time when the Lord will
show his kindness;

- announce the time when our God will
punish evil people;
comfort the sad people;
³ give honor to the sad people of Zion;*;
(Now they have only ashes.)
give the people of Zion the oil of
happiness;
(Now they have only sadness.)
give the people of Zion songs of praise
to God;
(Now they have only sorrow.)
name those people
'Good Trees';
name those people,
'The Lord's Wonderful Plant.' "

"At that time, the old cities that were
destroyed will be built again. Those cities will
be made new like they were in the beginning.
The cities that were destroyed for many, many
years will be made like new.

"Then your enemies will come to you and
care for your sheep. The children of your
enemies will work in your fields and in your
gardens. 'You will be called, 'The Lord's
Priests,' 'The Servants of our God.' You will
have the riches that come from all the nations
on earth. And you will be proud you have it.

"In the past other people shamed you and
said bad things to you. You were shamed much
more than any other people. So in your land
you will get two times more than other people.
You will get happiness that continues forever.
'Why will this happen?', Because I am the
Lord and I love fairness. I hate stealing and
everything that is wrong. So I will give the
people the payment they should have.

"I have made an Agreement with my people
forever. 'Everyone in all nations will know my
people. Everyone will know the children from
my nation. Any person that sees them will
know that the Lord blesses them.' "

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

God's Servant Brings Salvation and Goodness

- ¹⁰ "The Lord makes me very, very happy.
My whole self is happy in my God.
The Lord covered me with the clothes of salvation.
These clothes are like the nice clothes a man wears at his wedding.
The Lord covered me with a coat of goodness.
This coat is like the beautiful clothes a woman wears at her wedding.
¹¹ The earth causes plants to grow.
People plant seeds in the garden,
and the garden causes those seeds to grow.
In the same way, the Lord will make goodness grow.
The Lord will make praise grow in all the nations."

New Jerusalem: A City Full of Goodness

- 62** "I love Zion,*
so I will continue to speak for her.
I love Jerusalem,
so I will not stop speaking.
I will speak until goodness shines like a bright light.
I will speak until salvation burns bright like a flame.
² Then all nations will see your goodness.
All kings will see your honor.
Then you will have a new name.
The Lord himself will give you people that new name.
³ The Lord will be very proud of you.
You will be like a beautiful crown in the Lord's hand.
⁴ You will never again be called
'The People that God had Left.'
Your land will never again be called
'The Land that God Destroyed.'

- You will be called
'The People God Loves.'
Your land will be called
'God's Bride.'
Why? Because the Lord loves you.
And your land will belong to him.
⁵ When a young man loves a woman, he marries her.
And she becomes his wife.
In the same way, your land will belong to your children.
A man is very happy with his new wife.
In the same way, your God will be very happy with you."

God Will Keep His Promises

- ⁶ "I put guards (*prophets*) on the walls of Jerusalem to watch.
These guards will not be silent.
Day and night they will teach."
You people that teach about the Lord should never be quiet.
⁷ You should not stop praying to the Lord.
You should pray to him always.
Pray to the Lord until he makes Jerusalem a city again.
Pray to the Lord until he makes Jerusalem a city that all people on the earth will praise.
⁸ The Lord made a promise.
The Lord made the promise using his own power as proof.
And the Lord will use his power to keep that promise.
The Lord said,
"I promise I will never again give your food to your enemies.
I promise that your enemies will never again take the wine that you make.
⁹ The person that gathers food will eat it,
and that person will praise the Lord.
The person that gathers the grapes,
will drink the wine that comes from those grapes.
All these things will happen in my holy

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

land."

- ¹⁰ Come through the gates!
Make the way clear for the people!
Prepare the road!
Move all the stones off the road!
Raise the flag as a sign for the people!
- ¹¹ Listen, the Lord is speaking to all the
faraway lands:
"Tell the people of Zion: *
Look, your Savior is coming.
He is bringing your reward to you.
He is bringing that reward with him."
- ¹² His people will be called:
"The Holy People,"
"The Saved People of the Lord."
And Jerusalem will be called:
"The City God Wants,"
"The City God Is With."

The Lord Judges His People

- 63** Who is this coming from
Edom? *
He comes from Bozrah * wearing red
clothes.
He is glorious in his clothes.
And he is walking tall with his great
power.
He says,
"I have the power to save you.
And I speak honestly."
- ² "Why are your clothes bright red?
Why are your clothes red like the
person that makes wine from
grapes?"
- ³ He answers,
"I walked in the winepress * by myself.
No person helped me.
I was angry and I walked on the grapes.
The juice * splashed on my clothes."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Edom A country east of Judah.

Bozrah A city in Edom.

winepress A place where people walk on grapes to squeeze
the juice from them. This juice then becomes wine.

juice Or, "strong drink" or "blood."

- So now my clothes are dirty.
- ⁴ I chose a time to punish people.
The time has come for me to save and
protect my people.
- ⁵ I looked around, but I saw no person to
help me.
I was surprised that no person supported
me.
So I used my own power to save my
people.
My own anger supported me.
- ⁶ While I was angry, I walked on people.
I punished them while I was mad.
I poured their blood * on the ground."

The Lord Has Been Kind to His People

- ⁷ I will remember that the Lord is kind.
And I will remember to praise the Lord.
The Lord gave many good things to the
family of Israel.
The Lord has been very kind to us.
The Lord showed mercy to us.
- ⁸ The Lord said,
"These are my people.
These children don't lie."
So the Lord saved those people.
- ⁹ The people had many troubles,
but the Lord was not against them.
The Lord loved the people and felt sorry
for them.
So the Lord saved the people.
He sent his special angel to save them.
And the Lord will continue to care for
the people forever.
The Lord did not want to ever stop caring
for those people.
- ¹⁰ But the people turned against the Lord.
The people made his Holy Spirit very
sad.
So the Lord became their enemy.
The Lord fought against those people.
- ¹¹ But the Lord still remembers a long time
ago.
The Lord remembers Moses and his
people.

blood Or, "strong drink" or "strength."

The Lord is the One who brought the people through the sea.

The Lord used his shepherds (*prophets*) to lead his flock (*people*).

But where is the Lord now—the One who put his Spirit in Moses?

¹² The Lord led Moses by the right hand.

The Lord used his wonderful power to lead Moses.

The Lord divided the water so that the people could walk through the sea.

The Lord made his name famous by doing these great things.

¹³ The Lord led the people through the deep seas.

The people walked without falling. They walked like a horse through the desert.

¹⁴ A cow does not fall just walking in the field.

In the same way, the people did not fall while going through the sea.

The Lord's Spirit led the people to a resting place.

The people were safe all the time.

Lord, that is the way you led your people. You led the people and you made your name wonderful.

A Prayer for God to Help His People

¹⁵ Lord, look down from the heavens. See the things that are happening now! Look down at us from your great and holy home in heaven.

Where is your strong love* for us?

Where are your powerful works that come from deep inside you?

Where is your mercy for me?

Why are you hiding your kind love from me?

¹⁶ Look! You are our father! Abraham does not know we are his children.

Israel (*Jacob*) does not recognize us.

Lord, you are our father!

You are the One who has always saved us!

¹⁷ Lord, why are you pushing us away from you?

Why are you making it hard for us to follow you?

Come back to us Lord!

We are your servants.

Come to us and help us!

Our families belong to you.

¹⁸ Your holy people now have many troubles.

Our enemies are walking on your holy temple.*

¹⁹ Some people don't follow you.

Those people don't wear your name. And we were like those people.

64 ^{1,2} If you would tear open the skies and come down to earth, then everything would change. The mountains would melt before you.

² The mountains would burn in flames like burning bushes.

The mountains would boil like water on the fire.

Then your enemies would learn about you.

Then all nations would shake with fear when they see you.

³ (But we don't really want you to do these things.

The mountains would melt before you.)

⁴ Your people have never really listened to you.

Your people have never really heard the things you said.

No person has ever seen a God like you.

There is no other God—only you.

If people are patient and wait for you to help them,

strong love This Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

then you will do great things for them.

- ⁵ You are with people that enjoy doing good.

Those people remember your ways of living.

But look, in the past we sinned against you.

So you became angry with us.

Now, how will we be saved?

- ⁶ We are all dirty with sin.

All our "goodness" is like old dirty clothes.

We are all like dead leaves.

Our sins have carried us away like wind.

- ⁷ We don't worship you.

We don't trust in your name.

None of us are excited about following you.

So you have turned away from us.

We are helpless before you,
because we are full of sin.

- ⁸ But Lord, you are our father.

We are like clay.

And you are the potter.*

Your hands made us all.

- ⁹ Lord, don't continue to be angry with us!

Don't remember our sins forever!

Please, look at us!

We are your people.

- ¹⁰ Your holy cities are empty.

Those cities are like deserts now.

Zion* is a desert!

Jerusalem is destroyed!

- ¹¹ Our holy temple has been burned by fire.

That temple was great to us.

Our fathers worshiped you there.

All the good things we owned are now destroyed.

- ¹² Will these things always keep you from showing your love to us?

Will you continue to say nothing?

Will you punish us forever?

All People Will Learn About God

65 The Lord says, "I helped people that had not come to me for advice. The people that found me were not looking for me. I spoke to a nation that does not wear my name. I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!'"

"I stood ready to accept people that turned against me. I was waiting for those people to come to me. But they continued living a way that is not good. They did anything their hearts wanted to do. 'Those people are in front of me always making me angry. Those people offer sacrifices* and burn incense* in their special gardens.*' 'Those people sit among the graves. They wait to get messages from dead people. They even live among dead bodies. They eat pig meat. Their forks and knives are dirty with rotten meat."

"But those people tell other people, 'Don't come near me! Don't touch me until I make you clean.' Those people are like smoke in my eyes. And their fire burns all the time."

Israel Must Be Punished

"Look, here is a bill that must be paid. This bill shows you are guilty for your sins., I will not be quiet until I pay this bill, and I will pay the bill by punishing you."

"Your sins and your fathers' sins are all the same." The Lord said this, "Your fathers did these sins when they burned incense* in the mountains. They shamed me on those hills. And I punished them first. I gave them the punishment they should have."

God Will Not Completely Destroy Israel

"The Lord says, "When there is new wine in the grapes, people squeeze out the wine. But they don't completely destroy the grapes. They do this because the grapes can still be used. I will do the same thing to my servants. I will not

sacrifices Gifts to God. Sometimes these were special kinds of animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It was burned as a gift to God.

special gardens People worshiped false gods in these gardens.

potter A person that makes pots and other things from clay.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

completely destroy them. ⁹I will keep some of the people of Jacob (*Israel*). Some of the people of Judah will get my mountain. My servants will live there. I will choose the people that will live there. ¹⁰Then Sharon Valley* will be a field for sheep. The Valley of Achor* will be a place for cattle to rest. All these things will be for my people—the people that look for me.

¹¹"But you people that left the Lord will be punished. You are the people that forgot about my holy mountain.* You are the people that worship Luck. You depend on the false god Fate.* ¹²But I decide your future., And I will punish you by using my sword. You will all be humble before the One who punishes you.

I called you and you refused to answer me! I spoke to you and you would not listen. You did the things that I say are evil. You decided to do the things that I don't like."

¹³ So the Lord my Master said these things.

"My servants will eat,
but you evil people will be hungry.
My servants will drink,
but you evil people will be thirsty.
My servants will be happy,
but you evil people will be shamed.

¹⁴ My servants have goodness in their hearts,
so they will be happy.
But you evil people will cry,
because you will have pain in your hearts.

Your spirits will be broken,
and you will be very sad.

¹⁵ Your names will be like bad words to my servants."

My Master and Lord will kill you.
And he will call his servants by a new name.

¹⁶ People now ask blessings from the earth.
But in the future., they will ask
blessings from the faithful God.

People now trust in the power of the earth
when they make a promise.

But in the future., they will trust in the
faithful God.

Why? Because the troubles in the past
will all be forgotten.

My people will never again remember
those troubles.

A New Time Is Coming

¹⁷ "Look, I will make a new heaven and a
new earth.

People will not remember the past
things.

None of those things will be in the
memories of my people.

¹⁸ My people will not be sad!

No, they will be happy and will praise
God forever.

They will be happy because of the things
I will make.

I will make a Jerusalem that is full of
joy,

and I will make them a happy people.

¹⁹ Then I will be happy with Jerusalem.

I will be happy with my people.

There will never again be crying and
sadness in that city.

²⁰ There will never be a child from that city,
that is born and lives only a few days.

No person from that city will die after
only a short life.

Every child born will live a long life,
and every older person will continue
living for a long time.

A person that lives 100 years will be
called young.

(But the person that sins will be full of
trouble, even if he lives 100 years.)

²¹ In that city, if a person builds a house,
that person will live there.

If a person plants a garden of grapes,
that person will eat the grapes from the
garden.

Sharon Valley The low land along the coast of Palestine.
Valley of Achor A valley about ten miles north of
Jerusalem.

my holy mountain Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem
is built on.

Luck ... Fate Two false gods. The people thought these
gods controlled their futures.'

- ²² It will not happen that one person builds a house
and another person lives there.
And it will not happen that one person
plants a garden
and another person eats the fruit from
that garden.
My people will live as long as the trees.
The people I choose will enjoy the
things they make.
- ²³ People will never again work for nothing.
People will never again give birth to
children that die young.
All my people will be blessed by the
Lord.
My people and their children will be
blessed.
- ²⁴ I will know the things they need before
they ask.
I will help them—even before they finish
asking me for help.
- ²⁵ Wolves and little lambs will eat together.
Lions will eat with cattle.
A snake on the ground will not scare or
hurt any person on my holy
mountain.”
The Lord said all those things.

God Will Judge All Nations

- 66** This is what the Lord says,
“The skies are my throne.
The earth is my footstool.
So do you think you can build a house for
me?
No! You can’t!
Can you give me a place to rest?
No! You can’t!
¹ I myself made all things.
All things are here because I made
them.”
The Lord said these things.
- “Tell me, what people do I care for?
I care for the poor people.
These are the people that are very sad.
I care for people that obey my words.
³ Some people kill bulls to give to me as a

sacrifice,,
but they also beat people.
Those people kill sheep to give to me as a
sacrifice,
but they also break the necks of dogs!
And they offer me the blood of pigs!*

Those people remember to burn incense,*
but they also love their worthless idols.*
Those people choose their own ways—not
mine.
They love their terrible idols
completely.

- ⁴ So I decided to use their own tricks!
I mean that, I will punish them
using the things they are most afraid
of.
I called to those people,
but they did not listen.
I spoke to them,
but they did not hear me.
So I will do the same thing to them.
Those people did things I said are evil.
They chose to do things I did not like.”
- ⁵ You people that obey the Lord’s
commands should listen to the things
the Lord says,
“Your brothers hated you.
They turned against you because you
followed me.
Your brothers said,
‘We will come back to you when the
Lord is honored.
Then we will be happy with you.’
Those people will be punished.”

“Listen! There is a loud noise coming from
the city and the temple.* That noise is the Lord
punishing his enemies. The Lord is giving them
the punishment they should have.

dogs ... pigs God did not want his people to offer dogs and
pigs as sacrifices.

incense A kind of spice that smells good when it is burned. It
was burned as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God
commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in
Jerusalem.

⁷"It does not happen that a woman gives birth before she feels the pain. It has never happened that a woman sees her son born before she feels any pain. This has never happened. In the same way, no person ever saw a new world begin in one day. No person has ever heard of a new nation that began in one day. The land must first have pain like the pain of birth. After the birth pain then the land will give birth to her children—a new nation. ⁸In the same way, I will not cause pain without allowing something new to be born."

The Lord says this. "I promise, if I cause you the pain of birth then I will not stop you from having your new nation." Your God said this.

⁹ Jerusalem, be happy!

All you people that love Jerusalem
should be happy!

Sad things happened to Jerusalem,
so some of you people are sad.

But now you people should be very, very
happy.

¹¹ Why? Because you will have mercy like
milk coming from her breast.

That "milk" will truly satisfy you!

You people will drink the milk,
and you will truly enjoy the glory of
Jerusalem.

¹² The Lord says,

"Look, I will give you peace.

This peace will come flowing to you
like a great river.

All the wealth from all the nations on
earth will come flowing to you.

This wealth will flow like a stream from
a flood.

You will be like little children.

You will drink the 'milk.'

You will be lifted and held in my arms.

You will be bounced on my knees.

¹³ You will be comforted in Jerusalem.

I will comfort you like a mother
comforts her child.

¹⁴ You will see the things that you truly
enjoy.

You will be free and grow like grass.
The Lord's servants will see his power,
but the Lord's enemies will see his
anger.

¹⁵Look, the Lord is coming with fire. The Lord's armies are coming with clouds of dust. The Lord will punish those people with his anger. The Lord will use flames of fire to punish those people while he is angry. ¹⁶The Lord will judge the people. Then the Lord will destroy the people with fire and with his sword. The Lord will destroy many people.

¹⁷Those people wash themselves to make themselves pure for worshiping in their special gardens.* These people follow each other into their special gardens. Then they worship their idols. But, the Lord will destroy all those people.

"Those people eat the meat from pigs, rats, and other dirty things. But, all of those people will be destroyed together." (The Lord himself said these things.)

¹⁸"Those people have evil thoughts and do evil things. So I am coming to punish them. I will gather all nations and all people. All people will come together and see my power.

¹⁹I will put a mark on some of the people—I will save them. I will send some of these saved people to the nations Tarshish,* Libya,* Lud*

special gardens People worshiped false gods in these gardens.

Tarshish A city far away from Israel, probably in Spain. Tarshish was famous for its large ships that sailed the Mediterranean Sea.

Libya A country in North Africa, west of Egypt.

Lud This country was probably in the country that is now western Turkey.

(the land of archers*), Tubal,* Greece, and all the faraway lands. Those people have never heard my teachings. Those people have never seen my glory. So the saved people will tell the nations about my glory. ²⁰And they will bring all your brothers and sisters from all nations. They will bring your brothers and sisters to my holy mountain,* Jerusalem. Your brothers and sisters will come on horses, donkeys, camels, and in chariots and wagons. Your brothers and sisters will be like the gifts that the people of Israel bring on clean plates to the Lord's temple.* ²¹I will also choose some of these people to be priests and Levites.*" (The Lord said these things.)

The New Heavens and the New Earth

²²"I will make a new world—and the new heavens and the new earth, will last forever. In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me. ²³All people will come to worship me on every worship day; they will come every Sabbath* and every first day of the month.*

²⁴"These people will be in my holy city. And if they go out of the city, they will see the dead bodies of the people that sinned against me. There will be worms in those bodies,—and the worms will never die. Fires will burn those bodies,—and the fires will never stop.

archers Soldiers that use bows and arrows in war.

Tubal This country was probably in the country that is now eastern Turkey.

my holy mountain This is probably Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

temple A special building for worshiping God. God commanded the Jews to worship him at the temple in Jerusalem.

Levites People from the family group of Levi. Only Levites could help the priests in the temple.

Sabbath Saturday. A special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

first ... month Literally, "new moon," the first day of the Jewish month and a special day of worship.

Jeremiah

1 These are the messages of Jeremiah. Jeremiah was the son of a man named Hilkiyah. Jeremiah belonged to the family of priests that lived in the city of Anathoth.* That city is in the land that belongs to the family group of Benjamin.² The Lord began to speak to Jeremiah during the days when Josiah was king of the nation of Judah. Josiah was the son of a man named Amon. The Lord began to speak to Jeremiah in the 13th year that Josiah was king.*³ The Lord continued to speak to Jeremiah during the time when Jehoiakim was king of Judah. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah. The Lord continued to speak to Jeremiah during the eleven years and five months that Zedekiah was king of Judah. Zedekiah was also a son of Josiah. In the fifth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year as king, the people that lived in Jerusalem were taken away into exile.

God Calls Jeremiah

"The Lord's message came to Jeremiah. This message was from the Lord:

- ¹ "Before I made you in your mother's body, I knew you.
Before you were born, I chose you for a special work.

priests ... Anathoth These priests probably belonged to the family of the priest Abiathar. Abiathar was a high priest in Jerusalem during the time David was king. He was sent away to Anathoth by King Solomon. See 1 Kings 2:26.

13th ... king That is 627 B.C.

I chose you to be a prophet to the nations."

"Then I, Jeremiah, said, "But Lord All-Powerful, I don't know how to speak. I am only a boy."

² But the Lord said to me,

"Don't say, 'I am only a boy.'

You must go everywhere that I send you.

You must say everything I tell you to say.

- ³ Don't be afraid of anyone.

I am with you,

and I will protect you."

This message is from the Lord.

⁴ Then the Lord reached out with his hand and touched my mouth. The Lord said to me,

"Jeremiah, I am putting my words in your mouth.

- ⁵ Today I have put you in charge of nations and kingdoms.

You will pull up and tear down.

You will destroy and overthrow.

You will build up and plant."

Two Visions

"The Lord's message came to me. This message was from the Lord: "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

I answered the Lord and said, "I see a stick made from almond wood."

² The Lord said to me, "You have seen very

well. And I am watching* to make sure that my message to you comes true."

¹²The Lord's message came to me again. This message was from the Lord: "Jeremiah, what do you see?"

I answered the Lord and said, "I see a pot of boiling water. That pot is tipping over from the north."

¹³The Lord said to me,

"Something terrible will come from the north.

It will happen to all the people that live in this country.

¹⁴In a short time I will call all of the people in the northern kingdoms."

The Lord said those things.

"The kings of those countries will come.

They will set up their thrones near the gates of Jerusalem.

They will attack all the city walls of Jerusalem.

They will attack all the cities in the land of Judah.

¹⁵And I will announce my judgment against my people.

I will do this because they are bad people and they have turned against me.

My people left me.

How did they leave me?

They offered sacrifices to other gods.

They worshiped idols they had made with their own hands.

¹⁶"As for you, Jeremiah, get ready.

Stand up and speak to the people.

Tell the people everything that I tell you to say.

Don't be afraid of the people.

If you are afraid of the people, then I will give you good reason to be afraid of them.

¹⁷As for me, today I am going to make you a strong city, an iron column,

a bronze wall.

You will be able to stand against everyone in the land, against the kings of the land of Judah, against the leaders of Judah, against the priests of Judah, and against the people of the land of Judah.

¹⁸All those people will fight against you, but they will not defeat you. Why? Because I am with you, and I will save you."

This message is from the Lord.

Judah Was Unfaithful

2 The Lord's message came to Jeremiah. This message was from the Lord: ²"Jeremiah, go and speak to the people of Jerusalem. Say to them:

"At the time you were a young nation, you were faithful to me.

You followed me like a young bride.

You followed me through the desert, through a land that had never been used for farm land.

³The people of Israel were a holy gift to the Lord.

They were the firstfruit to be gathered by the Lord.

Any people that tried to hurt the people of Israel were judged guilty.

Bad things happened to those wicked people."

This message was from the Lord.

⁴Hear the Lord's message, family of Jacob.

Hear the message, all you family groups of Israel.

⁵This is what the Lord says:

"Was I not fair to your ancestors?*

Is that why they turned away from me?

Your ancestors worshiped worthless idols,

watching This is a play on words. "Shaged" is the Hebrew word for "almond wood," and "shoked" is the word for "watching."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

- and they became worthless themselves.
- ⁶ Your ancestors did not say,
 'The Lord brought us from Egypt.
 Where is he?
 The Lord led us through the desert.
 Where is he?
 The Lord led us through a dry and rocky
 land.
 Where is he?
 The Lord led us through a dark and
 dangerous land.
 No people travel through that land.
 No people live in that land.
 Where is he?'
 No, your ancestors did not ask those
 questions!]
- ⁷ I brought you into a good land with many
 good things.
 I did this so you could eat the fruit and
 produce that grew there.
 But you came and made my land
 'dirty.'
 I gave that land to you,
 but you made it a bad place.
- ⁸ 'The priests did not ask,
 'Where is the Lord?'
 The people that know the law did not
 want to know me.
 The leaders of the people of Israel turned
 against me.
 The prophets prophesied* in the name of
 the false god Baal.*
 They worshiped worthless idols.
- ⁹ "So now I will accuse you again,"
 says the Lord, "And I will also accuse
 your grandchildren.
- ¹⁰ Go across the sea to the Islands of
 Kittim* and see.
 Send someone to the land of Kedar* to
 pay close attention.

prophesied Or, "spoke."

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Islands of Kittim The name means the Island of Cyprus. But the name was often used for the other islands and coastlands of the Mediterranean Sea.

Kedar This was the name of an Arabian family group that lived in the desert to the east of Palestine.

- See if any person has ever done such a
 thing as this:
- ¹¹ Has a nation of people ever exchanged
 their old gods for new gods? No!
 (Of course, their gods are not really
 gods at all!)
- But my people have exchanged their
 glorious God
 for idols that are worth nothing.
- ¹² "Skies, be shocked at the things that have
 happened!
 Shake with great fear!"
 This message was from the Lord.
- ¹³ "My people have done two evil things.
 They have turned away from me
 (I am the spring of living water),
 and they have dug their own water
 cisterns.
 (They turned to other gods.)
 But their cisterns are broken.
 Those cisterns can't hold water.
- ¹⁴ "Have the people of Israel become
 slaves?
 Have they become like a person that
 was born a slave?
 Why did people take the wealth from the
 people of Israel?
- ¹⁵ Young lions' (*enemies*) roar at the nation
 of Israel.
 The lions growl.
 Lions have destroyed the land of the
 people of Israel.
 The cities of Israel have been burned.
 There are no people left in them.
- ¹⁶ The men from the cities of Memphis and
 Tahpanhes* have smashed the top of
 your head.
- ¹⁷ This trouble is your own fault!
 You turned away from the Lord your
 God.*
- ¹⁸ People of Judah, think about this:

Memphis and Tahpanhes Two important cities in Egypt.

God The Hebrew text adds "at the time of the one that leads you on the way." The ancient Greek translation does not have this addition.

Did it help to go to Egypt?
Did it help to drink from the Nile River?

No!

Did it help to go to Assyria?
Did it help to drink from the Euphrates River?

No!

- 19 You did bad things,
and those bad things will only bring
punishment to you.
Trouble will come to you.
And that trouble will teach you a lesson.
Think about it!
Then you will understand how bad it is
to turn away from your God.
It is wrong not to fear me!"
- This message was from my Master, the
Lord All-Powerful.

- 20 "Judah, a long time ago you threw off
your yoke.
You broke the ropes I used to hold you
close to me.
You said to me, 'I will not serve you!'
In fact, on every high hill,
and under every green tree,
you lie down and act like a prostitute!*
- 21 I planted you, Judah, like a special vine.
All of you were like good seed.
How did you turn into a different vine
that grows bad fruit?
- 22 Even if you wash yourself with lye,*
even if you use much soap,
I can still see your guilt." This message
was from the Lord God.
- 23 "Judah, how can you say to me, 'I am not
guilty;
I have not worshiped the Baal* idols'?
Think about the things you did in the
valley.
Think about what you have done.

You are like a fast she-camel that runs
from place to place.

- 24 You are like a wild donkey that lives in
the desert.
At mating time, she sniffs (*smells*) the
wind.

No person can bring her back at the
time she is in heat.

At mating time, every male that wants her
will get her.

It is easy to find her.

- 25 Judah, stop chasing after idols!
Stop being thirsty for those other gods.
But you say, 'It is no use! I can't quit!
I love those other gods.
I want to worship them.'

- 26 "A thief is ashamed when people catch
him.
In the same way, the family of Israel is
ashamed.
The kings and the leaders,
the priests and the prophets
are ashamed.

- 27 Those people talk to pieces of wood!
They say, 'You are my father.'
Those people speak to a rock.
They say, 'You gave birth to me.'
All those people will be ashamed.
Those people don't look at me.
They have turned their backs to me.
But when the people of Judah get into
trouble,
they say to me, 'Come and save us!'
Let those idols come and save you!
Where are the idols you have made for
yourselves?
Let's see if those idols come and save
you when you are in trouble.
People of Judah, you have as many idols
as cities!

- 28 "Why do you argue with me?
All of you have turned against me."
This message was from the Lord.

- 29 "I punished you people of Judah,
but it did not help.
You did not come back when you were

on every ... a prostitute This means the people
worshiped their false gods in these places.

lye A chemical that is used like soap.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god
brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made
the land produce good crops.

punished.

You killed with your swords the prophets
that came to you.

You were like a dangerous lion and you
killed the prophets."

³¹ People of this generation, pay attention to
the Lord's message!

"Have I been like a desert to the people of
Israel?

Have I been like a dark and dangerous
land to them?

My people say,

'We are free to go our own way.

We will not come back to you again,
Lord!'

Why do they say those things?

³² Does a young woman forget her jewelry?
No!

Does a bride forget the sash for her dress?
No!

But my people have forgotten me
for days without number.

³³ "Judah, you really know how to chase
after lovers (*false gods*).

So you have taught yourselves to do
evil things.

³⁴ You have blood on your hands!
It is the blood of the poor and innocent
people.

You killed people,
and those people were not even burglars
that you had caught.

³⁵ You do those bad things,
but you still keep on saying,
'I am innocent.

God is not angry with me.'

So I will also judge you guilty, of lying.

Why? Because you say, 'I have done
nothing wrong.'

³⁶ It is so easy for you to change your mind.
Assyria disappointed you.

So you left Assyria and went to Egypt
for help.

Egypt will disappoint you.

³⁷ You will eventually leave Egypt, too.
And your hands will be on your head in
shame.

You trusted those countries.

But you will not have any success with
those countries.

Why? Because the Lord has rejected
those countries.

3 "If a man divorces his wife,
and that wife leaves him
and marries another man,
can that man come back to his wife
again?

No!

If that man went back to that woman,*
then the land would become completely
'dirty.'

Judah, you acted like a prostitute with
many lovers (*false gods*).

And now you want to come back to
me?"

This message was from the Lord.

² "Look up to the bare hilltops, Judah.

Is there any place where you have not
had sex?

You have sat by the road waiting for
lovers.

You sat there like an Arab waiting in
the desert.

You made the land 'dirty'!

How? You did many bad things and you
were unfaithful to me.

³ You sinned, so the rain has not come.
There have not been any springtime
rains.

But you still have the look of a prostitute
on your face.

You refuse even to be ashamed of the
things you did.

⁴ But now you are calling me.

'My father,

You have been my dear friend since I
was a child.

⁵ God will not always be angry at me.

God's anger will not continue forever.'

If that ... woman It was against the law of Moses for a man to marry a woman he had divorced if that woman had become another man's wife. It was against the law for that man to marry her again even if her second husband divorced her or died. See Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

Judah, you say those things,
but you do as much evil as you can."

The Two Bad Sisters: Israel and Judah

⁶During the time that King Josiah was ruling the nation of Judah, the Lord spoke to me. The Lord said: "Jeremiah, you saw the bad things that Israel* did? You saw how she was unfaithful to me. She did the sin of adultery with idols on every hill and under every green tree. ⁷I said to myself, 'Israel will come back to me after she has finished doing these evil things.' But she did not come back to me. And Israel's unfaithful sister, Judah, saw what she did. ⁸Israel was unfaithful and Israel knew why I sent her away. Israel knew that I divorced her because she did the sin of adultery. But that did not make her unfaithful sister afraid. Judah, was not afraid. Judah also went out and acted like a prostitute. ⁹Judah did not care that she was acting like a prostitute. So she made her country 'dirty.' She did the sin of adultery by worshiping idols made out of stone and wood. ¹⁰Israel's unfaithful sister (Judah) did not come back to me with her whole heart. She only pretended that she came back to me." This message was from the Lord.

¹¹The Lord said to me, "Israel was not faithful to me. But she had a better excuse than unfaithful Judah. ¹²Go, Jeremiah, and speak this message toward the north:

'Come back, you faithless people of
Israel.'

This message was from the Lord.

'I will stop frowning at you.

I am full of mercy.'

This message was from the Lord.

'I will not be angry with you forever.

¹³ All you have to do is recognize your sin.

You turned against the Lord your God.

That is your sin.

You worshiped the idols of the people
from other nations.

You worshiped the idols under every
green tree.

You did not obey me.' "

This message was from the Lord.

¹⁴"Come back to me you unfaithful people.
This message was from the Lord.

"I am your Master. I will take one person from every city and two people from every family and bring you to Zion.* ¹⁵Then I will give you new rulers. Those rulers will be faithful to me. They will lead you with knowledge and understanding. ¹⁶In those days there will be many of you in the land." This message is from the Lord.

"At that time, people will never again say, 'I remember the days when we had the Box of the Lord's Agreement.*' They won't even think about the Holy Box anymore. They won't even remember or miss it. They will never make another Holy Box. ¹⁷At that time, the city of Jerusalem will be called the 'Lord's Throne.' All nations will come together in the city of Jerusalem to give honor to the name of the Lord. They won't follow their stubborn, evil hearts anymore. ¹⁸In those days, the family of Judah will join the family of Israel. They will come together from a land in the north. They will come to the land I gave to their ancestors.*

¹⁹ "I, the Lord, said to myself,

'I would be happy to treat you like my
own children.

I would be happy to give you a pleasant
land,

a land more beautiful than any other
nation.'

I thought that you would call me 'Father.'

I thought that you would always follow
me.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Box of the Agreement The box containing the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments written on them and the other things that proved God was with the people of Israel during their time in the Sinai Desert. Also called "The Ark of the Covenant."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Israel Here the name Israel means the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians about 100 years before Jeremiah's time.

- ²⁰ But you have been like a woman that is unfaithful to her husband.

Family of Israel, you have been unfaithful to me!"

This message was from the Lord.

- ²¹ You can hear crying on the bare hills.
The people of Israel are crying and praying for mercy.
They became very evil.
They forgot the Lord their God.

(The Lord also said,)

- ²² "Come back to me, you unfaithful people of Israel.

Come back and I will forgive*
you for being unfaithful to me."

(The people should say,)

"Yes, we will come to you.
You are the Lord our God.

- ²³ It was foolish to worship idols on the hills.

All the loud parties on the mountains
were only a lie.

Surely the salvation of Israel,
comes from the Lord our God.

- ²⁴ The shameful one*
has eaten up in sacrifice
everything our fathers owned.
This has happened since we were
children.

The shameful one took our fathers' sheep
and cattle,
their sons and daughters.

- ²⁵ Let us lie down in our shame.
Let our shame cover us like a blanket.
We have sinned against the Lord our
God.

We and our fathers have sinned.

Since we were children until now,
we have not obeyed the Lord our God."

- 4** This message is from the Lord.
"If you want to come back, Israel,"
then come back to me.

Throw away your idols.

Don't wander away from me.

- ² If you do those things,
then you will be able to use these words
to make a promise:

You will be able to say, 'As the Lord
lives.'

And you will be able to use those words
in a truthful, honest, and right way.

If you do these things, then the nations
will be blessed by the Lord.

They will brag about the things the Lord
has done."

'This is what the Lord says to the men of the
nation of Judah, and to the city of Jerusalem:

"Your fields have not been plowed.

Plow those fields!

Don't plant seeds among the thorns.

- ⁴ Become the Lord's people.

Change your hearts!*

Men of Judah and people of Jerusalem,
if you don't change,
then I will become very angry.

My anger will spread fast like a fire,
and my anger will burn you up.

And no person will be able to put out
that fire.

Why will this happen?

Because of the evil things you have
done."

Disaster from the North

"Announce this message to the people of
Judah:

Tell every person in the city of Jerusalem,
'blow the trumpet all over the country.'

Shout out loud and say,

'Come together!

Let us all escape to the strong cities for
protection.'

Become ... hearts Literally, "Be circumcised to the
Lord. Cut away the foreskin of your hearts." A man cut away
the foreskin from his sex organ to show he was becoming one
of God's people. Jeremiah is saying that the real circumcision
must be from inside a person's heart (mind).

forgive Literally, "heal."

shameful one This is probably a specific reference to the
god Baal.

- ⁶ Raise the signal flag toward Zion.*
Run for your lives!
Don't wait!
Do this because I am bringing disaster
from the north.*
I am bringing terrible destruction."
⁷ A lion has come out of his cave.
A destroyer of nations has begun to
march.
He has left his home
to destroy your land.
Your towns will be destroyed.
There will be no people left to live in
them.
⁸ So put on sackcloth.*
Cry loud!
Why? Because the Lord is very angry at
us.
⁹ At the time this happens,"
this message is from the Lord,
"the king and leaders will lose their
courage.
The priests will be scared!
The prophets will be shocked!"
- ¹⁰ Then I, Jeremiah, said, "Lord my Master,
you have really tricked the people of Judah
and Jerusalem. You said to them, 'You will have
peace.' But now the sword is pointing at their
throats!"
- ¹¹ At that time a message will be given
to the people of Judah and Jerusalem:
"A hot wind blows from the bare hills.
It comes out of the desert toward my
people.
It is not like the gentle wind that farmers
use to separate the grain from the
chaff.*

- ¹² It is a stronger wind than that,
and it comes from me.
Now, I will announce my judgment
against the people of Judah."
¹³ Look! The enemy rises up like a cloud.
His chariots* look like a wind storm.
His horses are faster than eagles.
It will be very bad for us!
We are ruined!
- ¹⁴ People of Jerusalem, wash the evil things
from your hearts.
Make your hearts pure so that you can
be saved.
Don't continue making evil plans.
¹⁵ Listen! The voice of a messenger from
the land of Dan*
is speaking.
One is bringing bad news from the hill
country of Ephraim.*
¹⁶ "Report it to this nation.*
Spread the news to the people in
Jerusalem.
Enemies are coming from a faraway
country.
Those enemies are shouting words of
war against the cities of Judah.
¹⁷ The enemy has surrounded Jerusalem like
men that guard a field.
Judah, you turned against me!
So the enemy is coming against you!"
This message is from the Lord.
¹⁸ "The way you lived and the things you
did brought this trouble to you.
It is your evil that has made your life so
hard.
It is your evil, that brought the pain
that hurts deep in your heart."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

north The Babylonian army came from this direction to
attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel
often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

sackcloth A kind of cloth that people wore to show they
were sad or crying for dead people.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds
of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let
the wind blow the useless chaff away.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

land of Dan The people from the family group of Dan
lived near the border in the northern part of Israel. They
would be the first to be attacked by an enemy from the north.
hill ... Ephraim This was the central part of the land that
had been the northern kingdom of Israel.

Report ... nation The Hebrew is hard to understand
here.

Jeremiah's Cry

- ¹⁹ Oh, my sadness and worry is making my stomach hurt.
I am bent over in pain.
Oh, I am so scared.
My heart is pounding inside me.
I can't keep quiet.
Why? Because I have heard the trumpet blow.
The trumpet is calling the army to war!
- ²⁰ Disaster follows disaster!
The whole country is destroyed!
Suddenly my tents are destroyed!
My curtains are torn down!
- ²¹ How long, O Lord, must I see the war flags?
How long must I hear the war trumpets?
- ²² God said, "My people are foolish.
They don't know me.
They are stupid children.
They don't understand.
They are skillful at doing evil,
but they don't know how to do good."

Disaster Is Coming

- ²³ I looked at the earth.
The earth was empty; nothing was on the earth.
I looked at the sky,
and its light was gone.*
- ²⁴ I looked at the mountains, and they were shaking.
All the hills were trembling.
- ²⁵ I looked, but there were no people.
All the birds of the sky had flown away.
- ²⁶ I looked, and the good land had become a desert.
All the cities in that land were destroyed.
The Lord caused this.
The Lord and his great anger caused this.

- ²⁷ The Lord says these things:
"The whole country will be ruined.
(But I will not completely destroy the land.)"
- ²⁸ So the people in the land will cry for the dead people.
The sky will grow dark.
I have spoken and will not change.
I have made a decision and I will not change my mind."
- ²⁹ The people of Judah will hear the sound of the horse soldiers and the archers,*
and the people will run away!
Some of the people will hide in caves,*
some will hide in the bushes,
some will climb up into the rocks.
All of the cities of Judah are empty.
No one lives in them.
- ³⁰ O Judah, you destroyed nation, what are you doing?
Why do you put on your finest red dress?
Why do you put on your gold jewelry?
Why do you put on your eye makeup?
You make yourself beautiful, but it is all useless.
Your lovers hate you.
They are trying to kill you.
- ³¹ I hear a cry like the cry of a woman having a baby.
It is a scream like a woman that is having her first baby.
It is the cry of the Daughter of Zion.*
She is lifting her hands in prayer, saying,
"Oh! I am about to faint!
Murderers are all around me!"

The Evil of the People of Judah

- 5** *(The Lord says,)*
"Walk up and down the streets of Jerusalem.
Look around and think about these

archers Soldiers that use bows and arrows in war.

hide in caves This line is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew text does not have this line.

Daughter of Zion A name for the city of Jerusalem.

The ... gone Jeremiah is comparing his country to the time before people were put on the earth. See Gen. 1:1.

things.

Search the public squares of the city.

See if you can find one good person,
one person that does honest things,
one that searches for the truth.

If you find one good person,
I will forgive Jerusalem!

- ² The people make promises and say,
'As the Lord lives,'
But they don't really mean it."

³ O Lord, I know that you look for truth in people.

You hit the people of Judah,
but they did not feel any pain.

You destroyed them,
but they refused to learn their lesson.
They became very stubborn.

They refused to be sorry for their evil
deeds.

- ⁴ But I (*Jeremiah*) said to myself,
"It must be only the poor people that are
so foolish.

It is they that have not learned the way
of the Lord.

The poor people don't know the teachings
of their God.

- ⁵ So I will go to the leaders of the people of
Judah.
I will talk to them.

Surely the leaders understand the way of
the Lord.

I am sure they know the law of their
God."

But the leaders had all joined together to
break away from serving the Lord.*

- ⁶ They turned against God,
so a lion from the forest will attack
them.

A wolf from the desert will kill them.

A leopard is hiding near their cities.

The leopard will tear to pieces anyone
that comes out of the city.

This will happen because the people of
Judah have sinned again and again.

They have wandered away from the
Lord many times.

- ⁷ God said, "Judah, give me a reason why
I should forgive you.

Your children have abandoned me.

They have made promises to idols that
are not gods at all.

I gave your children everything they
needed.

But they still were unfaithful to me!

They spent much time in houses of
prostitution.

- ⁸ They are like horses that have had plenty
to eat and are ready to mate.

They are like a horse calling its
neighbor's wife.

- ⁹ Should I punish the people of Judah for
doing these things?"

This message is from the Lord.

"Yes! You know I should punish a nation
such as this.

I should give them the punishment they
deserve.

- ¹⁰ "Go along the rows of Judah's
grapevines.

Cut down the vines.

(But don't completely destroy them.)

Cut off all their branches.

Why? Because these branches don't
belong to the Lord.

- ¹¹ The family of Israel and the family of
Judah

have been unfaithful to me in every
way."

This message is from the Lord.

- ¹² "Those people have lied about the Lord.
They have said,

'The Lord will not do anything to us.

Nothing bad will happen to us.

We will never see an army attack us.

We will never starve.'

- ¹³ "The false prophets are only empty
wind.*

break ... Lord Literally, "break the yoke and throw off the bonds."

wind This is a word play. The Hebrew word for wind is like the word for Spirit.

The word of God is not in them.*
Bad things will happen to them."

- ¹⁴ The Lord, God All-Powerful, said these things:

"Those people said I would not punish them.

So Jeremiah, the words I give you will be like fire.

And those people will be like wood.

The fire will burn up all the wood.

- ¹⁵ Family of Israel," this message is from the Lord,
"I will soon bring a nation from far away to attack you.

It is an old nation.

It is an ancient nation.

The people of that nation speak a language you don't know.

You can't understand what they say.

- ¹⁶ Their arrow bags are like open graves.

All of their men are strong soldiers.

- ¹⁷ Those soldiers will eat the crops that you have harvested.

They will eat all of your food.

They will eat (*destroy*) your sons and daughters.

They will eat your flocks and your herds.

They will eat your grapes and your figs.

They will destroy your strong cities with their swords.

They will destroy the strong cities that you trust in!

- ¹⁸ "But when those terrible days come," this message is from the Lord,

"I will not fully destroy you, Judah.

- ¹⁹ The people of Judah will ask you, 'Jeremiah, why has the Lord our God done this bad thing to us?'

Give them this answer:

'You people of Judah have left the Lord,

and you have served foreign idols in your own land.

You did those things,
so now you will serve foreigners in a land that does not belong to you.'

- ²⁰ The Lord said, "Announce this message to the family of Jacob.

Tell this message in the nation of Judah:

- ²¹ Hear this message,

You foolish people that have no sense:

'You people have eyes, but you don't see!

You people have ears, but you don't listen!'

- ²² Surely you are afraid of me."

This message is from the Lord.

"You should shake with fear in front of me.

I am the One who made the beaches to be a boundary for the sea.

I made it that way to keep the water in its place forever.

The waves may pound the beach, but they will not destroy it.

The waves may roar as they come in, but they can't go beyond the beach.

- ²³ But the people of Judah are stubborn.

They are always planning ways to turn against me.

They have turned and gone away from me.

- ²⁴ The people of Judah never say to themselves,

'We should fear and respect the Lord our God.

He gives us autumn and spring rains just at the right time.

He makes sure that we have the harvest at the right time.'

- ²⁵ People of Judah, you have done wrong.

So the rains and the harvest have not come.

Your sins have kept you from enjoying those good things from the Lord.

- ²⁶ There are evil men among my people.

Those evil men are like men that make nets for catching birds.*

The word of God ... them Literally, "and the 'He said' is not in them."

men that make nets ... birds The Hebrew is hard to understand here.

- These men set their traps,
But they catch men instead of birds.
- 27 The houses of these evil men are full of
lies,
like a cage full of birds.
Their lies have made them rich and
powerful.
- 28 They have grown big and fat from the
evil things they have done.
There is no end to the evil things they
do.
They will not plead the case of the
orphaned children.
They will not help the orphans.
They will not let poor people be judged
fairly.
- 29 Should I punish the people of Judah for
doing these things?"
- This message is from the Lord.
"You know that I should punish a nation
such as this.
I should give them the punishment they
should have."
- 30 The Lord says, "A terrible and shocking
thing has happened in the land of
Judah.
This is what has happened:
31 The prophets tell lies.
The priests take power into their own
hands.*
My people love it this way.
But what will you people do when
punishment comes?"

The City of Jerusalem Surrounded by the Enemy

- 6** Run for your lives, people of
Benjamin!
Run away from the city of Jerusalem!
Blow the war trumpet in the city of
Tekoa!
Put up the warning flag in the city of
Beth Hakkerem!
Do these things because disaster is
looking down from the north.*

take ... hands The Hebrew is hard to understand here.
north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the
north to attack the nation of Judah.

- Terrible destruction is coming to you.
- 2 Daughter of Zion,* you are like
a beautiful meadow.*
- 3 Shepherds come to Jerusalem,
and they bring their flocks.
They set up their tents all around her.
Each shepherd takes care of his own
flock.
- 4 "Get ready to fight against the city of
Jerusalem.
Get up! We will attack the city at noon.
But it is already getting late.
The evening shadows are growing long.
- 5 So get up! We will attack the city at
night!
We will destroy the strong defenses of
Jerusalem."
- 6 This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:
"Cut down the trees around Jerusalem.
And build a siege mound*
against Jerusalem.
This city should be punished."
Inside this city is nothing but
oppression.
- 7 A well keeps its water fresh.
In the same way, Jerusalem keeps its
wickedness fresh.
Violence and destruction are heard in this
city.
I can always see the sickness and hurts
of Jerusalem.
- 8 Listen to this warning, Jerusalem.
If you don't listen I will turn my back on
you.
I will make your land an empty desert.
No person will be able to live there."
- 9 This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:
"Gather* the people of Israel that were
left on their land.

Daughter of Zion A name for the city of Jerusalem.
you ... meadow The Hebrew is hard to understand here.
siege mound A large pile of dirt and rock that an army put
against the wall of a city they were attacking. This made it
easier for the enemy soldiers to climb over the wall into the
city.
Gather Or "Glean." Farmers were supposed to leave a little
of their grain and other crops in the field. In this way, poor
people and travelers could always find something to eat.
Gathering this leftover grain is called gleaning.

Gather them like you would gather the
last grapes on a grapevine.
Check each vine,
like a grape-gatherer does."

- 10 Who can I speak to?
Who can I warn?
Who will listen to me?
The people of Israel have closed their
ears,
so they can't hear my warnings.
The people don't like the Lord's
teachings.
They don't want to listen to the word of
the Lord.
- 11 But I (Jeremiah) am full of the anger of
the Lord!
I am tired of holding it in!
"Pour out the Lord's anger on the
children that play in the street.
Pour it out on the young men that gather
together.
A husband and his wife will both be
captured.
The old and very old people will be
captured.
- 12 Their houses will be given to other
people.
Their fields and their wives will be
given to others.
I will raise my hand and punish the
people of the land of Judah."
This message was from the Lord.
- 13 "All the people of Israel want more and
more money.
From the least to the greatest people,
they are all greedy.
Even the prophets and the priests
live lies!
- 14 The prophets and priests try to treat the
hurt of my people,
like it is only a small wound.
They say,
'It is alright, it is alright!'
But really, it is not alright!
- 15 The prophets and priests should be
ashamed of the bad things they do.

But they are not ashamed at all.
They don't even know enough to be
embarrassed about their sin.
So they will be punished with everyone
else.
They will be thrown to the ground when
I punish them."
This message is from the Lord.

- 16 The Lord says these things:
"Stand at the crossroads and look.
Ask where the old road is.
Ask where the good road is,
and walk on that road.
If you do, you will find rest for
yourselves.
But you people have said,
'We will not walk on the good road!'
I chose watchmen to watch over you.
I told them,
'Listen for the sound of the war
trumpet.'
But they said,
'We will not listen!'"
- 17 So, listen, all you nations!
Pay attention, all of you people in those
countries!*
- Listen to the things I will do to the
people of Judah.
- 18 Hear this, people of the earth:
I am going to bring disaster
to the people of Judah.
Why? Because of all the bad things those
people planned.
This will happen because they have not
paid attention to my messages.
Those people refused to obey my law."
- 19 The Lord says, "Why do you bring me
offerings of incense* from the country
of Sheba?*
- Why do you bring me sweet-smelling
cane from a distant land as an

Pay ... countries The Hebrew is hard to understand here.
incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a
sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.
Sheba A land south of Israel, located where part of Saudi
Arabia is today. Sheba controlled the spice trade in the time of
Jeremiah.

offering?

Your burnt offerings don't make me
happy.

Your sacrifices don't please me."

²¹ So, this is what the Lord says:

"I will put problems in front of the people
of Judah.

They will be like stones that make
people fall.

Fathers and sons will stumble over them.

Friends and neighbors will die."

²² This is what the Lord says:

"An army is coming from the land of
the north.*

A great nation is coming from faraway
places on earth.

²³ The soldiers carry bows and spears.

They are cruel.

They have no mercy.

They are so powerful.

They sound like the roaring ocean

as they ride their horses.

That army is coming ready for battle.

That army is coming to attack you, O

Daughter of Zion.*"

²⁴ We have heard the news about that army.

We are helpless from fear.

We feel trapped by our troubles.

We are in pain like a woman that is
having a baby.

²⁵ Don't go out into the fields.

Don't go on the roads.

Why? Because the enemy has swords.

Because danger is everywhere.

²⁶ O my people, put on sackcloth*,

And roll in the ashes.*

Cry loud for the dead people.

Cry like you lost an only son.

Do these things because the destroyer

will come against us very quickly.

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the
north to attack the nation of Judah.

Daughter of Zion A name for the city of Jerusalem.

sackcloth A kind of cloth that people wore to show they
were sad or crying for dead people.

And ... ashes This is one way in which people showed
that they were sad or crying for a dead person.

²⁷ "Jeremiah, I (*the Lord*) made you like a
worker that tests metals.

You will test my people and watch their
ways.

²⁸ My people have turned against me, and
they are very stubborn.

They go around telling bad things about
people.

They are like bronze and iron,
that became covered with rust and
tarnish.

²⁹ They are like a worker that tried to make
silver pure.

The bellows*

blew strongly and the fire became
hotter.

But only lead came from the fire!*

It was a waste of time to try to make pure
silver.

In the same way, the evil was not
removed from my people.

³⁰ My people will be called, 'Rejected
Silver.'

They will be given that name because
the Lord did not accept them."

Jeremiah's Temple Sermon

7 This is the Lord's message to Jeremiah:
¹Jeremiah, stand at the gate of the Lord's
house. Preach this message at the gate:

"Hear the message from the Lord, all you
people of the nation of Judah. All you people
that come through these gates to worship the
Lord, hear this message. ²The Lord is the God
of the people of Israel. This is what the Lord
All-Powerful says: 'Change your lives and do
good things. If you do this, I will let you live in
this place.* ³Don't trust the lies that some

bellows A tool for blowing air on a fire to make the fire
hotter.

lead ... fire Workers melted metals like silver to make the
metals pure. Lead was the first metal to melt, so the workers
poured the lead out, leaving the other metal pure. Here
Jeremiah is saying the people are all bad—they are all lead and
no silver!

I will let you live ... place This can also mean, "I will
live with you."

people say. They say, "This is the temple* of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!"* ¹If you change your lives and do good things, I will let you live in this place. You must be fair to each other. ²You must be fair to strangers. You must do the right things for widows and orphans.* Don't kill innocent people! Don't follow other gods! Why? Because they will ruin your lives. ³If you obey me, I will let you live in this place. I gave this land to your ancestors* for them to keep forever.

⁴"But you are trusting lies. And those lies are worthless. ⁵Will you steal and murder? Will you do the sin of adultery?* Will you falsely accuse other people? Will you worship the false god Baal* and follow other gods that you have not known? ⁶If you do those sins, do you think that you can stand before me in this house that is called by my name? Do you think you can stand before me and say, "We are safe," just so you can do all these terrible things? ⁷This temple is called by my name! Is this temple nothing more to you than a hideout for robbers? I have been watching you." This message is from the Lord.

⁸"You people of Judah, go now to the town of Shiloh. Go to the place where I first made a house for my name. The people of Israel also did evil things. Go and see what I did to that place because of the evil things they did.*

⁹You people of Israel were doing all these evil things"—This message is from the Lord!—"I

spoke to you again and again, but you refused to listen to me. I called to you, but you did not answer. ¹⁰So I will destroy the house called by my name in Jerusalem. I will destroy that temple* like I destroyed Shiloh. And that house in Jerusalem that is called by my name is the temple that you trust in. I gave that place to you and to your ancestors.* ¹¹I will throw you away from me just like I threw away all your brothers from Ephraim.*

¹²"As for you, Jeremiah, don't pray for these people of Judah. Don't beg for them or pray for them. Don't beg for me to help them. I will not listen to your prayer for them. ¹³I know you see what those people are doing in the towns of Judah. You can see what they are doing in the streets of the city of Jerusalem. ¹⁴This is what the people of Judah are doing: The children gather wood. The fathers use the wood to make a fire. The women make the dough and make cakes of bread to offer to the Queen of Heaven.* Those people of Judah pour out drink offerings to worship other gods. They do this to make me angry. ¹⁵But I am not the one the people of Judah are really hurting." This message is from the Lord. "They are only hurting themselves. They are bringing shame on themselves."

¹⁶So the Lord says this: "I will show my anger against this place. I will punish people and animals. I will punish the trees in the field and the crops that grow in the ground. My anger will be like a hot fire—and no person will be able to stop it."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
temple of the Lord Many people in Jerusalem thought that the Lord would always protect Jerusalem because his temple was there. They thought God would protect Jerusalem, no matter how evil the people were.

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Go and see ... they did That place was probably destroyed by the Philistines in the time of Eli and Samuel. See 1 Sam. 4.

The Lord Wants Obedience More than Sacrifice

¹The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says these things: "Go and offer as many burnt offerings and sacrifices as you want. Eat the meat of those sacrifices yourselves. ²I brought your ancestors* out of Egypt. I spoke to them, but I did not give them any commands about

Ephraim This is the northern kingdom of Israel.

Queen of Heaven Probably the false god Astarte. She was the goddess of sex and war. People in Mesopotamia worshiped her. They thought she was the planet Venus, which looks like a star in the sky.

burnt offerings and sacrifices. ²¹I only gave them this command: 'Obey me and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do all that I command, and good things will happen to you.'

²²"But your ancestors* did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were stubborn and did the things they wanted to do. They did not become good. They became even more evil—they went backward, not forward. ²³From the day that your ancestors left Egypt to this day, I have sent my servants to you. My servants are the prophets. I sent them to you again and again. ²⁴But your ancestors did not listen to me. They did not pay attention to me. They were very stubborn and did evil worse than their fathers.

²⁵"Jeremiah, you will tell these things to the people of Judah. But they won't listen to you! You call to them, but they won't answer you. ²⁶So you must tell them these things: This is the nation that did not obey the Lord its God. These people did not listen to God's teachings. These people don't know the true teachings.

The Valley of Slaughter

²⁷"Jeremiah, cut off your hair and throw it away.* Go up to the bare hilltop and cry. Why? Because the Lord has rejected this generation of people. The Lord has turned his back on these people. And in anger, he will punish them. ²⁸Do this because I have seen the people of Judah doing evil things." This message is from the Lord. "They have set up their idols. And I hate those idols! They have set up idols in the temple that is called by my name. They have made my house 'dirty'! ²⁹The people of Judah have built the high places* of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom. In those places the people killed their own sons and daughters—they burned them as sacrifices. This

is something I never commanded. Something like this never even entered my mind! ³⁰So, I warn you. The days are coming," this message is from the Lord, "when people won't call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom anymore. No, they will call it the Valley of Slaughter.* They will give it this name because they will bury the dead people in Topheth until there is no more room to bury anyone else. ³¹Then the bodies of the dead people will lie on top of the ground and, become food for the birds of the sky. Wild animals will eat the bodies of those people. There will be no person left alive to chase the birds or animals away. ³²I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. There will be no more sounds of the bride and bridegroom in Judah or Jerusalem. The land will become an empty desert."

8 This message is from the Lord: "At that time, men will take the bones of the kings and important rulers of Judah from their tombs.* They will take the bones of the priests and prophets from their tombs. They will take the bones of all the people of Jerusalem from their tombs. ²Those men will spread those bones on the ground under the sun, the moon, and the stars. The people of Jerusalem love to worship the sun, the moon, and the stars. No person will gather those bones and bury them again. So, the bones of those people will be like dung thrown on the ground.

³"I will force the people of Judah to leave their homes and their land. The people will be taken away to foreign lands. Some of the people of Judah that were not killed in the war will wish that they had been killed." This message is from the Lord.

Sin and Punishment

'Jeremiah, say this to the people of Judah:

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

cut off your hair ... away This showed Jeremiah was sad.

high places Special places where the people worshipped false gods. These places were often on hilltops, but not always. Some high places were in valleys.

Slaughter Usually, this word means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces of meat. But it often means to kill people like they are animals.

tomb(s) A grave dug in a wall of rock.

- The Lord says these things:
 "You know if a man falls down,
 he gets up again.
 And if a man goes the wrong way,
 he turns around and comes back.
 5 The people of Judah have gone (*lived*) the
 wrong way.
 But why do those people of Jerusalem
 continue going the wrong way?
 They believe their own lies.
 They refuse to turn around and come
 back.
 6 I have listened to them very carefully.
 But they don't say what is right.
 The people are not sorry for their sins.
 The people don't think about the bad
 things they have done.
 The people do things without thinking.
 They are like horses running into a
 battle.
 7 Even the birds in the sky
 know the right time to do things.
 The storks, doves, swifts, and thrushes
 know when it is time to fly to a new
 home.
 But my people don't know what the Lord
 wants them to do.
 8 "You keep saying,
 'We have the Lord's teachings!
 So we are wise!'
 But that is not true.
 Why? Because the scribes*
 have lied with their pens.
 9 Those 'wise people' refused to listen to
 the Lord's teachings.
 So they are not really wise people at all.
 Those 'wise people' were trapped.
 They became shocked and ashamed.
 10 So I will give their wives to other men.
 I will give their fields to new owners.
 All the people of Israel want more and
 more money.

- All the people, from the least important
 to most important people, are like
 that.
 All the people, from prophets to priests
 tell lies.
 11 The prophets and the priests try to heal
 the hurt of my people
 as if it were only a small wound.
 They say, 'It is alright, it is alright!'
 But it is not alright!
 12 Those people should be ashamed of the
 bad things they do.
 But they are not ashamed at all.
 They don't know enough to be
 embarrassed about their sins.
 So they will be punished with everyone
 else.
 I will punish them,
 and I will throw them to the ground."
 The Lord said those things.
 13 "I will take away their fruit and crops,
 so that there will be no harvest."
 This message is from the Lord.
 "There will not be any grapes on the vine.
 There will not be any figs on the fig tree.
 Even the leaves will become dry and
 die.
 I will take away the things I gave them.*
 14 "Why are we just sitting here?
 Come, let's run to the strong cities.
 If the Lord our God is going to make us
 die,
 then let's die there.
 We have sinned against the Lord,
 so God gave us poisoned water to drink.
 15 We hoped to have peace,
 but nothing good has come.
 We hoped for a time that he would
 forgive us,
 but only disaster has come.
 16 From the land of the family group of Dan,
 we hear the snorting*

scribes Men that wrote down and copied different things.
 Some of those writings included the books that later became
 the Old Testament. Those men spent so much time with those
 writings, that they often became experts at knowing what
 those scriptures (writings) meant.

I will take away ... gave them The Hebrew of this
 line is hard to understand.
snorting The sound that comes from breathing very hard
 through the nose.

of the enemy's horses.

The ground shakes from the pounding
of their hooves.*

They have come to destroy the land and
everything in it.

They have come to destroy the city and
all the people that live there.

¹⁷ "People of Judah, I am sending poisonous
snakes* to attack you.

Those snakes can't be controlled.

Those snakes will bite you."

This message is from the Lord.

¹⁸ God, I am very sad and afraid.

¹⁹ Listen to my people.

Everywhere in this country they are
crying for help.

They say,

"Is the Lord still at Zion?*

Is Zion's King still there?"

But God says,

"Why did the people of Judah make me
angry by worshiping their idols?

They worshiped their worthless foreign
idols."

²⁰ And the people say,

"Harvest time is over.

Summer is gone,
and we have not been saved."

²¹ My people are sick,*
so I am sick!*

I am sad and silent, from worrying about
these sick people.

²² Surely there is some medicine in the land
of Gilead.

Surely there is a doctor in the land of
Gilead.

So why are the hurts of my people not
healed?

If my head was filled with water,

⁹ If my head was filled with water,
and if my eyes were a fountain of
tears,
I would cry day and night
for my people that have been
destroyed.

² If only I had a place in the desert,
a house where travelers spend the night,
I could leave my people.

I could go away from those people.

Why? Because they are all being
unfaithful to God.

They are all turning against him.

³ "Those people use their tongues like a
bow;
lies fly from their mouths like arrows.
Lies, not truth, have grown strong in the
land.

Those people go from one sin to another
sin.

They don't know me."

The Lord said these things.

⁴ "Watch your neighbors!
Don't trust your own brothers!
Why? Because every brother is a cheat.
Every neighbor talks behind your back.

⁵ Every person lies to his neighbor.
No person speaks the truth.

The people of Judah have taught their
tongues to lie.

They sinned until they were too tired to
come back.

⁶ One bad thing followed another.
And lies followed lies.

The people refused to know me."
The Lord said those things.

⁷ So, the Lord All-Powerful says:

"I will test the people of Judah like a
person tests metal—
by heating it in a fire.

I have no other choice.

My people have sinned.

⁸ The people of Judah have tongues that are
like sharp arrows.
Their mouths speak lies.

Each person speaks nice to his neighbor.

hooves The hard part of the feet of certain animals.

poisonous snakes This probably means one of Judah's
enemies.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sick Literally, "broken."

But he is secretly planning to attack his neighbor.

- ⁹ Should I not punish the people of Judah for doing these things?"

This message is from the Lord.

"You know that I should punish that kind of people.

I should give them the punishment they deserve."

- ¹⁰ I (*Jeremiah*) will cry loud for the mountains.

I will sing a funeral song for the empty fields.

Why? Because the living things were taken away.

No person travels there.

The sound of cattle can't be heard in those places.

The birds have flown away and the animals are gone.

- ¹¹ "I (*the Lord*) will make the city of Jerusalem a pile of garbage.
It will become a home for jackals.*
I will destroy the cities in the land of Judah,
so no one will live there."

- ¹² Is there a man that is wise enough to understand these things?

Is there some person that has been taught by the Lord?

Can anyone explain the Lord's message?

Why was the land ruined?

Why was it made like an empty desert where no people go?

- ¹³ The Lord answered these questions. He said,

"It is because the people of Judah quit following my teachings.

I gave them my teachings,

but they refused to listen to me.

They did not follow my teachings.

- ¹⁴ The people of Judah lived their own way.

They were stubborn.

They followed the false god Baal.*

Their fathers taught them to follow those false gods."

- ¹⁵ So the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says,

"I will soon make the people of Judah eat bitter food.

I will make them drink poisoned water.

- ¹⁶ I will scatter the people of Judah through other nations.

They will live in strange nations.

They and their fathers never knew about those countries.

I will send men with swords.

Those men will kill the people of Judah.

They will kill them until the people are finished."

- ¹⁷ This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:
"Now, think about these things!

Call for the women that get paid to cry at funerals.

Send for the people that are good at that job.

- ¹⁸ "The people say, 'Let those women come quickly and cry for us.

Then our eyes will fill with tears,

and streams of water will come out of our eyes.'

- ¹⁹ "The sound of loud crying is heard from Zion*:

'We are truly ruined!

We are truly ashamed!

We must leave our land,

because our houses are destroyed and ruined.'"

- ²⁰ Now, women of Judah, listen to the message from the Lord.

Open your ears to hear the words of the Lord's mouth.

jackals A wild animal, like a dog. Those animals only live where no people are.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

The Lord says, "Teach your daughters
how to cry loud.
Each woman must learn to sing this
funeral song:

- ²¹ 'Death has come and climbed in through
our windows.
Death has entered our palaces.*
Death has come to our children that
play in the streets.
Death has come to the young men that
meet in the public places.'

- ²² "Jeremiah, say, 'This is what the Lord
says:
The dead bodies of men will lie in the
fields like dung.
Their bodies will lie on the ground like
grain a farmer has cut.
But there will be no one to gather
them.'"

- ²³ The Lord says:
"Wise men must not brag about their
wisdom.
Strong men must not brag about their
strength.
Rich men must not brag about their
money.
²⁴ But if someone wants to brag,
then let him brag about these things:
Let him brag that he understands and
knows me.
Let him brag that he understands that I
am the Lord.
Let him brag that I am kind and fair.
Let him brag that I do good things on
earth.
I love to do those things."
This message is from the Lord.

²⁵ "The time is coming," this message is
from the Lord, "when I will punish all the
people that are circumcised* only in the body.
²⁶ I am talking about the people of the nations of
Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab, and all

the people that live in the desert. The men in
those countries really were not circumcised
their bodies. But the people from the family of
Israel were not circumcised in their hearts."

The Lord and the Idols

10 Family of Israel, listen to the Lord
²This is what the Lord says:

- "Don't live like the people from other
nations.
Don't be afraid of special signs in the
sky.*
The other nations are afraid of the things
they see in the sky.
But you must not be afraid of those
things.
³ The customs of other people are worth
nothing.
Their idols are nothing but wood from
the forest.
Their idols are made by a worker with
his chisel.
⁴ They make their idols beautiful with
silver and gold.
With hammers and nails they fasten their
idols down,
So that they will not fall over.
⁵ The idols of the other nations are like a
scarecrow in a cucumber field.
Their idols can't talk.
Their idols can't walk.
People must carry the idols.
So don't be afraid of those idols.
They can't hurt you.
And they can't help you either!"
⁶ Lord, there is no one like you!
You are great!
Your name is great and powerful!
⁷ Every person should respect you, God.
You are the King of all the nations.
You deserve their respect.
There are many wise men among the

palace(s) A large house for the king and his family.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to
every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God
made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

special signs in the sky People believed that such
things as comets, meteors, or eclipses of the sun and moon
could be used to learn what was going to happen in the future.

nations.

But none of those people are as wise as you.

- ⁸ All the people of the other nations are stupid and foolish.
Their teachings come from worthless wooden statues.
- ⁹ They use silver from the city of Tarshish and gold from the city of Uphaz and make their statues.
Those idols are made by carpenters and metal-workers.
They put blue and purple clothes on those idols.
"Wise men" make those "gods."
- ¹⁰ But the Lord is the only true God.
He is the only God who is truly alive.
He is the King that rules forever.
The earth shakes when God is angry.
The people of the nations can't stop his anger.
- ¹¹ *(The Lord says,)*
"Tell this message to those people:
'Those false gods did not make heaven and earth.
And those false gods will be destroyed and disappear from heaven and earth.'"^a
- ¹² God is the One who made the earth with his power.
God used his wisdom and built the world.
With his understanding, God stretched out the sky over the earth.
- ¹³ God causes the loud thunder,
and he causes great floods of water to fall from the sky.
He makes clouds rise in the sky every place on earth.
He sends lightning with the rain.
He brings out the wind from his storehouses.

Tell this message ... earth This part was written in Aramaic, not Hebrew. This was the language people used often when writing to people in other countries. It was also the language spoken in Babylon.

- ¹⁴ People are so stupid!
Metal workers are made foolish by their idols.
Those statues are nothing but lies.
They are stupid.^a
- ¹⁵ Those idols are worth nothing.
They are something to make fun of.
In the time of judgment,
those idols will be destroyed.
- ¹⁶ But Jacob's God^b
is not like those idols.
God made everything.
And Israel is the family that God chose to be his own people.
God's name is "Lord All-Powerful."

Destruction Is Coming

- ¹⁷ Get everything you own and prepare to leave.
You people of Judah are caught in the city,
and the enemy is all around it.
- ¹⁸ The Lord says:
"This time, I will throw the people of Judah out of this country.
I will bring pain and trouble to them.
I will do this so they will learn their lesson."^a
- ¹⁹ Oh, I (*Jeremiah*) am hurt badly.
I am injured and I can't be healed.
Yet I told myself,
"This is my sickness,
I must suffer through it."
- ²⁰ My tent is ruined.
All the tent's ropes are broken.
My children left me.
They are gone.
No person is left to put up my tent.
No person is left to fix a shelter for me.

They are stupid Literally, "they have no spirit." The Bible teaches that it is the Spirit of God that makes people wise. This might also mean "they are not alive."

Jacob's God Literally, "Jacob's share." This shows that God and Israel had a special relationship—God belonged to Israel, and Israel belonged to God.^a

they will learn their lesson The Hebrew here is hard to understand.

- ²¹ The shepherds (*leaders*) are stupid.
They don't try to find the Lord.
They are not wise,
so their flocks (*people*) are scattered and lost.
- ²² Listen! A loud noise!
The loud noise is coming from the north.*
It will destroy the cities of Judah.
Judah will become an empty desert.
It will be a home for jackals.*
- ²³ Lord, I know that a person does not really own his life.
People don't really know the right way to live.
- ²⁴ Lord, correct us!
But be fair!
Don't punish us in anger!
- ²⁵ If you are angry, then punish the other nations.
They don't know or respect you.
Those people don't worship you.
Those nations destroyed Jacob's family.
They destroyed Israel completely.
They destroyed Israel's homeland.

The Agreement Is Broken

11 This is the message that came to Jeremiah. This message came from the Lord: ²⁴"Jeremiah, listen to the words of this Agreement.* Tell the people of Judah about these things. Tell these things to the people living in the Jerusalem. ²⁵This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'Bad things will happen to any person that does not obey this Agreement.' ¹'I am talking about the Agreement I made with your ancestors.* I made that Agreement with them at the time I brought them out of Egypt. Egypt was a place of many

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the north to attack the nation of Judah.

jackals A wild animal, like a dog. Those animals only live where no people are.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

troubles—it was like an oven hot enough to melt iron. I told those people: Obey me and do everything I command you. If you do this, you will be my people, and I will be your God.

³⁴"I did this to keep the promise that I had made to your ancestors.* I promised to give them a very fertile land—a land flowing with milk and honey. And you are living in that country today."

I (Jeremiah) answered, "Amen,* Lord."

"The Lord said to me, 'Jeremiah, preach this message in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. This is the message: Listen to the words of this Agreement.* And then obey those laws. ⁷I gave a warning to your ancestors* at the time I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I warned them again and again to this very day. I told them to obey me. ⁸But your ancestors did not listen to me. They were stubborn and did what their own evil hearts wanted. The Agreement says that bad things will happen to them if they don't obey. So I made all those bad things happen to them! I commanded them to obey the Agreement, but they did not."

⁹The Lord said to me, "Jeremiah, I know that the people of Judah and the people living in Jerusalem have made secret plans. ¹⁰Those people are doing the same sins that their ancestors did. Their ancestors refused to listen to my message. They followed and worshiped other gods. The family of Israel and the family of Judah have broken the Agreement I made with their ancestors."

¹¹So the Lord says: "I will soon make something terrible happen to the people of Judah. They will not be able to escape! They will be sorry. And they will cry to me for help. But I will not listen to them. ¹²The people in the towns of Judah and in the city of Jerusalem will go and pray to their idols for help. Those people burn incense* to those idols. But those idols will not be able to help the people of Judah when that terrible time comes.

Amen The Hebrew word "amen" means, "truly," or "indeed."
It is used to show that the person agrees with what has been said.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

¹³"People of Judah, you have many idols—there are as many idols as there are towns in Judah. You have built many altars for worshiping that disgusting god Baal*—there are as many altars as there are streets in Jerusalem.

¹⁴"As for you, Jeremiah, don't pray for these people of Judah. Don't beg for them. Don't say prayers for them. I will not listen. Those people will begin to suffer. And then they will call to me for help. But I will not listen.

¹⁵ "Why* is my lover (*Judah*) in my house (*temple*)?

She has no right to be there.

She had done many evil things.

Judah, do you think that special promises and animal sacrifices

will stop you from being destroyed?

Do you think you can escape punishment by offering sacrifices to me?"

¹⁶ The Lord gave you a name.

He called you, 'A green olive tree, beautiful to look at.'

But with a strong storm,

the Lord will set that tree on fire,

and its branches will be burned up.

¹⁷ The Lord All-Powerful planted you.

And he has announced that disaster will come to you.

Why? Because the family of Israel and the family of Judah have done evil things.

They made me angry by offering sacrifices to Baal.*

Evil Plans Against Jeremiah

"The Lord showed me that the men of Anathoth* were making plots against me. The Lord showed me the things they were doing, so I knew they were against me. "Before the Lord showed me that the people were against me, I

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Why We are not sure of the exact meaning of verses 15 and 16.

men of Anathoth Anathoth was Jeremiah's home town. The people that were plotting against him there included his own relatives. See Jer. 12:6.

was like a gentle lamb waiting to be butchered. I did not understand that they were against me. They were saying these things about me: "Let us destroy the tree and its fruit! Let us kill him! Then people will forget him." ²⁰But Lord, you are a fair judge. You know how to test peoples' hearts and minds. I will tell you my arguments. And I will let you give them the punishment they deserve.

²¹The men from Anathoth were planning to kill Jeremiah. Those men said to Jeremiah, "Don't prophesy* in the name of the Lord, or we will kill you." The Lord made a decision about those men from Anathoth. ²²The Lord All-Powerful said, "I will soon punish those men from Anathoth. Their young men will die in war. Their sons and daughters will die from hunger. ²³No person from the city of Anathoth will be left. No person will survive. I will punish them. I will cause something bad to happen to them."

Jeremiah Complains to God

12 Lord, if I argue with you, you are always right!

But I want to ask you about some things that don't seem right.

Why are wicked people successful?

Why do people you can't trust have such easy lives?

² You have put those wicked people here.

They are like plants with strong roots, they grow and produce fruit.

With their mouths, they say that you are near and dear to them.

But in their hearts, they are really far away from you.

³ But you know my heart, O Lord.

You see me and test my mind.

Drag those evil people away like sheep to be butchered.

Choose them for the day of slaughter.

⁴ How much longer will the land stay dried up?

How long will the grass be dry and

prophecy To speak for God.

dead?

The animals and birds in the land have died,

And it is the fault of the wicked people.
Yet those wicked people are saying,
"Jeremiah will not live long enough to see what happens to us."

God's Answer to Jeremiah

- ⁵ "Jeremiah, if you get tired running in a footrace with men,
how will you race against horses?
If you get tired in a country that is safe,
what will you do when you come to the dangerous thorn bushes that grow along the Jordan River?
- ⁶ These men are your own brothers.
Members of your own family are making plans against you.
People from your own family are yelling at you.
Don't trust them,
even when they speak to you like friends."

The Lord Rejects His People, Judah

- ⁷ "I (*the Lord*) have abandoned my house.
I have left my own property.*
I have given the one I love (*Judah*) to her enemies.
- ⁸ My 'property' has become like a wild lion to me.
She roars at me,
so I hate her.
- ⁹ My 'property' has become like a dying animal, surrounded by vultures.
Those birds fly around her.
Come on, wild animals.
Come get something to eat.
- ¹⁰ Many shepherds (*leaders*) have ruined my field of grapes.
Those shepherds have walked on the plants in my field.
Those shepherds have made my beautiful field into an empty desert.

house ... property This means the people of Judah.

- ¹¹ They changed my field to a desert.
It is dry and dead.
No people live there.
The whole country is an empty desert.
There is no person left to take care of that field.
- ¹² Many soldiers marched over those barren hills.
The Lord used those armies to punish that land.
People from one end of the land to the other were punished.
No person was safe.
- ¹³ The people will plant wheat,
but they will harvest only thorns.
They will work hard until they are very tired,
but they will get nothing for all their work.
They will be ashamed of their crop.
The Lord's anger caused those things."

The Lord's Promise to Israel's Neighbors

"This is what the Lord says: "I will tell you what I will do for all the people that live around the land of Israel. Those people are very wicked. They have destroyed the land I gave to the people of Israel. I will pull those evil people up and throw them out of their land. And I will pull the people of Judah up with them. ¹³But after I pull those people out of their land, I will feel sorry for them. I will bring each family back to its own property and to its own land. ¹⁴I want those people to learn their lessons well. In the past, those people taught my people to use Baal's* name to make promises. Now, I want those people to learn their lessons just as well. I want those people to learn to use my name. I want those people to say, 'As the Lord lives ...' If those people do that, then I will allow them to be successful and I will let them live among my people. ¹⁷But if any nation does not listen to my message, then I will completely destroy it. I will pull it up like a dead plant." This message is from the Lord.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

The Sign of the Waistcloth

13 This is what the Lord said to me: "Jeremiah, go and buy a linen waistcloth.* Then put it around your waist. Don't let the waistcloth get wet."

²So I bought a linen waistcloth,* just as the Lord told me to do. And I put it around my waist. ³Then the message of the Lord came to me a second time. "This was the message: "Jeremiah, take the waistcloth you bought and are wearing, and go to Perath.* Hide the waistcloth there in a crack in the rocks."

⁴So I went to Perath* and hid the waistcloth* there, just like the Lord told me to do. "Many days later, the Lord said to me, "Now, Jeremiah, go to Perath. Get the waistcloth that I told you to hide there."

⁵So I went to Perath and dug up the waistcloth. I took it out of the crack in the rocks where I had hidden it. But now I could not wear the waistcloth, because it was ruined. It was not good for anything.

⁶Then the message of the Lord came to me. "This is what the Lord said: "The waistcloth* is ruined and not good for anything. In the same way, I will ruin the proud people of Judah and Jerusalem. ⁷"I will ruin those proud and evil people of Judah. They refuse to listen to my messages. They are stubborn and do only the things they want to do. They follow and worship other gods. Those people of Judah will become like this linen waistcloth. They will be ruined and not good for anything. ⁸"A waistcloth is wrapped tightly around a man's waist. In the same way, I wrapped all the family of Israel and all the family of Judah around me." This message is from the Lord. "I did that so those people would be my people. Then my people would bring fame, praise, and honor to me. But my people would not listen to me."

waistcloth A common undergarment in ancient Judah. It was a short skirt that was wrapped around the hips. It reached about halfway down the thighs.

Perath Probably a village near Jerusalem. It is probably the town that is called Parah in the list of the cities of the land of Benjamin in Joshua 18:23. But the name "Perath" also means the Euphrates River.

Warnings to Judah

¹²"Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah: "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin* should be filled with wine.' Those people will laugh and say to you, 'Of course, we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine.' ¹³Then you will say to them, "This is what the Lord says: I will make everyone that lives in this land helpless, like a drunken man. I am talking about the kings that sit on David's throne. I am also talking about the priests, the prophets, and all the people that live in Jerusalem. ¹⁴"I will make the people of Judah stumble and fall into one another. Fathers and sons will fall into one another.' ¹⁵This message is from the Lord. "I will not feel sorry or have pity for them. I will not allow compassion to stop me from destroying the people of Judah.'"

¹⁶ Listen and pay attention.

The Lord has spoken to you.

Don't be proud.

¹⁷ Honor the Lord your God.

Praise him or he will bring darkness.

Praise him before you fall on the dark hills.

You people of Judah are hoping for light.

But the Lord will turn the light into thick darkness.

The Lord will change the light into a very thick darkness.

¹⁸ If you people of Judah don't listen to the Lord,

I will hide and cry.

Your pride will cause me to cry.

I will cry very hard.

My eyes will overflow with tears,

Why? Because the Lord's flock* will be captured.

¹⁹ Tell these things to the king and his wife,

"Come down from your thrones.

wineskin A bottle made from the skin of an animal and used for storing wine.

Lord's flock This is a figurative name for the people of Judah. The Lord is thought of as a shepherd, while his people are seen as his flock of sheep.

Your beautiful crowns have fallen
from your heads."

- ¹⁹ The cities in the Negev desert*
are locked up.

No person can open them.
All the people of Judah are taken into
exile.*

All of them have been carried away as
prisoners.

- ²⁰ Jerusalem, look up!
Look at the enemy, coming from the
north.*

Where is your flock?*

God gave that beautiful flock to you.
You were supposed to care for that
flock.

- ²¹ What will you say when the Lord asks
you to account for that flock?
You were supposed to teach the people
about God.
Your leaders were supposed to lead
the people.

But they did not do their job!
So you will have much pain and troubles.
Your pain will be like the pain of a
woman having a baby.

- ²² You might ask yourself,
"Why has this bad thing happened to
me?"

Those things happened because of your
many sins.

Because of your sins,
your skirt was torn off and your shoes
were taken away.

They did this to embarrass you.

- ²³ A black man can't change the color of his
skin.
And a leopard can't change his spots.

In the same way, O Jerusalem, you can't
change and do good.

You always do bad things.

- ²⁴ "I will force you to leave your homes.
You will run in all directions as you run
away.

You will be like chaff* that is blown
away by the desert wind.

- ²⁵ These are the things that will happen to
you;
this is your part in my plans."
This message is from the Lord.

"Why will this happen? Because you
forgot me.

You trusted false gods.

- ²⁶ Jerusalem, I will pull your skirts up over
your face.
Everyone will see you, and you will be
ashamed.

- ²⁷ I saw the terrible things you did.*
I saw you laughing and having sex with
your lovers.

I know about your plans to act like a
prostitute.*

I have seen you on the hills and in the
fields.

It will be very bad for you, Jerusalem.

I wonder how long you will continue
doing your dirty sins."

Drought and False Prophets

14 This is the Lord's message to Jeremiah
about the drought:*

- ¹ "The nation of Judah cries for people that
have died.

The people in the cities of Judah grow
weaker and weaker.

Negev desert The desert area in the southern part of the
kingdom of Judah.

exile Being forced to leave one's home country and being
moved to a foreign country.

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the
north to attack the nation of Judah.

flock Here, the word "flock" refers to all the towns around
Jerusalem, as if Jerusalem were the shepherd and the towns of
Judah were her flock.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seed
of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let
the wind blow the useless chaff away.

I saw ... you did This is probably talking about
worshipping false gods. But part of that worship was havin
sex with temple prostitutes.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometime
this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stop
following him.

drought A time when no rain falls and the crops become dr
and die.

Those people lie on the ground.
A cry goes up to God from the city of
Jerusalem.

- ¹ The leaders of the people send their
servants to get water.
The servants go to the water storage
places,
but they don't find any water.
The servants come back with empty jars.
So they are ashamed and embarrassed.
They cover their heads from shame.
- ⁴ No person prepares the ground for
crops.*
No rain falls on the land.
The farmers are depressed.
So they cover their heads from shame.
- ⁵ Even the mother deer in the field
leaves her newborn baby alone.
She does this because there is no
grass.
- ⁶ Wild donkeys stand on the bare hills.
They sniff the wind like jackals.*
But their eyes can't find any food,
because there are no plants to eat.
- ⁷ "We know that those things are our fault.
We are now suffering because of our
sins.
Lord, do something to help us for the
good of your name.
We admit that we have left you many
times.
We have sinned against you.
- ⁸ God, you are the Hope of Israel!
You save Israel in times of trouble.
But now it seems like you are a stranger
in the land.
It seems like you are a traveler that only
stays one night.
- ⁹ You seem like a man that has been
attacked by surprise.
You seem like a soldier that does not
have the power to save anyone.

But you are with us, O Lord.
We are called by your name,
So don't leave us without help!"

"This is what the Lord says about the
people of Judah: "The people of Judah really
love to leave me. Those people don't stop
themselves from leaving me. So now, the Lord
will not accept them. Now the Lord will
remember the bad things they do. The Lord will
punish them for their sins."

"Then the Lord said to me, "Jeremiah, don't
pray for good things to happen to the people of
Judah. "The people of Judah might begin to
fast* and pray to me. But I will not listen to
their prayers. Even if they offer burnt offerings
and grain offerings to me, I will not accept
those people. I will destroy the people of Judah
with war. I will take away their food, and the
people of Judah will starve. And I will destroy
them with terrible diseases."

"But I said to the Lord, "Lord, my Master,
the prophets were telling the people something
different. They were telling the people of
Judah, 'You people will not suffer from an
enemy's sword. You will never suffer from
hunger. The Lord will give you peace in this
land.'"

"Then the Lord said to me, "Jeremiah, those
prophets are preaching lies in my name. I did
not send those prophets. I did not command
them or speak to them. Those prophets have
been preaching false visions, worthless magic,
and their own wishful thinking. "So this is
what I say about the prophets that are preaching
in my name. I did not send those prophets.
Those prophets said, 'No enemy with swords
will ever attack this country. There will never
be hunger in this land.' Those prophets will die
from hunger and an enemy's sword will kill
them. "And the people those prophets spoke to
will be thrown into the streets. Those people
will die from hunger and from an enemy's
sword. No person will be there to bury those
people, or their wives or their sons or
daughters. I will punish them.

No person ... crops Following the ancient Greek
translation. The Hebrew is hard to understand.

jackals A wild animal, like a dog. Those animals only live
where no people are.

fast Going without food for a special time of prayer and
worship.

- ¹⁷ "Jeremiah, speak this message to the people of Judah:
 'My eyes are filled with tears.
 I will cry night and day without stopping.
 I will cry for my virgin daughter.*
 I will cry for my people.
 Why? Because someone hit them and crushed them.
 They have been hurt very badly.'
- ¹⁸ If I go into the country,
 I see those people that were killed with swords.
 If I go into the city,
 I see much sickness, because the people have no food.
 The priests and the prophets have been taken to a foreign land.'"
- ¹⁹ "Lord, have you completely rejected the nation of Judah?
 Lord, do you hate Zion*?
 You hurt us so badly that we can't be made well again.
 Why did you do that?
 We were hoping for peace,
 but nothing good has come.
 We were hoping for a time of healing,
 but only terror came.
- ²⁰ Lord, we know that we are very evil people.
 We know that our ancestors* did bad things.
 Yes, we sinned against you.
- ²¹ Lord, for the good of your name,
 don't push us away.
 Don't take away the honor from your glorious throne.
 Remember your Agreement* with us.
 Don't break that Agreement.

virgin daughter This is another name for Jerusalem.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
 Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

- ²² Foreign idols don't have the power to bring rain.
 The sky does not have the power to send showers of rain down.
 You are our only hope.
 You are the One who made all these things."

15 The Lord said to me, "Jeremiah, even if Moses and Samuel were here to pray for the people of Judah, I would not feel sorry for these people. Send the people of Judah away from me. Tell them to go. 'Those people might ask you, 'Where will we go?' You tell them this: This is what the Lord says:

- 'I have appointed some people to die.
 Those people will die.
 I have appointed some people to be killed with swords.
 Those people will die with the swords.
 I have appointed some people to die from hunger.
 Those people will die from hunger.
 I have appointed some people to be captured and carried to a foreign country.
 Those people will be prisoners in that foreign country.'
- ³ I will send four kinds of destroyers against them.'
 This message is from the Lord.
 'I will send the enemy with a sword to kill.
 I will send the dogs to drag their bodies away.
 I will send birds of the air and wild animals to eat and destroy their bodies.'
- ⁴ I will make the people of Judah an example of some terrible thing for all the people on earth.
 I will do this to the people of Judah because of what Manasseh* did in Jerusalem.

Manasseh Manasseh was the most evil king of Judah, according to 2 Kings 21:1-16. He worshiped many gods.

Manasseh was the son of King
Hezekiah.

Manasseh was a king of the nation of
Judah.*

- 5 "No person will feel sorry for you, city of
Jerusalem.

No person will be sad and cry for you.
No person will go out of his way
to even ask how you are!

- 6 Jerusalem, you left me."

This message is from the Lord.

"Again and again you left me!

So I will punish and destroy you.

I am tired of holding back your
punishment.

- 7 I will separate the people of Judah with
my pitchfork.*

I will scatter them at the city gates of
the land.

My people have not changed.

So I will destroy them.

I will take away their children.

- 8 Many women will lose their husbands.

There will be more widows than there is
sand of the sea.

I will bring a destroyer at noontime.

The destroyer will attack the mothers of
the young men of Judah.

I will bring pain and fear on the people of
Judah.

I will make this happen very quickly.

- 9 The enemy will attack with swords and
kill the people.

They will kill the survivors* from
Judah.

A woman might have seven sons,
but they will all die,

she will cry and cry

until she becomes weak and not able to
breathe.

She will be upset and confused.

Her bright day will become dark from

sadness."

Jeremiah Again Complains to God

- 10 Mother, I am sorry that you gave birth to
me.

I (*Jeremiah*) am the person that must
accuse and criticize the whole land.
I have not loaned or borrowed anything.
But every person curses me.

- 11 Truly, Lord, I have served you well.
In time of troubles, I prayed to you
about my enemies.

God Answers Jeremiah

- 12 "Jeremiah, you know that no person can
smash a piece of iron.

I mean the kind of iron that is from the
north.*

And no person can smash a piece of
bronze either.

- 13 The people of Judah have wealth and
treasures.

I will give those riches to other people.
Those other people will not have to buy
those riches.

I will give those riches to them.

Why? Because Judah has many sins.

Judah has sinned in every part of the
country.

- 14 People of Judah, I will make you slaves
of your enemies.

You will be slaves in a land that you
have never known.

I have become very angry.

My anger is like a hot fire,
and you will be burned."

- 15 Lord, you understand me.

Remember me and take care of me.

People are hurting me.

Give those people the punishment they
deserve.

You are being patient with those people.

But don't destroy me while you remain
patient with them.

pitchfork A tool with sharp points for throwing hay from
one place to another.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this
means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of
Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the
north to attack the nation of Judah.

Think about me.

Think about the pain I suffer for you,
Lord.

- ¹⁶ Your message came to me and I ate your words.

Your message made me very happy.
I was happy because I am called by your name.

Your name is Lord (God) All-Powerful.

- ¹⁷ I never sat with the crowd as they laughed and had fun.

I sat by myself because of your influence on me.

You filled me with anger at the evil around me.

- ¹⁸ I don't understand why I still hurt.
I don't understand why my wound is not cured and cannot be healed.

Lord, I think you have changed.
You are like a spring of water that became dry.

You are like a spring whose water has stopped flowing.

- ¹⁹ Then, the Lord said,
"Jeremiah, if you change and come back to me,

then I will not punish you.

If you change and come back to me, you can serve me.

If you speak important things, and not those worthless words, then you can speak for me.

The people of Judah should change and come back to you Jeremiah.

But don't you change and be like them.

- ²⁰ I will make you strong.
Those people will think you are strong like a wall made of bronze.

The people of Judah will fight against you.

But they will not defeat you.

They will not defeat you.

Why? Because I am with you.

I will help you and I will save you."

This message is from the Lord.

- ²¹ "I will save you from those evil people.
Those people scare you.

But I will save you from those people."

The Day of Disaster

16 The Lord's message came to me: ¹"Jeremiah, you must not get married. You must not have sons or daughters in this place."

²The Lord says these things about the sons and daughters that are born in the land of Judah. And this is what the Lord says about the mothers and fathers of those children: "Those people will die a terrible death. No person will cry for those people. No person will bury them. Their bodies will lie on the ground like dung. Those people will die by an enemy's sword, or they will starve to death. Their dead bodies will be food for the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth."

³So the Lord says: "Jeremiah, don't go into a house where people are eating a funeral meal. Don't go there to cry for the dead or show your sorrow. Don't do those things. Why? Because I have taken back my blessing. I will not be kind to these people of Judah. I will not feel sorry for them." This message is from the Lord. ⁴"Important people and common people will die in the land of Judah. No person will bury those people or cry for them. No person will cut himself or shave his head to show sorrow for those people. ⁵No person will bring food to the people that are crying for the dead. No person will comfort those people whose mother or father has died. No person will offer a drink to comfort the people that are crying for the dead.

⁶"Jeremiah, don't go into a house where the people are having a party. Don't go into that house and sit down to eat and drink. ⁷The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel says these things: 'I will soon stop the sounds of people having fun. I will stop the happy sounds people make during a wedding party. This will happen during your lifetime. I will do these things quickly.'

⁸"Jeremiah, you will tell the people of Judah these things. And the people will ask you, 'Why has the Lord said these terrible

things to us? What have we done wrong? What sin have we done against the Lord our God?"

"You must say these things to those people: 'Terrible things will happen to you because your ancestors* quit following me.' This message is from the Lord. 'They quit following me and began to follow and serve other gods. They worshiped those other gods. Your ancestors left me and they quit obeying my law. 'But you people have sinned more than your ancestors. You are very stubborn. And you are doing only the things that you want to do. You are not obeying me. You do only what you want to do. 'So I will throw you out of this country. I will force you to go to a foreign country. You will go to a land that you and your ancestors never knew. In that land you can serve false gods all you want to. I will not help you or show you any favors.'

"'People make promises and say, 'As surely as the Lord lives. He is the One who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.' But the time is coming," this message is from the Lord, "when people will not say those things. 'The people will say something new. They will say, 'As surely as the Lord lives. He is the One who brought the people of Israel out of the northern land. He brought them out of all the countries where he had sent them.' Why will the people say these things? Because I will bring the people of Israel back to the land that I gave to their ancestors.

"'I will soon send for many fishermen to come to this land." This message is from the Lord. "Those fishermen will catch the people of Judah. After that happens, I will send for many hunters to come to this land. Those hunters* will hunt the people of Judah on every mountain and hill and in the cracks of the rocks. 'I see everything they do. The people of Judah can't hide from me the things they do. Their sin is not hidden from me. 'I will pay the people of Judah back for the bad things they did—I will punish them two times for every sin.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

fishermen ... hunters This means the enemy soldiers from Babylon.

I will do this because they have made my land 'dirty.' They made my land 'dirty' with their terrible idols. I hate those idols. But they have filled my country with their idols."

- ¹⁹ Lord, you are my strength and my protection.
You are a safe place to run to in a time of trouble.
The nations will come to you from all over the world.
They will say,
"Our fathers had false gods.
They worshiped those worthless idols,
but those idols did not help them at all."
- ²⁰ Can people make real gods for themselves?
No! They can make statues,
but those statues are not really gods.
- ²¹ "So I will teach those people that make idol gods.
Right now I will teach them about my power and my strength.
Then they will know that I am God.
They will know that my Name is the Lord."

Guilt Written on the Heart

17 "The sin of the people of Judah is written down where it can't be erased.

Those sins were cut into stone with an iron pen.

Their sins were cut into stone with a diamond tipped pen.*

And that stone is their heart.

Those sins were cut into the horns of their altars.*

- ² Their children remember the altars dedicated to false gods.

diamond tipped pen Or, "flint-tipped pen."

horns of their altars The corners of altars were shaped like horns. This was like a place of safety for the people. If a person did something wrong, he could run to the altar. People could punish them only if they proved the person was guilty. Here Jeremiah is saying that there is no safe place for the people of Judah.

They remember the wooden poles
dedicated to Asherah.*

They remember those things under the
green trees and on the hills.

- 3 "They remember those things on the
mountains in the open country.

The people of Judah have wealth and
treasures.

I will give those things to other people.
People will destroy all the high places* in
your country.

You sinned by worshiping at those
places.

- 4 You will lose the land I gave you.

I will let your enemies take you as their
slaves.

Why? Because I am very angry.

My anger is like a hot fire,
and you will be burned forever."

Trusting In People, and Trusting In God

- 5 The Lord says these things:

"Bad things will happen to people that
trust only other people.

Bad things will happen to people that
depend on other people for strength.

Why? Because those people have
stopped trusting the Lord.

- 6 Those people are like a bush in a desert.
That bush is in a land where no people
live.

That bush is in a hot and dry land.

That bush is in a bad soil.

That bush does not know about the
good things that God can give.

- 7 But the person that trusts in the Lord will
be blessed.

Why? Because the Lord will show him
that he can be trusted.

- 8 That person will be strong like a tree
planted near water.

That tree has large roots that find the
water.

That tree is not afraid when the days are
hot.

Its leaves are always green.

It does not worry in a year when no rain
comes.

That tree always produces fruit.

- 9 "A person's mind is very tricky!

The mind can be very sick,
and no person truly understands the
mind.

- 10 But I am the Lord,

and I can look into a person's heart.

I can test a person's mind.

So I can decide what each person should
have.

I can give each person the right
payment for the things he does.

- 11 Sometimes a bird will hatch an egg that it
did not lay.

A person that cheats to get money is
like that bird.

When that man's life is half finished,
he will lose the money.

At the end of his life,

it will be clear that he was a foolish
person."

- 12 From the very beginning,
our temple* has been a glorious throne
for God.

It is a very important place.

- 13 Lord, you are the hope of Israel.

Lord, you are like a spring of living
water.

If a person quits following the Lord,
then his life will be very short.*

Jeremiah's Third Complaint

- 14 Lord, if you heal me,
I truly will be healed.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the
people thought she was the wife of Baal.

high places Special places where the people worshiped
false gods. These places were often on hilltops, but not
always. Some "high places" were in valleys.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
his ... short Literally, "He will be written in the dirt." This
might mean a person's name was written on a list of people
that would soon die. Or that a person's life will soon be
gone—like a name written in the sand.

Save me,
and I truly will be saved.

Lord, I praise you!

- ¹⁵ The people of Judah keep asking me questions.

They say,

"Jeremiah, where is the message from the Lord?

Let's see that message come true."

- ¹⁶ Lord, I did not run away from you.
I followed you.

I became the shepherd* you wanted.
I did not want the terrible day to come.

Lord, you know the things I said.

You see all that is happening.

- ¹⁷ Lord, don't ruin me.
I depend on you in times of trouble.

- ¹⁸ People are hurting me.

Make those people ashamed.

But don't disappoint me.

Let those people be scared.

But don't scare me.

Bring the terrible day of disaster to my enemies.

Break them.

And break them again.

Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

"The Lord said these things to me: 'Jeremiah, go and stand at the People's Gate* of Jerusalem, where the kings of Judah go in and out. Tell the people my message, and then, go to all the other gates of Jerusalem and do the same things.'"

"Say to those people: 'Listen to the message of the Lord. Listen, kings of Judah. Listen, all you people of Judah. All you people that come through these gates into Jerusalem, listen to me!'" The Lord says these things: Be careful that you don't carry a load on the

Sabbath* day. And don't bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.

²²Don't bring a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day. Don't do any work on that day.

You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. I gave this same command to your ancestors.*

²³But your ancestors did not obey me. They did not pay attention to me. Your ancestors were very stubborn. I punished them, but it did not do any good. They did not listen to me. ²⁴But you must be careful to obey me." This message is from the Lord. "You must not bring a load through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath. You must make the Sabbath day a holy day. You will do this by not doing any work on that day.

²⁵"If you obey this command, then kings that sit on David's throne will come through the gates of Jerusalem. Those kings will come riding on chariots* and on horses. The leaders of the people of Judah and Jerusalem will be with those kings. The city of Jerusalem will have people living in it forever! ²⁶People will come to Jerusalem from the towns of Judah. People will come to Jerusalem from the little villages that are around it. People will come from the land where the family group of Benjamin lives.* People will come from the western foothills and from the hill country. And people will come from the Negev.* All those people will bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, grains offerings, incense,* and thank offerings. They will bring those offerings and sacrifices to the temple of the Lord.

²⁷"But if you don't listen to me and obey me, then bad things will happen. If you carry loads into Jerusalem on the Sabbath* day, then you are not keeping it a holy day. So I will start a fire that can't be put out. That fire will start at the gates of Jerusalem, and it will burn until it burns even the palaces.*"

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

the land where ... Benjamin lives The land of Benjamin was just north of the land of Judah.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

palaces A large house for the king and his family.

shepherd God's people are sometimes called his "sheep," and the person that takes care of them is called the "shepherd."

People's Gate Each city gate of Jerusalem had its own name.

Sabbath Saturday, a special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

The Potter and the Clay

18 This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Jeremiah, go down to the potter's* house. I will give you my message at the potter's house."

"So I went down to the potter's house. I saw the potter working with clay at the wheel. 'He was making a pot from clay. But there was something wrong with the pot. So the potter used that clay again, and he made another pot. He used his hands to shape the pot the way that he wanted it to be.

"Then the message from the Lord came to me: "'Family of Israel, you know that I (God) can do the same thing with you. You are like the clay in the potter's* hands. And I am like the potter! 'There may come a time that I will speak about a nation or a kingdom. I may say that I will pull that nation up. Or maybe I will say that I will pull that nation down and destroy that nation or kingdom. 'But the people of that nation might change their hearts and lives. The people in that nation might stop doing evil things. Then I would change my mind. I would not follow my plans to bring disaster to that nation. 'There might come another time when I speak about a nation. I might say that I will build up and plant that nation. 'But I might see that nation doing evil things by not obeying me. Then I would think again about the good I had planned to do for that nation.

"So, Jeremiah, say to the people of Judah and the people that live in Jerusalem, 'This is what the Lord says: I am preparing troubles for you right now. I am making plans against you. So stop doing the evil things that you are doing. Each person must change and start doing good things! 'But the people of Judah will answer, 'It will not do any good to try. We will continue to do what we want. Each of us is going to do the things his stubborn, evil heart wants.'"

¹³ Listen to the things the Lord says:

potter's Someone that makes pottery (jars, bowls, etc.) from clay. The Hebrew word also means, "Creator, or "a person that makes new things."

"Ask the people in other nations this question:

'Have you ever heard of anyone doing the evil things Israel has done?' And Israel is like God's bride!

¹⁴ You know that rocks never leave the fields by themselves.*

You know that the snow on the mountains of Lebanon never melts. You know that cool, flowing streams do not become dry.

¹⁵ But my people have forgotten about me. They make offerings to worthless idols. My people stumble in the things they do. They stumble about in the old paths of their ancestors.*

My people would rather walk along back roads, and poor highways, than to follow me on the good roads.

¹⁶ So Judah's country will become an empty desert.

People will whistle and shake their heads every time they pass by.

They will be shocked at how the country was destroyed.

¹⁷ I will scatter the people of Judah before their enemies.

I will scatter them like the strong east wind blows things around.

I will destroy those people.

At that time, they will not see me coming to help them.

No! They will see me leaving!"

Jeremiah's Fourth Complaint

"Then the enemies of Jeremiah said, "Come, let us make plans against Jeremiah. Surely the teaching of the law by the priest will not be lost. And the advice from the wise men

You ... yourselves This is probably a word play. In Hebrew this sounds like, "Would anyone leave the Rock, Shaddai?" These are two names for God. But this could also be translated, "Does Lebanon's snow ever melt from Shaddai's mountain?" This would probably mean Mount Hermon.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

will still be with us. We will still have the words of the prophets. So let us tell lies about him. That will ruin him. We will not pay attention to anything he says."

¹⁹ Lord, listen to me!

Listen to my arguments and decide who is right.

²⁰ I have done good to the people of Judah. But now they are paying me back with evil.

Now they have dug a pit in order to kill me.

Lord, do you remember the things I did?

I stood before you and asked you to do good things for these people.

I asked you to stop being angry at them.

I have done good to the people of Judah.

But now they are paying me back with evil.

They are trying to trap me and kill me.

²¹ So now, make their children starve in a famine.*

Let their enemies defeat them with swords.

Let their wives be without children.

Let the men from Judah be put to death.

Make their wives into widows.

Let the men from Judah be put to death.

Let the young men be killed with swords in battle.

²² Let there be crying in their houses.

Make them cry when you suddenly bring an enemy against them.

Let all this happen because my enemies have tried to trap me.

They have hidden traps for me to step in.

²³ Lord, you know about their plans to kill me.

Don't forgive their crimes.

Don't erase their sins.

Destroy my enemies!

Punish those people while you are angry!

famine A time when there is not enough rain for crops to grow. People and animals die without enough food or water.

The Broken Jar

19 The Lord said to me: "Jeremiah, go and buy a clay jar from a potter.* 'Go out to the Valley of Ben Hinnom, near the front of the Potsherd Gate.* Take some of the elders (*leaders*) of the people and some priests with you. At that place, tell them the things that I tell you. 'Say to those people with you, 'King of Judah and people of Jerusalem, listen to this message from the Lord! This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: I will soon make a terrible thing happen to this place! Every person that hears about it will be amazed and full of fear. 'I will do these things because the people of Judah quit following me. They have made this a place for foreign gods. The people of Judah have burned sacrifices in this place to other gods. The people did not worship those gods long ago. Their ancestors* did not worship those gods. These are new gods from other countries. The kings of Judah filled this place with the blood of the innocent children. 'The kings of Judah built high places* for the god Baal.* They use those places to burn their sons in the fire. They burned their sons as burnt offerings to the god Baal. I did not tell them to do that. I did not ask you to offer your sons as sacrifices. I never even thought of such a thing. 'Now people call this place in the Valley of Hinnom, Topheth. But, I give you this warning: The days are coming," this message is from the Lord, "'when people will call this place the Valley of Slaughter.* 'At this place, I will ruin the plans

potter A worker that makes things from clay. The Hebrew word also means "creator."

Potsherd Gate Each city gate of Jerusalem had its own name.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

high places Special places where the people worshiped false gods. These places were often on hilltops, but not always. Some 'high places' were in valleys.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Slaughter Usually, this word means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces of meat. But it often means to kill people like they are animals.

of the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The enemy will chase these people. And I will let the people of Judah be killed with swords in this place. And I will make their dead bodies food for the birds and wild animals. 'I will completely destroy this city. People will whistle and shake their heads when they pass by Jerusalem. They will be shocked when they see how the city was destroyed. 'The enemy will bring its army around the city. That army will not let people go out to get food. So the people in the city will begin to starve. They will become so hungry that they will eat the bodies of their own sons and daughters. And then they will begin to eat each other.'

¹⁰"Jeremiah, you will tell those things to the people. And while they are watching, you will break that jar. "At that time, say these things: 'The Lord All-Powerful says, I will break the nation of Judah and the city of Jerusalem just like someone breaking a clay jar! This jar can't be put back together again. It will be the same for the nation of Judah. The dead people will be buried here in Topheth until there is no more room. ¹¹"I will do this to these people and to this place. I will make this city like Topheth.' This message is from the Lord. ¹²"The houses in Jerusalem will become as "dirty" as this place, Topheth. The kings' palaces* will be ruined like this place, Topheth. Why? Because the people worshiped false gods on the roofs of those houses.* They worshiped the stars and burned sacrifices to honor them. They gave drink offerings to false gods."

¹³"Then Jeremiah left Topheth where the Lord had told him to preach. Jeremiah went to the Lord's temple* and stood in the courtyard* of the temple. Jeremiah said to all the people: ¹⁴"This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel says: 'I said I would bring many disasters to Jerusalem and the villages around it. I will soon make those things happen. Why? Because the people are very stubborn—they refused to listen and obey me.'"

palace(s) A large house for the king and his family.
roofs of those houses People built their house with a flat roof, and they used the roof like an extra room.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
courtyard The large area around the temple sanctuary.

Jeremiah and Pashhur

20 A man named Pashhur was a priest. He was the highest officer in the temple* of the Lord. Pashhur was the son of a man named Immer. Pashhur heard Jeremiah preach those things in the temple yard. 'So he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten. And he had Jeremiah's hands and feet locked between large blocks of wood. This was at the Upper Gate of Benjamin of the temple. 'The next day Pashhur took Jeremiah out from between the blocks of wood. Then Jeremiah said to Pashhur, "The Lord's name for you is not Pashhur. Now the Lord's name for you is Terror on Every Side. 'That is your name, because the Lord says: 'I will soon make you a terror to yourself! I will soon make you a terror to all your friends. You will watch enemies killing your friends with swords. I will give all the people of Judah to the king of Babylon. He will take the people of Judah away to the country of Babylon. And his army will kill the people of Judah with their swords. 'The people of Jerusalem worked hard to build things and become wealthy. But I will give all those things to their enemies. The king in Jerusalem has many treasures. But I will give all those treasures to the enemy. The enemy will take those things and carry them away to the country of Babylon. 'And Pashhur, you and all the people living in your house will be taken away. You will be forced to go and live in the country of Babylon. You will die in Babylon. And you will be buried in that foreign country. You preached lies to your friends. 'You said these things would not happen., But all of your friends will also die and be buried in Babylon.'"

Jeremiah's Fifth Complaint

¹ Lord, you tricked me,
 and I certainly was fooled.
 You are stronger than I am,
 so you won.

I have become a joke.

People laugh at me and make fun of me
 all day long.

- ¹ Every time I speak, I shout.
I am always shouting about violence
and destruction.
I tell the people about the message I
received from the Lord.
But people only insult me and make fun
of me.
- ³ Sometimes I say to myself,
"I will forget about the Lord.
I will not speak any more in the name of
the Lord!"
But if I say that,
then the Lord's message becomes like a
burning fire inside me!
It feels like it is burning me deep in my
bones!
I get tired of trying to hold the Lord's
message inside of me.
And finally, I am not able to hold it in.
- ¹⁰ I hear many people talking against me
with low voices.
Everywhere, I hear things that scare me.
Even my friends are saying things
against me.
People are just waiting for me to make
some mistake.
They are saying,
"Let us lie and say he did some bad
thing.
Maybe we can trick Jeremiah.
Then we will have him.
We will finally be rid of him.
Then we will grab him and take our
revenge on him."
- ¹¹ But the Lord is with me.
The Lord is like a strong soldier.
So the people that are chasing me will
fall.
Those people will not defeat me.
Those people will fail.
They will be disappointed.
Those people will be ashamed.
And people will never forget that
shame.
- ¹² Lord All-Powerful, you test good people.
You look deeply into the heart and mind
of a person.

I have told you my arguments against
those people,
so let me see you give them the
punishment they deserve.

- ¹³ Sing to the Lord!
Praise the Lord!
The Lord saves the lives of poor people!
He saves them from the power of the
wicked people!

Jeremiah's Sixth Complaint

- ¹⁴ Curse the day that I was born!
Don't bless the day my mother had me.
- ¹⁵ Curse the man that told my father
the news that I was born.
"You have a son," he said, "It is a
boy!"
He made my father very happy when he
told him this.
- ¹⁶ Let that man be the same
as the cities that the Lord destroyed.*
The Lord did not have any pity on
those cities.
Let that man hear shouts of war in the
morning.
And let him hear battle cries at
noontime.
- ¹⁷ Why? Because that man did not kill me
while I was in my mother's body.
If he had killed me at that time,
then my mother would have been my
grave,
and I would never have been born.
- ¹⁸ Why did I have to come out of the body?
All I have seen is trouble and sorrow.
And my life will end in shame.

God Rejects King Zedekiah's Request

21 This is the message that came to
Jeremiah from the Lord. This message
came when Zedekiah, the king of Judah, sent a
man named Pashhur and a priest named

cities ... destroyed The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.
See Genesis 19.

Zephaniah to Jeremiah. Pashhur* was the son of a man named Malkijah. Zephaniah was the son of a man named Maaseiah. Pashhur and Zephaniah brought a message for Jeremiah. ²Pashhur and Zephaniah said to Jeremiah, "Pray to the Lord for us. Ask the Lord what will happen. We want to know, because Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, is attacking us. Maybe the Lord will do great things for us, like he did in the past. Maybe the Lord will make Nebuchadnezzar stop attacking us and leave."

³Then Jeremiah answered Pashhur and Zephaniah. He said, "Tell King Zedekiah: 'This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'You have weapons of war in your hands. You are using those weapons to defend yourselves against the king of Babylon and the Babylonians.* But I will make those weapons worthless.

"The army from Babylon is outside the wall around the city. That army is all around the city. Soon I will bring that army into Jerusalem. 'I myself will fight against you people of Judah. I will fight against you with my own powerful hand. I am very angry with you, so I will fight against you with my own powerful arm. I will fight very hard against you and show how angry I am. 'I will kill the people living in Jerusalem. I will kill people and animals. They will die from terrible sicknesses that will spread all through the city. 'After that happens,'" this message is from the Lord, "'I will give Zedekiah king of Judah to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. I will also give Zedekiah's officials to Nebuchadnezzar. Some of the people in Jerusalem will not die from the terrible sicknesses. Some of the people will not be killed with swords. Some of them will not die from hunger. But I will give those people to Nebuchadnezzar. I will let Judah's enemy win. Nebuchadnezzar's army wants to kill the people of Judah. So the people

of Judah and Jerusalem will be killed with swords. Nebuchadnezzar will not show any mercy. He will not feel sorry for those people.'

"Also tell these things to the people of Jerusalem. The Lord says these things: 'Understand that I will let you choose to live or die. 'Any person that stays in Jerusalem will die. That person will die by a sword, or from hunger, or from a terrible sickness. But any person that goes out of Jerusalem and surrenders to the Babylonian army will live! That army has surrounded the city. So no person can bring food into the city. But any person that leaves the city will save his life. 'I have decided to make trouble for the city of Jerusalem. I will not help the city.'" This message is from the Lord. "'I will give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon. He will burn it with fire.'

¹¹ "Tell these things to Judah's royal family: Listen to the message from the Lord.

¹² Family of David,* the Lord says these things: 'You must judge people fairly every day.

Protect the victims* from the criminals.

If you don't do that, then I will become very angry.

My anger will be like a fire that no person will be able to put out. This will happen because you have done evil things.'

¹³ "Jerusalem, I am against you.

You sit on top of the mountain.

You sit like a queen over this valley.

You people of Jerusalem say,

'No person can attack us.

No person can come into our strong city.'

Pashhur This is not the same Pashhur as the man in Jer. 20:1.

Babylonians The Babylonians were the family group to which King Nebuchadnezzar belonged. They were the group that controlled the land of Babylon at this time.

Family of David The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David's family would be kings in Judah.

victims People that have suffered some kind of hurt or trouble. Often this means people that were hurt or lost something during a crime.

But listen to this message from the Lord.

¹⁴ "You will get the punishment you deserve.

I will start a fire in your forests.

That fire will completely burn everything around you."

Judgment Against Evil Kings

22 The Lord said: "Jeremiah, go down to the king's palace. Go to the king of Judah and preach this message there: 'Listen to the message from the Lord, King of Judah. You rule from David's throne, so listen. King, you and your officials must listen well. All of your people that come through the gates of Jerusalem must listen to the message from the Lord. 'The Lord says: Do the things that are fair and right. Protect the person that has been robbed from the person that robbed him. Don't hurt or do anything wrong to orphans* or widows.* Don't kill innocent people. 'If you obey these commands, then this is what will happen: kings that sit on David's throne will continue to come through the gates into the city of Jerusalem. Those kings will come through the gates with their officials. Those kings, their officials, and their people will come riding in chariots* and on horses. 'But if you don't obey these commands, this is what the Lord says: I, the Lord, promise that this king's palace* will be destroyed—it will become a pile of rocks.'"

"This is what the Lord says about the palace where the king of Judah lives:

"This palace* is tall,
like the forests of Gilead.

It is tall
like the mountains of Lebanon.

But I will truly make it like a desert.

This palace will be empty like a city
where no person lives.

orphan(s) Children whose parents are dead. Often these children have no one to care for them.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

⁷ I will send men to destroy the palace.

Each man will have weapons that he will use to destroy that house.

Those men will cut up your strong, beautiful cedar beams.

Those men will throw those beams into the fire.

"People from many nations will pass by this city. They will ask one another, 'Why has the Lord done such a terrible thing to Jerusalem? Jerusalem was such a great city.' This will be the answer to that question: 'God destroyed Jerusalem because the people of Judah quit following the Agreement* of the Lord their God. Those people worshiped and served other gods.'"

Judgment Against King Jehoahaz (Shallum)

¹⁰ Don't cry for the king that has died.*
Don't cry for him.

But cry very hard for the king that is going away from here.*

Cry for him because he will never come back again.

Jehoahaz will never see his homeland again.

"This is what the Lord says about Shallum (Jehoahaz) son of Josiah. (Shallum became king of Judah after his father Josiah died.) Jehoahaz has gone away from Jerusalem. He will never come back to Jerusalem again. Jehoahaz will die in the place where the Egyptians have taken him. He will not see this land again."

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

king ... died This means King Josiah that was killed in battle against the Egyptians in 609 B.C.

king ... here This means Josiah's son, Jehoahaz. He became king after Josiah died. He is also called Shallum. Neco, the king of Egypt, defeated Josiah. And Neco took Jehoahaz off the throne of Judah and made him a prisoner in Egypt.

Judgment Against King Jehoiakim

- 13 "It will be very bad for King Jehoiakim.
He is doing bad things so he can build
his palace.
He is cheating people so he can build
rooms upstairs.
He is making his own people work for
nothing.
He is not paying them for their work.
- 14 Jehoiakim says, 'I will build a great
palace for myself.
I will have large upper rooms.'
So he builds the house with large
windows.
He uses cedar wood for paneling,
And he paints it red.
- 15 Jehoiakim, having a lot of cedar wood in
your house
does not make you a great king.
Your father Josiah was satisfied to have
food and drink.
He did what was right and fair.
Josiah did that,
so everything went well for him.
- 16 Jehoiakim helped the poor and needy people.
Josiah did that,
so everything went well for him.
Jehoiakim, what does it mean 'to know
God?'
Living right and being fair,
that is what it means to know me."
This message is from the Lord.
- 17 "Jehoiakim, your eyes look only for what
benefits yourself,
You are always thinking about getting
more for yourself.
You are willing to kill innocent people.
You are willing to steal things from
other people."
- 18 So this is what the Lord says to King
Jehoiakim son of Josiah:
"The people of Judah will not cry for
Jehoiakim.
They will not say to one another,
'Oh, my brother, I am so sad about
Jehoiakim,'
Oh, my sister, I am so sad about

Jehoiakim,!"

The people of Judah will not cry for
Jehoiakim.

They will not say about him,
'Oh, master, I am so sad,'
Oh, King, I am so sad.'

- 19 The people of Jerusalem will bury
Jehoiakim like they were burying a
donkey.

They will just drag his body away.
And they will throw his body outside
the gates of Jerusalem.

- 20 "Judah, go up to the mountains of
Lebanon and cry out.

Let your voice be heard in the
mountains of Bashan.

Cry out in the mountains of Abarim.

Why? Because your 'lovers' will all be
destroyed.

- 21 Judah, you felt safe.
But I warned you!

I warned you,
but you refused to listen.

You have acted like this since you were
young.

And since you were young,
you have not obeyed me, Judah.

- 22 Judah, my punishment will come like a
storm.

And it will blow all your shepherds
(*leaders*) away.

You thought some of the other nations
would help you.

But those nations will also be defeated.
Then you will really be disappointed.

You will be embarrassed about all of
the bad things you did.

- 23 King, you live high on the mountain in
your house made from cedar wood.

It is almost like you live in Lebanon
where that wood came from.

You think you are safe, high on the
mountain in your big house.

But you will really groan when your
punishment comes.

You will hurt like a woman giving
birth to a baby."

Judgment Upon King Jehoiachin (Coniah)

²⁴“As surely as I live,” this message is from the Lord, “I will do this to you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah: Even if you were a signet ring* on my right hand, I would still pull you off. ²⁵Jehoiachin, I will give you to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and the Babylonians. Those are the people you are afraid of. Those people want to kill you. ²⁶I will throw you and your mother into another country where neither of you was born. You and your mother will die in that country. ²⁷Jehoiachin, you will want to come back to your land—but you will never be allowed to come back.”

²⁸ Coniah (*Jehoiachin*) is like a broken pot
some person threw away.

He is like a pot that no person wants.
Why will Jehoiachin and his children be
thrown out?

Why will they be thrown into a foreign
land?

²⁹ Land, land, land of Judah!
Listen to the message of the Lord!

³⁰ The Lord says,
“Write this down about Jehoiachin:

‘He is a man that has no children
anymore!

Jehoiachin will not be successful in his
lifetime.

None of his children will sit on the
throne of David.

None of his children will rule in
Judah.’”

23 “It will be very bad for the shepherds (*leaders*) of the people of Judah. Those shepherds are destroying the sheep. They are making the sheep run from my pasture in all directions.” This message is from the Lord.

²Those shepherds (*leaders*) are responsible for my people. And the Lord, the God of Israel, says these things to those shepherds: “You

shepherds (*leaders*) have made my sheep run away in all directions. You have forced them to go away. And you have not taken care of them. But I will take care of you—I will punish you for the bad things you did.” This message is from the Lord: ³“I sent my sheep (*people*) to other countries. But I will gather together my sheep (*people*) that are left. And I will bring them back to their pasture (*country*). When my sheep (*people*) are back in their pasture (*country*), they will have many children and grow in number. ⁴I will place new shepherds (*leaders*) over my sheep. Those shepherds (*leaders*) will take care of my sheep (*people*). And my sheep (*people*) will not be scared or afraid. None of my sheep (*people*) will be lost.” This message is from the Lord.

The Righteous “Sprout”

⁵ “The time is coming,”
this message is from the Lord,
“when I will raise up a righteous
‘sprout.’”

He will be a king that will rule in a wise
way.

And he will do what is fair and right in
the land.

⁶ In the time of that righteous ‘sprout,’ the
people of Judah will be saved.

And Israel will live in safety.

This will be his name:

The Lord is our Righteousness.*

⁷“So the time is coming,” this message is from the Lord, “when people won’t say the old promise by the Lord any more. The old promise is: ‘As surely as the Lord lives, the Lord is the One who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt.’ ⁸But people will say something new. They will say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, the Lord is the One who brought the people of Israel out of the land of the north. He brought them out of all the countries where he

signet ring A special ring worn by a king. The design on the ring could be pressed into a bit of clay or warm wax and leave an impression of the design. This was like a person’s signature—so the ring was very important.

sprout This means a new king from the family of David.

The ... Righteousness This is a word play. In Hebrew, this is like the name Zedekiah, the king of Judah at the time that this prophecy was probably given. But Jeremiah is talking about another king.

had sent them.' Then the people of Israel will live in their own land."

Judgments Against False Prophets

- ⁹ A message to the prophets:

I am very sad—my heart is broken.

All my bones are shaking.

I (*Jeremiah*) am like a man that is drunk.

Why? Because of the Lord and his holy words.

- ¹⁰ The land of Judah is full of people that do the sin of adultery.*

They are unfaithful in many ways.

The Lord cursed the land,

and it became very dry.

The plants are dried and dying in the pastures.

The fields have become like the desert.

The prophets are evil.

Those prophets use their influence and power in the wrong way.

- ¹¹ "The prophets and even the priests are evil.

I have seen them doing evil things in my own temple."

This message is from the Lord.

- ¹² "So, I will stop giving my messages to them.

It will be like they are forced to walk in darkness.

It will be like the road is slippery for the prophets and priests.

In that dark place, those prophets and priests will fall.

I will bring disaster on them.

At that time, I will punish those prophets and priests."

This message is from the Lord.

- ¹³ "I saw the prophets of Samaria* do something wrong.

I saw those prophets prophesy* by the

false god Baal.*

Those prophets led the people of Israel away from the Lord.

- ¹⁴ And I have seen the prophets of Judah do some terrible things in Jerusalem.

These prophets do the sin of adultery.*

They listened to lies—and they obeyed those false teachings.

They encourage wicked people to keep on doing evil.

So the people did not stop sinning.

All of those people are like the city of Sodom.

The people of Jerusalem are like the city of Gomorrah* to me."

- ¹⁵ So, this is what the Lord All-Powerful says about the prophets:

"I will punish those prophets.

The punishment will be like eating poisoned food and water.

The prophets started a spiritual sickness.

And that sickness spread through the whole country.

So I will punish those prophets.

That sickness came from the prophets in Jerusalem."

- ¹⁶ The Lord All-Powerful says these things:

"Don't pay attention to the things those prophets are saying to you.

They are trying to fool you.

Those prophets talk about visions.*

But they did not get their visions from me.

Their visions come from their own minds.

- ¹⁷ Some of the people hate the Lord's true messages.

So those prophets say different things to those people.

They say,

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

Samaria The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. This kingdom was destroyed by God because its people did many bad things.

prophesy To speak for God.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

Sodom, Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

'You will have peace.'

Some of the people are very stubborn.

They do only the things they want to do.

So those prophets say,

'Nothing bad will happen to you!'

¹⁸ But none of these prophets has stood in the heavenly council.*

None of them has seen or heard the message of the Lord.

None of them has paid close attention to the Lord's message.

¹⁹ Now the punishment from the Lord will come like a storm.

The Lord's anger will be like a tornado.

It will come crashing down on the heads of those wicked people.

²⁰ The Lord's anger will not stop until he finishes what he plans to do.

When that day is over,
you will understand this clearly.

²¹ I did not send those prophets.

But they ran to tell their messages.

I did not speak to them.

But they preached in my name.

²² If they had stood in my heavenly council, then they would have told my messages to the people of Judah.

they would have stopped the people from doing bad things.

they would have stopped them from doing evil."

²³ "I am God, and I am always near!"

This message is from the Lord.

"I am not far away!"

²⁴ A person might try to hide from me in some hiding place.

But it is easy for me to see him.

Why? Because I am everywhere in heaven and earth!"

The Lord said these things.

²⁵ "There are prophets that preach lies in my name. They say, 'I have had a dream! I have had a dream!' I heard them say those things.

heavenly council The people in the Old Testament often talk about God like he was the leader of a council of heavenly beings (angels). Compare 1 Kings 22:19-23; Isaiah 6:1-8; Job chapters 1 and 2.

²⁶How long will this continue? Those prophets think up lies. And then they teach those lies to the people. ²⁷These prophets are trying to make the people of Judah forget my name. They are doing this by telling each other these false dreams. They are trying to make my people forget me in the same way that their ancestors* forgot me. Their ancestors forgot me and worshiped the false god Baal.* ²⁸Straw is not the same thing as wheat! In the same way, those prophets' dreams are not messages from me. If a person wants to tell about his dreams, then let him. But let the man that hears my message speak my message truthfully. ²⁹My message is like a fire." This message is from the Lord. "It is like a hammer that smashes a rock."

³⁰"So I am against the false prophets." This message is from the Lord. "These prophets keep stealing my words from one another. ³¹I am against the false prophets." This message is from the Lord. "They use their own words and pretend that it is a message from me. ³²I am against the false prophets that preach fake dreams." This message is from the Lord. "They mislead my people with their lies and false teachings. I did not send those prophets to teach the people. I never commanded them to do anything for me. They can't help the people of Judah at all." This message is from the Lord.

The Sad Message from the Lord

¹"The people of Judah, or a prophet, or a priest may ask you, 'Jeremiah, what is the announcement of the Lord?' You will answer them and say, 'You are a heavy load* to the Lord. And I will throw down this heavy load.' This message is from the Lord.

²"A prophet, or a priest, or maybe one of the people might say, 'This is an announcement from the Lord ... ' That person lied, so I will

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

heavy load This is a word play. The Hebrew word for "announcement" is like the word translated "heavy load."

punish that person and his whole family. ³³This is what you will say to one another: 'What did the Lord answer?' or 'What did the Lord say?' ³⁴But you will never again use the expression, 'The announcement (*heavy load*) of the Lord.' This is because the Lord's message should not be a heavy load for anyone. But you changed the words of our God. He is the living God, the Lord All-Powerful!

³⁵"If you want to learn about God's message, then ask a prophet, 'What answer did the Lord give you?' or 'What did the Lord say?'" ³⁶But don't say, 'What was the announcement (*heavy load*) from the Lord?' If you use these words, then the Lord will say these things to you: 'You should not have called my message an 'announcement (*heavy load*) from the Lord.' I told you not to use those words.' ³⁷But you called my message a heavy load, so I will pick you up like a heavy load and throw you away from me. I gave the city of Jerusalem to your ancestors.* But I will throw you and that city away from me. ³⁸And I will make you a disgrace forever. You will never forget your embarrassment.'"

The Good Figs and the Bad Figs

24 The Lord showed me these things: I saw two baskets of figs arranged in front of the temple* of the Lord. (I saw this vision after Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took Jeconiah* as a prisoner. Jeconiah was the son of King Jehoiakim. Jeconiah and his important officials were taken away from Jerusalem. They were taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar also took away all the carpenters and metal-workers of Judah.) ¹One basket had very good figs in it. Those figs were like figs that ripen early in the season. But the other basket had rotten figs. They were too rotten to eat.

²The Lord said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I answered, "I see figs. The good

figs are very good. And the rotten figs are very rotten. They are too rotten to eat."

³Then the message of the Lord came to me. ⁴The Lord, the God of Israel, said: "The people of Judah were taken from their country. Their enemy brought them to Babylon. Those people will be like these good figs. I will be kind to those people. ⁵I will protect them. I will bring them back to the land of Judah. I will not tear them down—I will build them up. I will not pull them up—I will plant them so they can grow. ⁶I will make them want to know me. They will know that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God. I will do this because those prisoners in Babylon will turn to me with their whole hearts.

⁷"But Zedekiah king of Judah will be like those figs that are too rotten to eat. Zedekiah, his high officials, all the people that are left in Jerusalem, and those people of Judah that are living in Egypt will be like those rotten figs.

⁸"I will punish those people. The punishment will shock all the people on earth. People will make fun of those people from Judah. People will tell jokes about them. People will curse them in all the places where I scatter them. ⁹I will send a sword, starvation, and disease against them. I will attack them until they have all been killed. Then they will no longer be on the land which I gave to them and to their ancestors.*

A Summary of Jeremiah's Preaching

25 This is the message that came to Jeremiah concerning all of the people of Judah. This message came in the fourth year* that Jehoiakim was king of Judah. Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah. The fourth year of his time as king was the first year that Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon. ²This is the message that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and all the people of Jerusalem:

³I have given you messages from the Lord again and again for these past 23 years. I have been a prophet since the 13th year that Josiah

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Jeconiah This is another name for King Jehoiachin.

Jehoiachin was taken prisoner in the year 597 B.C.

fourth year This was the year 605 B.C.

son of Amon was the king of Judah. I have spoken messages from the Lord to you from that time until today. But you have not listened. 'The Lord has sent his servants, the prophets, to you over and over again. But you have not listened to them. You have not paid any attention to them.

⁹Those prophets said, "Change your lives! Stop doing those bad things! If you change, then you can return to the land which the Lord gave you and your ancestors* long ago. He gave you this land to live in forever. 'Don't follow other gods. Don't serve or worship them. Don't worship idols that some person has made. That only makes me angry at you. Doing this only hurts yourselves.*"

¹⁰"But you did not listen to me." This message is from the Lord. "You worshiped idols that some person made. And that made me angry. And that only hurt you."

¹¹So, this is what the Lord All-Powerful says, "You have not listened to my messages. ¹²So I will soon send for all the family groups of the north.*" This message is from the Lord. "I will soon send for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He is my servant. I will bring those people against the land of Judah and against the people of Judah. I will bring them against all the nations around you too. I will destroy all of those countries. I will make those lands like a empty desert forever. People will see those countries, and whistle about how badly they were destroyed. ¹³I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and happiness in those places. There will be no more happy sounds of the brides and bridegrooms. I will take away the sound of people grinding meal. I will take away the light of the lamp. ¹⁴That whole area will be an empty desert. All of those people will be slaves of the king of Babylon for 70 years.

¹⁵"But when the 70 years have passed, I will punish the king of Babylon. I will punish the

nation of Babylon." This message is from the Lord. "I will punish the land of the Babylonians for their sins. I will make that land a desert forever. ¹⁶I have said many bad things will happen to Babylon. All of those things will happen. Jeremiah preached about those foreign nations. And all of those warnings are written in this book. ¹⁷Yes, the people of Babylon will have to serve many nations and many great kings. I will give them the punishment they deserve for all the things they will do."

Judgment on the Nations of the World

¹⁸The Lord, the God of Israel, said these things to me: "Jeremiah, take this cup of wine from my hand. It is the wine of my anger. I am sending you to different nations. Make all those nations drink from this cup. ¹⁹They will drink this wine. Then they will vomit and act like crazy people. They will do this because of the sword that I will soon send against them."

²⁰So I took the cup of wine from the Lord's hand. I went to those nations and I made those people drink from the cup. ²¹I poured this wine for the people of Jerusalem and Judah. I made the kings and leaders of Judah drink from the cup. I did this so that they would become an empty desert. I did this so that place would be destroyed so badly that people would whistle about it and say curses about that place. And it happened—Judah is like that now!

²²I also made Pharaoh king of Egypt drink from the cup. I made his officials, his important leaders, and all his people drink from the cup of the Lord's anger.

²³I also made all the Arabs and all of the kings of the land of Uz drink from the cup.

I also made all the kings of the land of the Philistines drink from the cup. These were the kings of the cities of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and what remains of the city Ashdod.

²⁴Then I made the people of Edom, Moab, and Ammon drink from the cup.

²⁵I made all the kings of Tyre and Sidon drink from the cup.

I also made all the kings of the faraway countries drink from that cup. ²⁶I made the people of Dedan, Tema, and Buz drink from

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Doing... yourselves Following the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew reads, "Then I will not hurt you."

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the north to attack the nation of Judah.

the cup. I made all those that cut their hair at their temples drink from the cup. ²¹I made all the kings of Arabia drink from the cup. These kings live in the desert. ²²I made all the kings from Zimri, Elam, and Media drink from the cup. ²³I made all the kings of the north, those that were near and far, drink from the cup. I made them drink one after the other. I made all the kingdoms that are on earth drink from the cup of the anger of the Lord. But the king of Babylon will drink from this cup after all of these other nations.

²⁴"Jeremiah, say to those nations, this is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says, 'Drink this cup of my anger. Get drunk from it and vomit! Fall down and don't get up. Don't get up because I am sending a sword to kill you.'

²⁵"Those people will refuse to take the cup from your hand. They will refuse to drink it. But you will say to them, 'The Lord All-Powerful says these things: You will indeed drink from this cup! ²⁶I am already making these bad things happen to Jerusalem, the city that is called by my name. Maybe you people think that you will not be punished. But you are wrong. You will be punished. I am calling out a sword to attack all the people of the earth.' " This message is from the Lord.

²⁷"Jeremiah, you will give them this message:

'The Lord shouts from the high and holy temple!

The Lord shouts against his pasture
(people)!

His shouts are loud
like people that walk on grapes to make wine.

²⁸ The noise spreads to all the people on earth.

What is all the noise about?

The Lord is punishing the people from
all the nations.

The Lord told his arguments against the people.

He judged the people.

And he is killing the evil people with a sword.' "

This message is from the Lord.

²⁹ This is what the Lord All-Powerful says:
"Disasters will soon spread from
country to country.

They will come like a powerful storm
to all the faraway places on earth!"

³⁰The dead bodies of those people will reach from one end of the country to the other. No person will cry for those dead people. No person will gather up their bodies and bury them. They will be left lying on the ground like dung.

³¹ Shepherds (*leaders*), you should be
leading the sheep (*people*).

Start crying you great leaders!

Roll around on the ground in pain, you
leaders of the sheep (*people*).

Why? Because it is now time for your
slaughter.*

I will scatter your sheep.

They will scatter everywhere, like the
pieces from a broken jar.

³² There will be no place for the shepherds
(*leaders*) to hide.

Those leaders will not escape.

³³ I hear the shepherds (*leaders*) shouting.
I hear the leaders of the sheep (*people*)

crying.

The Lord is destroying their pastures
(*country*).

³⁴ Those peaceful pastures are like an empty
desert.

This happened because the Lord is very
angry.

³⁵ The Lord is like a dangerous lion leaving
his cave.

The Lord is angry!

The Lord's anger will hurt those people.
Their country will become an empty
desert.

slaughter Usually, this word means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces of meat. But it often means to kill people like they are animals.

Jeremiah's Lesson at the Temple

26 This message came from the Lord during the first year that Jehoiakim was king* of Judah. Jehoiakim was the son of King Josiah. ²The Lord said: "Jeremiah, stand in the temple* yard of the Lord. Give this message to all the people of Judah that are coming to worship at the temple of the Lord. Tell them everything that I tell you to speak. Don't leave out any part of my message. ³Maybe they will listen and obey my message. Maybe they will stop living such evil lives. If they change, then I might change my mind about my plans to punish them. I am planning this punishment because of many bad things those people have done. ⁴You will say to them, 'This is what the Lord says: I gave my teachings to you. You must obey me and follow my teachings. ⁵You must listen to the things my servants say to you. (The prophets are my servants.) I have sent prophets to you again and again, but you did not listen to them. ⁶If you don't obey me, then I will make my temple in Jerusalem just like my Holy Tent at Shiloh.* People all over the world will think of Jerusalem when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities.'"

⁷The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah say all of these words at the Lord's temple.* ⁸Jeremiah finished speaking everything the Lord had commanded him to say to the people. Then the priests, the prophets, and all the people grabbed Jeremiah. They said, "You will die for saying such terrible things! ⁹How dare you preach such a thing in the name of the Lord! How dare you say that this temple will be destroyed like the one at Shiloh! How dare you say that Jerusalem will become a desert with no people living in it!" All the people gathered around Jeremiah in the temple of the Lord.

¹⁰Now the rulers of Judah heard about all of the things that were happening. So they came

out of the king's palace. They went up to the Lord's temple. There, they took their places at the entrance of the New Gate. The New Gate is a gate leading to the Lord's temple. ¹¹Then the priests and the prophets spoke to the rulers and all the other people. They said, "Jeremiah should be killed. He said bad things about Jerusalem. You heard him say those things."

¹²Then Jeremiah spoke to all the rulers of Judah and all the other people. He said, "The Lord sent me to say these things about this temple and this city. Everything that you have heard is from the Lord. ¹³You people change your lives! You must start doing good things! You must obey the Lord your God. If you do that, then the Lord will change his mind. The Lord will not do the bad things he told you about. ¹⁴As for me, I am in your power. Do to me what you think is good and right. ¹⁵But if you kill me, be sure of one thing. You will be guilty of killing an innocent person. You will make this city and everyone that lives in it guilty, too. The Lord really did send me to you. The message you heard really is from the Lord."

¹⁶Then the rulers and all the people spoke. Those people said to the priests and the prophets, "Jeremiah must not be killed. The things Jeremiah told us come from the Lord our God."

¹⁷Then some of the elders (*leaders*) stood up and spoke to all the people. ¹⁸They said, "Micah the prophet was from the city of Moresheth. Micah was a prophet during the time that Hezekiah was king of Judah. Micah said* these things to all the people of Judah:

"The Lord All-Powerful says:

"Zion* will become a plowed field!

Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks!

The hill where the temple is will be overgrown with trees!"

¹⁹"Hezekiah was the king of Judah. And Hezekiah didn't kill Micah. None of the people of Judah killed Micah. You know that

first ... king This was 609 B.C.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
my Holy ... Shiloh The holy place at Shiloh was probably destroyed during the time of Samuel. See Jeremiah 7 and 1 Samuel 4.

Micah said See Micah 3:12.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Hezekiah respected the Lord. He wanted to please the Lord. The Lord had said he would do bad things to Judah. But Hezekiah prayed to the Lord, and the Lord changed his mind. The Lord didn't do those bad things. If we hurt Jeremiah, then we will bring many troubles on ourselves. And those troubles will be our own fault."

²¹In the past, there was another man that preached the Lord's message. His name was Uriah. He was the son of a man named Shemaiah. Uriah was from the city of Kiriath Jearim. Uriah preached the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did. ²²King Jehoiakim and his army officers and the leaders of Judah heard Uriah preach. They became angry. King Jehoiakim wanted to kill Uriah. But Uriah heard that Jehoiakim wanted to kill him. Uriah was afraid, so he escaped to the land of Egypt. ²³But King Jehoiakim sent a man named Elnathan and some other men to Egypt. Elnathan was the son of a man named Achbor. ²⁴Those men brought Uriah from Egypt. Then those men took Uriah to King Jehoiakim. Jehoiakim ordered Uriah to be killed with a sword. Uriah's body was thrown into the burial place where poor people are buried.

²⁵There was an important man named Ahikam son of Shaphan. Ahikam supported Jeremiah. So Ahikam kept Jeremiah from being killed by the priests and prophets.

The Lord Has Made Nebuchadnezzar Ruler

27 A message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. It came during the fourth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah.* Zedekiah was the son of King Josiah. ²This is what the Lord said to me: "Jeremiah, make a yoke* out of straps and poles. Put that yoke on the back of your neck. ³Then send messages to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Send the messages with the messengers

of these kings that have come to Jerusalem to see Zedekiah king of Judah. 'Tell those messengers to give this message to their masters. Tell them, 'The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: Tell your masters that 'I made the earth and all the people on it. I made all the animals on the earth. I did this with my great power and my strong arm. I can give the earth to anyone I want. 'Now I have given all your countries to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He is my servant. I will make even the wild animals obey him. 'All nations will serve Nebuchadnezzar and his son and his grandson. Then the time will come for Babylon to be defeated. Many nations and great kings will make Babylon their servant.

⁴"But now, some nations or kingdoms might refuse to serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. They might refuse to put his yoke* on their necks. If that happens, this is what I will do: I will punish that nation with sword, hunger, and terrible sickness.'" This message is from the Lord. "I will do that until I destroy that nation. I will use Nebuchadnezzar to destroy the nation that fights against him. 'So don't listen to your prophets. Don't listen to the people that use magic to tell what will happen in the future. Don't listen to people that say they can interpret dreams. Don't listen to people that talk to the dead or to people that practice magic. All those people tell you, "You will not be slaves to the king of Babylon.'" ¹⁰But those people are telling you lies. They will only cause you to be taken far from your homeland. I will force you to leave your homes. And you will die in another land.

¹¹"But the nations that put their necks under the yoke* of the king of Babylon and obey him will live. I will let those nations stay in their own country and serve the king of Babylon.'" This message is from the Lord. ¹²"The people from those nations will live in their own land and farm it.

¹³"I gave the same message to Zedekiah king of Judah. I said, "Zedekiah, you must place your neck under the yoke* of the king of Babylon and obey him. If you serve the king of Babylon and his people, then you will live. ¹⁴If

the ... Judah The Hebrew has, "At the beginning of the kingship of Jehoiakim." This is probably a scribal error. Vs. 3 talks about Zedekiah. Jeremiah 28:1 mentions the fourth year: 594-593 B.C.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

you don't agree to serve the king of Babylon, then you and your people will die from the enemy's sword, from hunger, and from terrible sicknesses. The Lord said those things will happen. "But the false prophets are saying: You will never be slaves to the king of Babylon.

"Don't listen to those prophets, because they are preaching lies to you. 'I didn't send those prophets.'" This message is from the Lord. "They are preaching lies and saying that the message is from me. So, I will send you people of Judah away. You will die. And those prophets that preach to you will die also."

"Then I (*Jeremiah*) said to the priests and all those people, "The Lord says: Those false prophets are saying, 'The Babylonians took many things from the Lord's temple.* Those things will be brought back soon.' Don't listen to those prophets because they are preaching lies to you. "Don't listen to those prophets. Serve the king of Babylon. Accept your punishment, and you will live. There is no reason for you to cause this city of Jerusalem to be destroyed. "If those men are prophets and have the message from the Lord, let them pray. Let them pray about the things that are still in the Lord's temple. Let them pray about the things that are still in the king's palace. And let them pray about the things that are still in Jerusalem. Let those prophets pray that all those things will not be taken away to Babylon."

"The Lord All-Powerful says this about those things that are still left in Jerusalem. In the temple,* there are the pillars, the bronze sea, the moveable stands, and other things.* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, left those things in Jerusalem. "Nebuchadnezzar didn't take those things away at the time he took Jehoiachin king of Judah away as a prisoner. Jehoiachin was the son of King Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar also took other important people away from Judah and Jerusalem. "The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of

Israel, says this about the things still left in the Lord's temple, and in the king's palace and in Jerusalem: "All of those things will also be taken to Babylon. "Those things will be brought to Babylon until the day comes when I go to get them." This message is from the Lord. "Then I will bring those things back. I will put those things back in this place."

The False Prophet Hananiah

28 In the fifth month of the fourth year* that Zedekiah was king of Judah, Hananiah the prophet spoke to me. Hananiah was the son of a man named Azzur. Hananiah was from the town of Gibeon. Hananiah was in the Lord's temple when he spoke to me. The priests and all the people were there also. This is what Hananiah said: "The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: 'I will break the yoke* that the king of Babylon has put on the people of Judah. 'Before two years are over, I will bring back all the things that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took from the Lord's temple. Nebuchadnezzar has carried those things to Babylon. But I will bring those things back here to Jerusalem. 'I will also bring Jehoiachin king of Judah back to this place. Jehoiachin is the son of Jehoiakim. And I will bring back all those people of Judah that Nebuchadnezzar forced to leave their homes and go to Babylon.' This message is from the Lord. 'So I will break the yoke that the king of Babylon put on the people of Judah!'"

"Then the prophet Jeremiah answered the prophet Hananiah. They were standing in the temple of the Lord. The priests and all the people there could hear Jeremiah's answer. "Jeremiah said to Hananiah, "Amen!* I hope the Lord will really do that! I hope the Lord will make the message you preach come true. I hope the Lord will bring the things of the

fourth year This was about 593 B.C.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

Amen A Hebrew word meaning "truly," "indeed." It is used to show that a person agrees with what has been said.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
pillars ... things For a description of these things, see 1 Kings 7:23-37.

Lord's temple back to this place from Babylon. And I hope the Lord will bring all the people that were forced to leave their homes back to this place.

¹¹"But listen to what I must say, Hananiah. Listen to what I say to all you people. ¹²There were prophets long before you and I became prophets, Hananiah. They preached that war, hunger, and terrible sicknesses would come to many countries and great kingdoms. ¹³But the prophet that preaches that we will have peace must be tested to see if he truly was sent by the Lord. If the message of that prophet comes true, then people can know that he truly was sent by the Lord."

¹⁴Jeremiah was wearing a yoke* around his neck. Then the prophet Hananiah took that yoke from Jeremiah's neck. Hananiah broke that yoke. ¹⁵Then Hananiah spoke loudly, so all the people could hear him. He said, "The Lord says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He put that yoke on all the nations of the world. But I will break that yoke before two years are over.'"

After Hananiah said that, Jeremiah left the temple.

¹⁶Then the message of the Lord came to Jeremiah. This happened after Hananiah had taken the yoke* off of Jeremiah's neck and had broken it. ¹⁷The Lord said to Jeremiah, "Go and tell Hananiah, 'This is what the Lord says: You have broken a wooden yoke. But I will make a yoke of iron in the place of the wooden yoke.' ¹⁸The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the Israel, says: 'I will put a yoke of iron on the necks of all these nations. I will do that to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And they will be slaves to him. I will even give Nebuchadnezzar control over the wild animals.'"

¹⁹Then the prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, "Listen, Hananiah! The Lord did not send you. But you have made the people of Judah trust in lies. ²⁰So this is what the Lord says, 'Soon I will take you from this

world, Hananiah. You will die this year. Why? Because you taught the people to turn against the Lord.'"

²¹Hananiah died in the seventh month of that same year.

A Letter to the Jewish Captives in Babylon

29 Jeremiah sent a letter to the Jewish captives* in Babylon. He sent it to the elders (*leaders*), the priests, the prophets, and all the other people that were living in Babylon. These were the people that Nebuchadnezzar took from Jerusalem and brought to Babylon. ²(This letter was sent after King Jehoiachin, the queen mother, the officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the carpenters, and the metal workers had been taken from Jerusalem.) ³Zedekiah sent Elasah and Gemariah to King Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah was the king of Judah. Elasah was the son of Shaphan. And Gemariah was the son of Hilkiah. Jeremiah gave the letter to those men to take to Babylon. This is what the letter said:

"The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says these things to all those people he sent into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁴"Build houses and live in them. Settle in the land. Plant gardens and eat the food you grow. ⁵Get married and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons. And let your daughters be married. Do that so they also may have sons and daughters. Have many children and grow in number in Babylon. Don't become fewer in number. ⁶Also, do good things for the city I sent you to. Pray to the Lord for the city you are living in. Why? Because if there is peace in that city, then you will have peace also." ⁷The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: "Don't let your prophets and the people that practice magic fool you. Don't listen to the dreams they have.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

captives People that were taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

"They are preaching lies. And they are saying that their message is from me. But I didn't send it." This message is from the Lord.

"This is what the Lord says: 'Babylon will be powerful for 70 years. After that time, I will come to you people that are living in Babylon. I will keep my good promise to bring you back to Jerusalem.' I say this because I know the plans that I have for you." This message is from the Lord. "I have good plans for you. I don't plan to hurt you. I plan to give you hope and a good future. "Then you people will call my name. You will come to me and pray to me. And I will listen to you. "You people will search for me. And when you search for me with all your heart, you will find me. "I will let you find me." This message is from the Lord. "And I will bring you back from your captivity. I forced you to leave this place. But I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have sent you," – this message is from the Lord – "and I will bring you back to this place."

"You people might say, 'But the Lord has given us prophets here in Babylon.'"

"But the Lord says these things about your relatives that were not carried away to Babylon. I am talking about the king that is sitting on David's throne now and all the other people that are still in the city of Jerusalem. "The Lord All-Powerful says: 'I will soon send the sword, hunger, and terrible sicknesses against those people that are still in Jerusalem. And I will make them the same as bad figs, which are too rotten to eat. "I will chase those people that are still in Jerusalem with the sword, with hunger, and terrible sicknesses. And I will make it so that all the kingdoms of the earth will be frightened at what has happened to those people. Those people

will be destroyed. People will whistle with amazement when they hear about the things that happened. And people use them as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to people. People will insult them wherever I force those people to go. "I will make all those things happen because those people of Jerusalem have not listened to my message." This message is from the Lord. "I sent my message to them again and again. I used my servants, the prophets, to give my messages to those people. But the people didn't listen." This message is from the Lord. "You people are captives.* I forced you to leave Jerusalem and go to Babylon. So, listen to the message from the Lord."

"The Lord All-Powerful says this about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah: "These two men have been preaching lies to you. They have said that their message is from me. (But they were lying.) I will give those two prophets to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And Nebuchadnezzar will kill those prophets in front of all you people that are captives in Babylon. "All of the Jewish captives use those men as examples when they ask for bad things to happen to other people. Those captives will say: 'May the Lord treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab. The king of Babylon burned those two in the fire!' "Those two prophets have done very bad things among the people of Israel. They have done the sin of adultery* with their neighbors' wives. They have also spoken lies and said those lies were a message from me, the Lord. I did not tell them to do those things. I know what they have done. I am a witness." This message is from the Lord.

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

God's Message to Shemaiah

¹Also give a message to Shemaiah. Shemaiah is from the Nehelamite family. ²The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "Shemaiah, you sent letters to all the people in Jerusalem. And you sent letters to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. You also sent letters to all the priests. You sent those letters in your own name and not by the authority of the Lord. ³Shemaiah, this is what you said in your letter to Zephaniah: 'Zephaniah, the Lord has made you priest in place of Jehoiada. You are to be in charge of the Lord's temple. You should arrest anyone that acts like a crazy person* and acts like a prophet. You should put that person's feet between large blocks of wood and put neck-irons* on him.' ⁴Now, Jeremiah is acting like a prophet. So why have you not arrested him? ⁵Jeremiah has sent this message to us in Babylon: 'You people in Babylon will be there for a long time. So build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat what you grow.'"

⁶Zephaniah the priest read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet. ⁷Then the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah: ^{8,9}"Jeremiah, send this message to all the captives* in Babylon: 'This is what the Lord says about Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelamite family: Shemaiah has preached to you, but I didn't send him. Shemaiah has made you believe a lie. ¹⁰Because Shemaiah has done that, this is what the Lord says: I will soon punish Shemaiah, the man from the Nehelamite family. I will completely destroy his family. And he will not share in the good things I will do for my people.'" This message is from the Lord. ¹¹"I will punish Shemaiah because he has taught the people to turn against the Lord."

Promises of Hope

30 This is the message that came to Jeremiah from the Lord. ¹The Lord, the God of the people of Israel, said: "Jeremiah, write in a book the words I have spoken to you. Write this book for yourself. ²Do this because the days will come" – this message is from the Lord – "when I will bring my people, Israel and Judah, back from exile."* This message is from the Lord. ³"I will put those people back in the land that I gave to their ancestors.* ⁴Then my people will own that land again."

⁵The Lord spoke this message about the people of Israel and Judah. ⁶This is what the Lord said:

"We hear people crying from fear!
People are scared!
There is no peace!

⁷"Ask this question, and consider it:
Can a man have a baby? Of course not!
Then why do I see every strong man
holding his stomach
like a woman having labor pains?
Why is every person's face turning white
like a dead man?
(Why? Because the men are very scared.)

⁸"This is a very important time for Jacob.*
This is a time of great trouble.
There will never be another time like
this.
But Jacob* will be saved.

"At that time," this message is from the Lord All-Powerful, "I will break the yoke* from the necks of the people of Israel and Judah. And I will break the ropes holding you. People from foreign countries will never again force my people to be slaves. ²The people of Israel and Judah will not serve foreign countries. No! They will serve the Lord their

crazy person Shemaiah is referring to Jeremiah here. See verses 27-28.

neck-iron(s) A ring made from iron. People put the rings around prisoners' necks. They often fastened a chain to the ring to control the prisoners.

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

exile Being forced to leave one's home country.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

God. And they will serve David their king.* I will send that king to them.

¹⁰ "So, Jacob,* my servant, don't be afraid!"

This message is from the Lord.

"Israel, don't be afraid.

I will save you from that faraway place.

You are captives* in that faraway land,

But I will save your descendants* from that land.

Jacob will have peace again.

People will not bother Jacob.

There will be no enemy to scare my people.

¹¹ People of Israel and Judah, I am with you."

This message is from the Lord.

"And I will save you.

I sent you to those nations.

But I will completely destroy all those nations.

It is true, I will destroy those nations, but I will not destroy you.

You must be punished for the bad things you did.

But I will discipline you fairly."

¹² The Lord says:

"You people of Israel and Judah have a wound that can't be cured.

You have an injury that will not heal.

¹³ There is no person to care for your sores. So you will not be healed.

¹⁴ You became friends with many nations. But those nations don't care about you.

Your 'friends' have forgotten you.

I hurt you like an enemy.

I punished you very hard.

I did this because of your great guilt.

I did this because of your many sins.

¹⁵ Israel and Judah, why are you yelling about your wound?

Your wound is painful, and there is no cure for it.

I, the Lord, did these things to you because of your great guilt.

I did these things because of your many sins.

¹⁶ Those nations destroyed you.

But now those nations have been destroyed.

Israel, Judah, your enemies will become captives.*

Those people stole things from you.

But other people will steal things from them.

Those people took things from you in war.

But other people will take things from them in war.

¹⁷ And I will bring your health back. And I will heal your wounds."

This message is from the Lord.

"Why? Because other people said you were outcasts.*

Those people said, 'No one cares about Zion.*'"

¹⁸ The Lord says:

"Jacob's* people are now in captivity.

But they will come back.

And I will have pity on Jacob's houses.

The city* is now only a hill covered with ruined buildings.

But the city will be built again.

And the king's house will be built again where it should be.

¹⁹ People in those places will sing songs of praise.

There will also be the sound of laughter.

I will give them many children.

Israel and Judah will not be small.

I will bring honor to them.

No person will look down on them.

David their king This means another king of Israel, that will be great like King David.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

captives People that were taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

outcasts People that were thrown out of some special group of people. Usually other people don't like or respect outcasts.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

city This probably refers to Jerusalem. But it might also mean all of the cities of Israel and Judah.

- ²⁰ Jacob's family will be like the family in the old days.
I will make the people of Israel and Judah strong,
And I will punish the people that hurt them.
- ²¹ One of their own people will lead them.
That ruler will come from my people.
People can come close to me only if I ask them to.
So I will ask that leader to come to me,
and he will be close to me.
- ²² You will be my people.
And I will be your God."
- ²³ The Lord was very angry!
He punished the people.
And the punishment came like a storm.
The punishment came like a tornado
against the wicked people.
- ²⁴ The Lord will stay angry until he finishes punishing the people.
He will stay angry until he finishes the punishment he planned.
When that day comes,
you people of Judah will understand.

The New Israel

31 The Lord said these things: "At that time, I will be the God of all the family groups of Israel. And they will be my people."

- ¹ The Lord says:
"Some of the people were not killed by the enemy's sword.
Those people will find comfort in the desert.
Israel will come looking for rest."
- ² From far away, the Lord will appear to his people.
(The Lord says,)
"I love you people.
And my love will continue forever.
I will be true to you forever."
- ³ Israel, my bride, I will build you again.
You will be a country again.

- You will pick up your tambourines again.
You will dance with all the other people that are having fun.
- ⁴ You farmers of Israel will plant fields of grapes again.
You will plant those vineyards on the hills around the city of Samaria.
And the farmers will enjoy the fruit from those vineyards.
- ⁵ There will be a time when watchmen shout this message:
'Come, let's go up to Zion* to worship the Lord our God!'
Even the watchmen in the hill country of Ephraim* will shout that message."
- ⁶ The Lord says:
"Be happy and sing for Jacob*!
Shout for Israel, the greatest of the nations!
Sing your praises!
Shout this:
'The Lord has saved his people!'
He has saved the people that are left alive from the nation of Israel."
- ⁷ Understand that I will bring Israel from the country in the north.
I will gather the people of Israel from the faraway places on earth.
Some of the people are blind and crippled.
Some of the women will be pregnant and ready to give birth.
Many, many people will come back.
- ⁸ Those people will be crying as they come back.
But I will lead them and comfort them.
I will lead those people by streams of water.
I will lead them on an easy road, so that they will not stumble.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
Ephraim This means the northern kingdom of Israel.
Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.
The ... people Or, "Lord, save your people!" This is often a shout of victory.

I will lead them in that way because I am
Israel's father.
And Ephraim* is my firstborn son.

- ¹⁰ "Nations, listen to this message from the
Lord!

Tell the message in the faraway lands by
the sea. Say,

'The One who scattered the people of
Israel will bring them back together.
And he will watch over his flock
(people) like a shepherd.'

- ¹¹ The Lord will bring Jacob* back.
The Lord will save his people from
people that were stronger than they
were.

- ¹² The people of Israel will come to the
heights of Zion.*
And they will shout from joy.
Their faces will shine with happiness
about the good things the Lord gives
them.
The Lord will give them grain, new
wine, oil, young sheep, and cows.
They will be like a garden that has plenty
of water.

And the people of Israel will not be
troubled anymore.

- ¹³ Then the young women of Israel will be
happy and will dance.
The young men and old men will also
join in the dancing.
I will change their sadness into happiness.
I will comfort the people of Israel.
I will change their sadness to
happiness.

- ¹⁴ The priests will have more than enough
sacrifices.
And my people will be filled and
satisfied with the good things I give
them."

This message is from the Lord.

- ¹⁵ The Lord says:

"A sound will be heard in Ramah.
It will be bitter crying and much
sadness.

Rachel* will be crying for her children.
Rachel will refuse to be comforted,
because her children are dead."

- ¹⁶ But the Lord says:

"Stop crying!
Don't fill your eyes with tears!
You will be rewarded for your work!"
This message is from the Lord.

"The people of Israel will come back
from their enemy's land.

- ¹⁷ So, Israel, there is hope for you."
This message is from the Lord.

"Your children will come back to their
own land.

- ¹⁸ I have heard Ephraim* crying.
I heard Ephraim say these things:
'Lord, you really punished me!
And I learned my lesson.
I was like a calf that was never
trained.

Please stop punishing me,
and I will come back to you.

You truly are the Lord my God.

- ¹⁹ Lord, I wandered away from you.
But I learned about the bad things I did.
So I changed my heart and life.
I am ashamed and embarrassed about the
foolish things I did when I was
young.'

- ²⁰ (God says,) "You know that Ephraim* is
my dear son.
I love that child.

Yes, I often speak against Ephraim,
but I still remember him.
I love him very much.

"I want to really comfort him."
This message is from the Lord.

- ²¹ "People of Israel, fix the road signs.
Put up the signs that show you the way

Ephraim This means the northern kingdom of Israel.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Rachel Jacob's wife. Here this means all the women that are
crying for their husbands and children that have died in the
war with Babylon.

home.

Watch the road.

Pay attention to the road you are traveling on.

Israel, my bride, come home.

Come back to your towns.

²² You were an unfaithful daughter.

But you changed.

So how long will you wait before you come home?

The Lord has made things like new in the land:

Let the woman surround the man.²³

²⁴The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "I will again do good things for the people of Judah. At that time, the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'May the Lord bless you, O righteous dwelling, O holy mountain.'"

²⁵"People in all the towns of Judah will live together in peace. Farmers and those that move around with their flocks will live peacefully together in Judah. ²⁶I will give rest and strength to the people that are weak and tired."

²⁷After hearing that, I (*Jeremiah*) woke up and looked around. That was a very pleasant sleep.

²⁸"The days are coming," this message is from the Lord, "when I will help the family of Israel and Judah to grow. I will help their children and animals to grow too. It will be like planting and caring for a plant. ²⁹In the past, I watched over Israel and Judah, but I watched for the time to pull them up. I tore them down. I destroyed them. I gave many troubles to them. But now, I will watch over them to build them up and make them strong." This message is from the Lord.

³⁰"At that time, people will no longer use this saying: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and that caused the children to grind

their teeth.'"³¹ But, each person will die for his own sin. The person that eats sour grapes will grind his own teeth because of the sour taste."

The New Agreement

³²The Lord said these things: "The time is coming when I will make a new Agreement^{*} with the family of Israel, and with the family of Judah. ³³It will not be like the Agreement I made with their ancestors.^{*} I made that Agreement when I took them by the hand and brought them out of Egypt. I was their Master, but they broke that Agreement." This message is from the Lord.

³⁴"In the future, I will make this Agreement with the people of Israel." This message is from the Lord. "I will put my teachings in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. ³⁵People will not have to teach their neighbors and relatives to know the Lord. Why? Because ³⁶all people, from the least important to the greatest, will know me." This message is from the Lord. "I will forgive them for the bad things they did. I won't remember their sins."

The Lord Will Never Leave Israel

³⁷ The Lord says:

"The Lord makes the sun shine in the day.

And the Lord makes the moon and the stars shine at night.

The Lord stirs up the sea so that its waves crash on the shore.

The Lord All-Powerful is his name."

³⁸ The Lord says these things:

"The only way the descendants^{*} of Israel will stop being a nation before me,

The ... teeth This means that children were suffering for the things their parents did.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Let ... man This line is hard to understand. It might be part of some saying that was familiar to the people in Jeremiah's time.

O righteous ... mountain This was a blessing for the temple and for Zion, the mountain the temple was built on.

is if I lose control over the sun, moon, stars, and sea."

"The Lord says:

"The only way I will reject the descendants of the people of Israel is if people can measure the sky above, and if they can learn all the secrets of the earth below.

If people can do those things, then I will reject the descendants of the people of Israel.

Then I will reject them because of what they have done."

This message is from the Lord.

The New Jerusalem

"The days are coming," this message is from the Lord, "when the city of Jerusalem will be built again for the Lord. The whole city will be built again—from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. The measuring line* will stretch from the Corner Gate straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to the place named Gorah. The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown will be holy to the Lord. And all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate will be included. All that area will be holy to the Lord. The city of Jerusalem will never again be torn down or destroyed."

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 This is the message from the Lord that came to Jeremiah during the tenth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah.* The tenth year of Zedekiah was the 18th year of Nebuchadnezzar. At that time, the army of the king of Babylon was surrounding the city of Jerusalem. And Jeremiah was under arrest in the courtyard of the guard. This courtyard was at the palace of the king of Judah. Zedekiah king of Judah had put Jeremiah in prison in that

place. Zedekiah didn't like the things Jeremiah prophesied.* Jeremiah had said, "The Lord says: 'I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar will capture this city. Zedekiah king of Judah will not escape from the army of the Babylonians. But he will surely be given to the king of Babylon. And Zedekiah will speak to the king of Babylon face to face. Zedekiah will see him with his own eyes. The king of Babylon will take Zedekiah to Babylon. Zedekiah will stay there until I have punished him.' This message is from the Lord. 'If you fight against the army of the Babylonians, you will not succeed.'")

While Jeremiah was prisoner, he said, "The message from the Lord came to me. This was the message: 'Jeremiah, your cousin, Hanamel, will come to you soon. He is the son of your uncle Shallum. Hanamel will say to you, 'Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth. Buy it because you are my nearest relative. It is your right and your responsibility to buy that field.'

"Then it happened just as the Lord said. My cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard. Hanamel said to me, 'Jeremiah, buy my field near the town of Anathoth, in the land of the family group of Benjamin. Buy that land for yourself because it is your right to buy it and own it.'"

So I knew that this was a message from the Lord. I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel. I weighed out 17 shekels* of silver for him. I signed the deed.* And I had a copy of the deed sealed up.* And I got some men to witness the things I had done. And I weighed out the silver on the scales. Then I took the sealed copy of the deed and the copy that was not sealed, and I gave them to Baruch. Baruch was the son of Neriah. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah. The sealed copy of

prophesied Spoke for God.

shekel Or, "1/2 of an ounce."

deed A piece of paper that proves a person owns a certain piece of property.

sealed up Important documents were rolled up and tied with a string. Then a piece of clay or wax was put on the string. Then a person's mark was put in that clay or wax. This way, people could prove nothing in the document was changed.

measuring line A rope or chain for measuring property lines.

tenth year ... Judah This was 588-587 B.C. This was the year Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

the deed had all the terms and conditions of my purchase. I gave this deed to Baruch while my cousin Hanamel and the other witnesses were there. Those witnesses also signed the deed. There were also many people of Judah sitting in the courtyard that saw me give the deed to Baruch.

¹¹With all the people watching, I said to Baruch: ¹²"The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: 'Take both copies of the deed—the sealed copy and the copy that was not sealed—and put them in a clay jar. Do this so that these deeds will last a long time.' ¹³The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: 'In the future, my people will once again buy houses, fields, and vineyards in the land of Israel.'"

¹⁴After I gave the deed to Baruch son of Neriah I prayed to the Lord. I said:

¹⁵"Lord God, you made the skies and the earth. You made them with your great power. There is nothing too wonderful for you to do. ¹⁶Lord, you are loyal and kind to thousands of people. But you also bring punishment to children for their fathers' sins. Great and powerful God, your name is the Lord All-Powerful. ¹⁷You plan and do great things, Lord. You see everything that people do. You give reward to people that do good things and you punish people that do bad things—you give them what they deserve. ¹⁸Lord, you did powerful miracles in the land of Egypt. You have done powerful miracles even until today. You did those things in Israel and you did those things wherever there are people. You have become famous because of these things. ¹⁹Lord, you used powerful miracles and brought your people Israel out of Egypt. You used your own powerful hand to do those things. Your power was amazing!

²⁰"Lord, you gave this land to the people of Israel. This is the land you promised to give to their ancestors* long

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

ago. It is a very good land. It is a good land with many good things. ²¹The people of Israel came into this land and took it for their own. But those people didn't obey you. They didn't follow your teachings. They didn't do the things you commanded. So you made all these terrible things happen to the people of Israel.

²²"And now, the enemy has surrounded the city. They are building ramps, so that they can get over the walls of Jerusalem and capture it. By using their swords, and hunger, and terrible sicknesses, the Babylonian army will defeat the city of Jerusalem. The Babylonian army is attacking the city now. Lord, you said this would happen—and now you see it is happening.

²³"Lord my Master, all of those bad things are happening. But now you are telling me, 'Jeremiah, buy the field with silver and choose some men to witness the purchase.' You are telling me this while the Babylonian army is ready to capture the city. Why should I waste my money like that?"

²⁴Then the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah: ²⁵"Jeremiah, I am the Lord. I am the God of every person on the earth. Jeremiah, you know that nothing is impossible for me."

²⁶The Lord also said, ²⁷"I will soon give the city of Jerusalem to the Babylonian army and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. That army will capture the city. ²⁸The Babylonian army is already attacking the city of Jerusalem. They will soon enter the city and start a fire. They will burn this city down. There are houses in this city where the people of Jerusalem made me angry by offering sacrifices to the false god Baal* on the housetops. And the people poured out drink offerings to other idol gods. The Babylonian army will burn down those houses.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

³¹I have watched the people of Israel and the people of Judah. Everything they do is evil. They have done evil things since they were young. The people of Israel have made me very angry. They have made me angry because they worship idols that they made with their own hands." This message is from the Lord. ³²"From the time that Jerusalem was built until now, the people of this city have made me angry. This city has made me so angry, I must remove it from my sight. ³³I will destroy Jerusalem because of all the evil things the people of Israel and Judah have done. The people, their kings, leaders, their priests and prophets, the men of Judah, and the people of Jerusalem have all made me angry.

³⁴"Those people should have come to me for help. But they turned their backs to me. I tried to teach those people again and again. But they would not listen to me. I tried to correct them, but they would not listen. ³⁵"Those people have made their idols—and I hate those idols. They put their idols in the temple* that is called by my name. In this way, they made my temple 'dirty.'

³⁶"In the Valley of Ben Hinnom,* those people built high places* to the false god Baal.* They built those worship places so that they could burn their sons and daughters as child sacrifices. I never commanded them to do such a terrible thing. I never even thought the people of Judah would do such a terrible thing.

³⁷"You people are saying, 'The king of Babylon will capture Jerusalem. He will use swords, hunger, and terrible sicknesses to defeat this city.' But the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: ³⁸"I have forced the people of Israel and Judah to leave their land. I

was very angry with those people. But I will bring them back to this place. I will gather those people from the land where I forced them to go. I will bring them back to this place. I will let them live in peace and safety. ³⁹"The people of Israel and Judah will be my people. And I will be their God. ⁴⁰I will give those people the desire to be truly one people. They will have one goal—they will truly want to worship me all their lives. They will truly want to do this, and so will their children.

⁴¹"I will make an Agreement with the people of Israel and Judah. This Agreement will last forever. In this Agreement, I will never turn away from those people. I will always be good to them. I will make them want to respect me. Then they will never turn away from me. ⁴²"They will make me happy. I will enjoy doing good to them. And I will surely plant them in this land and make them grow. I will do this with all my heart and soul."

"This is what the Lord says: 'I have brought this great disaster to the people of Israel and Judah. In the same way, I will bring good things to them. I promise to do good things for them. ⁴³You people are saying: 'This land is an empty desert. There are no people or animals here. The Babylonian army defeated this country.' But in the future, people will once again buy fields in this land. ⁴⁴"People will use their money and buy fields. They will sign and seal their agreements. People will witness the people signing their deeds.* People will again buy fields in the land where the family group of Benjamin lives. They will buy fields in the area around Jerusalem. They will buy fields in the towns of the land of Judah, in the hill country, in the western foothills, and in the area of the southern desert. That will happen because I will bring your people back home." This message is from the Lord.

The Promise of God

33 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah a second time. Jeremiah was

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Valley ... Hinnom This valley is also called, "Gehenna."

This name comes from the Hebrew name "Ge Hinnom-Hinnom's Valley." This place became an example of how God punishes wicked people.

high places Special places where the people worshiped false gods. These places were often on hilltops, but not always. Some 'high places' were in valleys.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

deed(s) A piece of paper that proves a person owns a certain piece of property.

still locked up in the courtyard* of the guards. ⁷The Lord made the earth, and he keeps it safe. The Lord is his name. The Lord says, ⁸"Judah, pray to me, and I will answer you. I will tell you important secrets. You have never heard these things before. ⁹The Lord is the God of Israel. The Lord says these things about the houses in Jerusalem and about the palaces* of the kings of Judah. The enemy will pull those houses down. The enemy will build ramps up to the top of the city walls. The enemy will use swords and fight the people in these cities.

¹⁰"The people in Jerusalem have done many bad things. I am angry at those people. I have turned against them. So I will kill many, many people there. The Babylonian army will come to fight against Jerusalem. There will be many, many dead bodies in the houses in Jerusalem.

¹¹"But then I will heal the people in that city. I will let those people enjoy peace and safety. ¹²I will make good things happen to Judah and Israel again. I will make those people strong like in the past. ¹³They sinned against me—but I will wash away that sin. They fought against me—but I will forgive them. ¹⁴Then Jerusalem will be a wonderful place. People will be happy. And people from other nations will praise it. This will happen at the time those people hear about the good things happening there. They will hear about the good things I am doing for Jerusalem.

¹⁵"You people are saying, 'Our country is an empty desert. There are no people or animals living there.' It is now quiet in the streets of Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah. But it will be noisy there soon. ¹⁶There will be sounds of joy and happiness. There will be the happy sounds of a bride and groom. There will be the sounds of people bringing their gifts to the Lord's temple.* ¹⁷Those people will say, 'Praise the Lord All-Powerful! The Lord is good! The Lord's kindness continues forever!' ¹⁸The people will say these things because I will again do good things to Judah. It will be like in the beginning." ¹⁹The Lord said these things.

²⁰The Lord All-Powerful says, "This place is empty now. There are no people or animals living here. But there will be people in all the towns of Judah. There will be shepherds, and there will be pastures where they will let their flocks rest. ²¹Shepherds count their sheep as the sheep walk in front of them. People will be counting their sheep all around the country—in the hill-country, in the western foothills, in the Negev,* and in all the other towns of Judah."

The Good Branch

¹This message is from the Lord: "I made a special promise to the people of Israel and Judah. The time is coming when I will do the things I promised. ²At that time, I will make a good 'branch' grow from David's family. That good 'branch' will do the things that are good and right for the country. ³At the time of this 'branch,' the people of Judah will be saved. The people will live safely in Jerusalem. The branch's name is: 'The Lord is Good.'"

⁴The Lord says, "A person from David's family will always sit on the throne and rule the family of Israel. ⁵And there will always be priests from the family of Levi. Those priests will always stand before me and offer burnt offerings and sacrifice grain offerings and give sacrifices to me."

⁶This message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. ⁷The Lord says, "I have an agreement with day and night. I agreed that they will continue forever. You can't change that agreement. Day and night will always come at the right time. If you could change that agreement, ⁸then you could change my Agreement with David and Levi. Then descendants* from David would not be the kings and the family of Levi would not be priests. ⁹But I will give many descendants to my servant David and to the family group of Levi. They will be as many as the stars in the sky—no person can count all those stars. And they will be as many as the pieces of sand on

courtyard An area around the king's house.

palace(s) A large house for the king and his family.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

the seashore—no person can count those pieces of sand.”

²²Jeremiah received this message from the Lord: ²³“Jeremiah, have you heard what the people are saying? Those people are saying, ‘The Lord turned away from the two families of Israel and Judah. The Lord chose those people, but now he does not even accept them as a nation.’”

²⁴The Lord says, “If my agreement with day and night does not continue, and if I didn’t make the laws for the sky and earth, then maybe I would leave those people. ²⁵Then maybe I would turn away from Jacob’s* descendants.* And then maybe I would not let David’s descendants rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But David is my servant. And I will be kind to those people. And I will again cause good things to happen to those people.”

A Warning to Zedekiah King of Judah

34 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. The message came at the time when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, was fighting against Jerusalem and all the towns around it. Nebuchadnezzar had with him all his army and the armies of all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled.

²This was the message: “This is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: Jeremiah, go to Zedekiah king of Judah and give him this message: ‘Zedekiah, this is what the Lord says: I will give the city of Jerusalem to the king of Babylon very soon, and he will burn it down. ³Zedekiah, you will not escape from the king of Babylon. You will surely be caught and given to him. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes. He will talk to you face to face, and you will go to Babylon. ⁴But listen to the promise of the Lord, Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the Lord says about you: You will not be killed with a sword. ⁵You will die in a peaceful way. People made funeral

fires to honor your ancestors,* the kings that ruled before you became king. In the same way, people will make a funeral fire to honor you. They will cry for you. They will sadly say, ‘Oh, master!’ I myself make this promise to you.” This message is from the Lord.

⁶So Jeremiah gave the message from the Lord to Zedekiah in Jerusalem. This was while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem. The army of Babylon was also fighting against the cities of Judah that had not been captured. Those cities were Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in the land of Judah.

The People Break One of their Agreements

⁷King Zedekiah had made an agreement with all the people in Jerusalem to give freedom to all the Hebrew slaves. A message from the Lord came to Jeremiah after Zedekiah had made that agreement. ⁸Every person was supposed to free his Hebrew slaves. All male and female Hebrew slaves were to be set free. No one was supposed to keep another person from the family group of Judah in slavery. ⁹So all the leaders of Judah and all the people accepted this agreement. Every person would free their male and female slaves and no longer keep them as slaves. Every person agreed, and so all the slaves were set free. ¹⁰But after that,* the people that had slaves changed their minds. So they took the people they had set free and made them slaves again.

¹¹Then the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah: ¹²Jeremiah, this is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: “I brought your ancestors* out of the land of Egypt, where they were slaves. When I did that, I made an Agreement with them. ¹³I said to your

ancestors Literally, “fathers,” meaning a person’s parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

after that In the summer of 588 B.C., the Egyptian army came to help the people of Jerusalem, and the Babylonian army had to leave Jerusalem briefly to fight the Egyptians. The people of Jerusalem thought that God had helped them, and that things were back to normal, so they didn’t keep their promise. They took the slaves that they had set free back into slavery.

Jacob’s Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

descendants A person’s children and all of their future families.

ancestors: 'At the end of every seven years, each person must set his Hebrew slaves free. If you have a fellow Hebrew that has sold himself to you, you must let him go free after he has served you for six years.' But your ancestors didn't listen to me or pay attention to me. ¹⁵A short time ago, you changed your hearts to do what is right. Each of you gave freedom to his fellow Hebrews that were slaves. And you even made an agreement before me in the temple* that is called by my name. ¹⁶But now, you have changed your minds. You have shown you don't honor my name. How did you do this? Each of you has taken back the male and female slaves that you had set free. You have forced them to become slaves again.

¹⁷"So this is what the Lord says: 'You people have not obeyed me. You have not given freedom to your fellow Hebrews. Because you have not kept the agreement, I will give "freedom."¹⁸ This is the message of the Lord. *(I will give)* "freedom" to be killed by swords, by terrible sicknesses, and by hunger! I will make you become something that terrifies all the kingdoms of the earth, when they hear about you. ¹⁹I will hand over the men that broke my Agreement, and have not kept the promises they made before me. These men cut a calf into two pieces before me and walked between the two pieces.* ²⁰These are the people that walked between the two pieces of the calf when they made the Agreement before me: the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the important officials of the court, the priests, and the people of the land. ²¹So I will give those people to their enemies and to every person that wants to kill them. The bodies of those people will become food for the birds of the air and for the wild animals of the earth. ²²I will give Zedekiah king of Judah, and his leaders to their enemies and to every person that wants to kill them. I will

give Zedekiah and his people to the army of the king of Babylon, even though that army has left²³ Jerusalem.* ²⁴But I will give the order,' this message is from the Lord, 'to bring the Babylonian army back to Jerusalem. That army will fight against Jerusalem. They will capture it and set it on fire and burn it down. And I will destroy the cities in the land of Judah. Those cities will become empty deserts. No people will live there.'²⁵

The Good Example of the Recabite Family

35 During the time when Jehoiakim was king of Judah, the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. Jehoiakim was the son of King Josiah. This was the message from the Lord: ²"Jeremiah, go to the Recabite family.* Invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the temple* of the Lord. Offer them wine to drink."

³So I (Jeremiah) went to get Jaazaniah.* Jaazaniah was the son of a man named Jeremiah,* that was the son of a man named Habazziniah. And I got all of Jaazaniah's brothers and sons. I got the whole family of the Recabites together. ⁴Then I brought the Recabite family into the temple of the Lord. We went into the room called the room of the sons of Hanan. Hanan was the son of a man named Igdaliah. Hanan was a man of God.* The room was next to the room where the princes of Judah stay. It was over the room of Maaseiah son of Shallum. Maaseiah was the doorkeeper in the temple. ⁵Then I (Jeremiah) put some bowls full of wine with some cups in front of the Recabite family. And I said to them, "Drink some wine."

left Jerusalem An army from Egypt came to help the people of Jerusalem in the summer of 588 B.C. So the Babylonian army left Jerusalem for a short time to fight them. See Jer. 37:5. See also the footnote to Jer. 34:11.

Recabite family A group of people descended from Jonadab son of Recab. The family was very loyal to the Lord. See 2 Kings 10:15-28 for the story of Jonadab.

Jaazaniah He was the head of the Recabite family at that time.

Jeremiah Not the prophet Jeremiah, but a different man of the same name.

man of God This is usually an honorable title for a prophet. We know nothing else about Hanan.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

These men ... two pieces This is part of a ceremony people used when they made an important agreement. A calf (or sometimes other animals) was cut into two pieces. The people that were making the agreement would walk between the pieces. Then they would say something like, "I hope this same thing happens to me if I don't keep the agreement."

"But the Recabite people answered, "We never drink wine. We never drink it because our ancestor* Jonadab son of Recab, gave us this command: 'You and your descendants* must never drink wine.' Also, you must never build houses, plant seeds, or plant vineyards. You must never do any of those things. You must live only in tents. If you do that, then you will live a long time in the land where you move from place to place." So, we Recabite people have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. We never drink wine. And our wives, sons, and daughters never drink wine. We never build houses to live in. And we never own vineyards or fields. And we never plant crops. We have lived in tents and have obeyed everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked the country of Judah, we did go into Jerusalem. We said to each other, 'Come, we must enter the city of Jerusalem, so that we can escape the Babylonian army and the Aramean army.' So we have stayed in Jerusalem."

Then the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah: "The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: 'Jeremiah, go and tell this message to the men of Judah and to the people of Jerusalem: You people should learn a lesson and obey my message.' This message is from the Lord. Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine, and that command has been obeyed. Until today, the descendants of Jonadab obeyed their ancestor's command. They don't drink wine. But I am the Lord. And I have given you people of Judah messages again and again, but you didn't obey me. I sent my servants the prophets to you people of Israel and Judah. I sent them to you again and again. Those prophets said to you, 'Each of you people of Israel and Judah must stop doing evil things. You must be good. Don't follow other gods. Don't worship or serve them. If you obey me, then you will live in the land I have given

to you and your ancestors.' But you people have not paid attention to my message. The descendants of Jonadab obeyed the commands that their ancestor gave them. But the people of Judah have not obeyed me."

So the Lord God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "I said many bad things would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. I will soon make all those bad things happen. I spoke to those people, but they refused to listen. I called out to them, but they didn't answer me."

Then Jeremiah said to the family of Recabite people, "The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, 'You people have obeyed the commands of your ancestor* Jonadab. You have followed all of Jonadab's teachings. You have done everything he commanded.' So the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: There will always be a descendant of Jonadab son of Recab to serve me.'"

King Jeholakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll

36 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. This was during the fourth year that Jehoikim son of Josiah was king of Judah. This was the message from the Lord: "Jeremiah, get a scroll* and write on it all the messages I have spoken to you. I have spoken to you about the nations of Israel and Judah and all the nations. Write all the words that I have spoken to you from the time that Josiah was king, until now. Maybe the family of Judah will hear what I am planning to do to them. And maybe they will stop doing bad things. If they will do that, I will forgive them for the bad sins they have done."

So Jeremiah called a man named Baruch. Baruch was the son of Neriah. Jeremiah spoke the messages the Lord had given him. While Jeremiah spoke, Baruch wrote those messages on the scroll.* Then Jeremiah said to Baruch, "I can't go to the Lord's temple. I am not allowed to go there. So I want you to go to the

ancestor Literally, "father," meaning a person that people are descended from.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

temple of the Lord. Go there on a day of fasting* and read to the people from the scroll. Read to the people the messages from the Lord that you wrote on the scroll as I spoke them to you. Read those messages to all the people of Judah that come into Jerusalem from the towns where they live. 'Perhaps those people will ask the Lord to help them. Perhaps each person will stop doing bad things. The Lord has announced that he is very angry with those people.' "So Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do. Baruch read aloud the scroll that had the Lord's messages written on it. He read it in the Lord's temple.

"In the ninth month of the fifth year that Jehoiakim was king, a fast* was announced. All the people that lived in the city of Jerusalem, and everyone that had come into Jerusalem from the towns of Judah were supposed to fast before the Lord. "At that time, Baruch read the scroll* that contained Jeremiah's words. He read the scroll in the temple of the Lord. Baruch read the scroll to all the people that were in the Lord's temple. Baruch was in the room of Gemariah in the upper courtyard when he read from the scroll. That room was located at the entrance of the New Gate of the temple. Gemariah was the son of Shaphan. Gemariah was a scribe* in the temple.

"A man named Micaiah heard all the messages from the Lord that Baruch read from the scroll.* Micaiah was the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan. "When Micaiah heard the messages from the scroll, he went down to the secretary's room in the king's palace. All of the royal officials were sitting there in the king's palace. These are names of those officials: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, Gemariah

son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah; and all the other royal officials were there too. "Micaiah told those officials everything he had heard Baruch read from the scroll.

"Then all those officials sent a man named Jehudi to Baruch. Jehudi was the son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Cushi. Jehudi said to Baruch, "Bring the scroll* that you read from and come with me."

Baruch son of Neriah took the scroll and went with Jehudi to the officials.

"Then those officials said to Baruch, "Sit down and read the scroll to us."

So Baruch read the scroll to them.

"Those royal officials heard all the messages from the scroll. Then they became afraid, and they looked at one another. They said to Baruch, "We must tell King Jehoiakim about these messages on the scroll." "Then the officials asked Baruch a question. They said, "Tell us, Baruch, where did you get these messages that you wrote on the scroll? Did you write down the things Jeremiah spoke to you?"

"Yes," Baruch answered. "Jeremiah spoke, and I wrote down all the messages with ink on this scroll."

"Then the royal officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah must go and hide. Don't tell anyone where you are hiding."

"Then the royal officials put the scroll in the room of Elishama the scribe. They went to King Jehoiakim and told him all about the scroll.

"So King Jehoiakim sent Jehudi to get the scroll. Jehudi brought the scroll from the room of Elishama the scribe. Then Jehudi read the scroll to the king and all of the servants that stood around the king. "The time this happened was in the ninth month,* so King Jehoiakim was sitting in the winter apartment. There was a fire burning in a small fireplace in front of the king. "Jehudi began to read from the scroll. But whenever he would read two or three columns, King Jehoiakim would grab the scroll. Then he would cut those columns off of the scroll with a

fast(ing) To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

fast Going without food for a special time of prayer and worship.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often became an expert at the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

ninth month This was in November or December.

small knife and throw them into the fireplace. Finally, the whole scroll was burned in the fire.

²⁴And, when King Jehoiakim and his servants heard the message from the scroll, they were not afraid. They didn't tear their clothes to show sorrow for doing wrong.

²⁵Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah tried to talk King Jehoiakim into not burning the scroll.* But the king would not listen to them.

²⁶And King Jehoiakim commanded some men to arrest Baruch the scribe* and Jeremiah the prophet. Those men were Jerahmeel, a son of the king, and Seraiah son of Abdeel. But those men could not find Baruch and Jeremiah, because the Lord had hidden them.

²⁷The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. This happened after King Jehoiakim burned the scroll* that had contained all the messages from the Lord. Jeremiah had spoken to Baruch, and Baruch had written the messages on the scroll. This was the message from the Lord that came to Jeremiah:

²⁸"Jeremiah, get another scroll.* Write all the messages on it that were on the first scroll. That is the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned. ²⁹Jeremiah, also say this to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'This is what the Lord says: Jehoiakim, you burned that scroll. You said, "Why did Jeremiah write that the king of Babylon will surely come and destroy this land? Why did he say that the king of Babylon will destroy both men and animals in this land?"' ³⁰So, this is what the Lord says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: Jehoiakim's descendants* will not sit on David's throne. When Jehoiakim dies, he will not get a king's funeral, but his body will be thrown out on the ground. His body will be left out in the heat of the day, and the cold frost of the night. ³¹I, the Lord, will punish Jehoiakim and his children. And I will punish his officials. I will do this

because they are wicked. I have promised to bring terrible disasters on them, and on all the people that live in Jerusalem and on the people from Judah. I will bring all the bad things on them, just as I promised, because they have not listened to me."

³²Then Jeremiah took another scroll* and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah, the scribe.* As Jeremiah spoke, Baruch wrote on the scroll the same messages that were on the scroll that King Jehoiakim had burned in the fire. And many other words like those messages were added to the second scroll.

Jeremiah Is Put in Prison

37 Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah as king of Judah in the place of Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim. Zedekiah was a son of King Josiah. ²But Zedekiah did not pay attention to the messages the Lord had given to Jeremiah the prophet to preach. And Zedekiah's servants and the people of Judah did not pay attention to the Lord's messages.

³King Zedekiah sent a man named Jehucal and the priest Zephaniah to Jeremiah the prophet with a message. Jehucal was the son of Shelemiah. The priest Zephaniah was the son of Maaseiah. This was the message they brought to Jeremiah: "Jeremiah, pray to the Lord our God for us."

⁴(At that time, Jeremiah had not yet been put into prison, so he was free to go anywhere he wanted. ⁵Also at that time, Pharaoh's army had marched from Egypt toward Judah. The Babylonian army had surrounded the city of Jerusalem, in order to defeat it. Then they had heard about the army from Egypt marching toward them. So the army from Babylon had left Jerusalem to fight with the army from Egypt.)

⁶The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet: ⁷"This is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says: 'Jehucal and Zephaniah, I know that Zedekiah king of Judah, sent you to me to ask questions. Tell this to King Zedekiah: Pharaoh's army marched out of Egypt to come here to help you against the

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (*paper*) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often became an expert at the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

army of Babylon. But Pharaoh's army will go back to Egypt. 'After that, the army from Babylon will come back here. They will attack Jerusalem. Then that army from Babylon will capture and burn Jerusalem.' 'This is what the Lord says: 'People of Jerusalem, don't fool yourselves. Don't say to yourselves, "The army of Babylon will surely leave us alone." They will not. "People of Jerusalem, even if you could defeat all of the Babylonian army that is attacking you, there would still be a few wounded men left in their tents. Even those few wounded men would come out of their tents and burn Jerusalem down."'

"When the Babylonian army left Jerusalem to fight the army of the Pharaoh of Egypt, Jeremiah wanted to travel from Jerusalem to the land of Benjamin.* He was going there to attend a division of some property that belonged to his family. "But when Jeremiah got to the Benjamin Gate of Jerusalem,* the captain in charge of the guards arrested him. The captain's name was Irijah. Irijah was the son of Shelemiah. Shelemiah was the son of Hananiah. So Irijah the captain arrested Jeremiah and said, "Jeremiah, you are leaving us to join the Babylonian side."

"Jeremiah said to Irijah, "That is not true. I am not leaving to join the Babylonians." But Irijah refused to listen to Jeremiah. And Irijah arrested Jeremiah and took him to the royal officials of Jerusalem. "Those officials were very angry with Jeremiah. They gave an order for Jeremiah to be beaten. Then they put Jeremiah in a prison. The prison was in the house of a man named Jonathan. Jonathan was a scribe* for the king of Judah. Jonathan's house had been made into a prison. "Those people put Jeremiah into a cell under the house of Jonathan. That cell was in a dungeon* under the ground. Jeremiah was there for a long time.

the ... Benjamin Jeremiah was going to his home town, Anathoth, which was in the land of Benjamin.

Benjamin ... Jerusalem This gate led out of Jerusalem to the road which went north to the land of Benjamin.

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often become an expert at the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

dungeon A deep pit in the ground, like a cave, used as a prison.

"Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah and had him brought to the king's house. Zedekiah talked to Jeremiah in private. He asked Jeremiah, "Is there any message from the Lord?"

Jeremiah answered, "Yes, there is a message from the Lord. Zedekiah, you will be given to the king of Babylon." "Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What have I done wrong? What crime have I done against you or your officials or the people of Jerusalem? Why have you thrown me into prison? "King Zedekiah, where are your prophets now? Those prophets preached a false message to you. They said, 'The king of Babylon will not attack you or this land of Judah.' "But now, my lord, king of Judah, please listen to me. Please let me bring my request to you. This is what I ask: Don't send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe. If you send me back, I will die there."

"So King Zedekiah gave orders for Jeremiah to be put under guard in the courtyard. And he ordered that Jeremiah should be given bread from the street bakers. Jeremiah was given bread until there was no more bread in the city. So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the courtyard.

Jeremiah Is Thrown into a Cistern

38 Some of the royal officials heard what Jeremiah was preaching. They were: Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehucal son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah. Jeremiah was telling all the people this message: "This is what the Lord says: 'Everyone that stays in Jerusalem will die by a sword, or hunger, or terrible sickness. But everyone that surrenders to the army of Babylon will live. Those people will escape with their lives.' "And this is what the Lord says: 'This city of Jerusalem will surely be given to the army of the king of Babylon. He will capture this city.'"

"Then those royal officials that heard the things Jeremiah was telling the people went to King Zedekiah. They said to the king, "Jeremiah must be put to death. He is making

the soldiers that are still in the city become discouraged. Jeremiah is discouraging everyone by the things he is saying. Jeremiah does not want good to happen to us. He wants to ruin the people of Jerusalem."

"So King Zedekiah said to those officials, "Jeremiah is in your control. I can't do anything to stop you."

"So those officials took Jeremiah and put him into Malkijah's cistern.* (Malkijah was the king's son.) That cistern was in the temple yard where the king's guard stayed. Those officials used ropes to lower Jeremiah into the cistern. The cistern didn't have any water in it, but only mud. And Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

"But a man named Ebed-Melech heard that those officials had put Jeremiah into the cistern.* Ebed-Melech was a man from Ethiopia, and he was a eunuch* in the king's house. King Zedekiah was sitting at the Benjamin Gate. So Ebed-Melech left the king's house and went to talk to the king at that gate. "Ebed-Melech said, "My lord and king, those officials have acted in a wicked way. They have treated Jeremiah the prophet wickedly. They have thrown him into a cistern. They have left him there to die."

"Then King Zedekiah gave a command to Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian. This was the command: "Ebed-Melech, take three* men from the king's house with you. Go and lift Jeremiah out of the cistern before he dies."

"So Ebed-Melech took the men with him. But first he went to a room under the storeroom in the king's house. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from that room. Then he let those rags down with some ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. "Ebed-Melech, the Ethiopian, said to Jeremiah, "Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms. When we pull you out, these rags will pad your underarms. Then the ropes will not hurt you."

So Jeremiah did as Ebed-Melech said. "Those men pulled Jeremiah up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah stayed under guard in the temple yard.

Zedekiah Asks Jeremiah Some Questions Again

"Then King Zedekiah sent someone to get Jeremiah the prophet. He had Jeremiah brought to the third entrance to the temple of the Lord. Then the king said, "Jeremiah, I am going to ask you something. Don't hide anything from me, but tell me everything honestly."

"Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I give you an answer, you will probably kill me. And even if I did give you advice, you would not listen to me."

"But King Zedekiah swore an oath to Jeremiah. Zedekiah did this in secret. This is what Zedekiah swore: "As surely as the Lord lives, who has given us breath and life, I will not kill you, Jeremiah. And I promise not to give you to those officials that want to kill you."

"Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "This is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of the people of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, your life will be saved and Jerusalem will not be burned down. And you and your family will live.' "But if you refuse to surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, Jerusalem will be given to the Babylonian army. They will burn Jerusalem down, and you yourself will not escape from them."

"Then King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "But I am afraid of the men of Judah that have already gone over to the side of the Babylonian army. I am afraid that the soldiers will give me to those men of Judah and they will treat me badly and hurt me."

"But Jeremiah answered, "The soldiers will not give you to those men of Judah. King Zedekiah, obey the Lord by doing what I tell you. Then things will go well for you, and your life will be saved. "But if you refuse to surrender to the army of Babylon, the Lord has shown me what will happen. This is what the

cistern A deep hole in the ground used to store water.

eunuch A man that had his sexual organs removed. Often important officials of the king were eunuchs.

They ... die Literally, "He will starve to death because there is no more bread in the city."

three Some Hebrew copies have, "30."

Lord has told me: ²All the women that are left in the house of the king of Judah will be brought out. They will be brought to the important officials of the king of Babylon. Your women will make fun of you with a song. This is what the women will say:

'Your good friends led you the wrong way and were stronger than you.
Those were friends that you trusted.
Your feet are stuck in the mud.
Your friends have left you.'

²⁴"All your wives and children will be brought out. They will be given to the Babylonian army. You yourself will not escape from the army of Babylon. You will be captured by the king of Babylon, and Jerusalem will be burned down."

²⁵Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Don't tell any person that I have been talking to you. If you do, you might die. ²⁶Those officials might find out that I talked to you. Then they will come to you and say, 'Jeremiah, tell us what you said to King Zedekiah. And tell us what King Zedekiah said to you. Be honest with us and tell us everything, or we will kill you.' ²⁷If they say this to you, then tell them, 'I was begging the king not to send me back to the cell in the dungeon* under Jonathan's house. If I were to go back there, I would die.'"

²⁸It happened that those royal officials of the king did come to Jeremiah to question him. So Jeremiah told them everything the king had ordered him to say. Then those officials left Jeremiah alone. No person had heard what Jeremiah and the king had talked about.

²⁹So Jeremiah stayed under guard in the temple yard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

The Fall of Jerusalem

39 This is how Jerusalem was captured: During the tenth month of the ninth year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched

against Jerusalem with his whole army. He surrounded the city to defeat it. ²And on the ninth day of the fourth month in Zedekiah's eleventh year, the wall of Jerusalem was broken through. ³Then all the royal officials of the king of Babylon came into the city of Jerusalem. They came in and sat down at the Middle Gate. These are the names of those officials: Nergal-Sharezzer, the governor of the district of Samgar, a very high official; Nebo-Sarsekim, another very high official; and various other important officials were there also.

⁴Zedekiah king of Judah saw those officials from Babylon, so he and the soldiers with him ran away. They left Jerusalem at night and went out from the king's garden. They went through the gate that was between the two walls. Then they headed toward the desert. ⁵But the Babylonian army chased Zedekiah and the soldiers with him. The Chaldean army caught up with Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured Zedekiah and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar was at the town of Riblah, in the land of Hamath. At that place, Nebuchadnezzar announced his judgment on Zedekiah. ⁶There at the town of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah's sons, while Zedekiah watched. And Nebuchadnezzar killed all the royal officials of Judah while Zedekiah watched. ⁷Then Nebuchadnezzar tore out Zedekiah's eyes. He put bronze chains on Zedekiah, and took him to Babylon.

⁸The army of Babylon set fire to the king's house and the houses of the people of Jerusalem. And they broke down the walls of Jerusalem. ⁹A man named Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon's special guards. He took the people that were left in Jerusalem and made them captives. He carried them away to Babylon. Nebuzaradan also made those people of Jerusalem captives that had surrendered to him earlier. He made all the others of the people of Jerusalem captives and carried them away to Babylon. ¹⁰But Nebuzaradan, the commander of the special guards, left some of the poor people of Judah

dungeon A deep pit in the ground, like a cave, used as a prison.

behind. Those were the people that owned nothing. So on that day, Nebuzaradan gave those poor people of Judah vineyards and fields.

"But Nebuchadnezzar gave some orders to Nebuzaradan about Jeremiah. Nebuzaradan was the commander of Nebuchadnezzar's special guards. These were the orders: ¹²"Find Jeremiah and take care of him. Don't hurt him. Give him whatever he asks for."

¹³So Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king's special guards, Nebushazban, a chief officer in the army of Babylon, Nergal-Sharezer, a high official, and all the other officers of the army of Babylon sent for Jeremiah. ¹⁴Those men had Jeremiah taken out of the temple yard where he had been under the guard of the king of Judah. Those officers of the army of Babylon turned Jeremiah over to Gedaliah.* Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam. Ahikam was the son of Shaphan. Gedaliah had orders to take Jeremiah back home. So Jeremiah was taken home, and he stayed among his own people.

A Message from the Lord to Ebed-Melech

¹While Jeremiah had been under guard in the temple yard, a message from the Lord came to him. This was the message: ²"Jeremiah, go and tell Ebed-Melech,* the man from Ethiopia, this message: 'This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of the people of Israel, says: Very soon I will make my messages about this city of Jerusalem come true. My messages will come true through disaster and not good things. You will see everything come true with your own eyes. ³But I will save you on that day, Ebed-Melech.' This is the message of the Lord. ⁴You won't be given to the people you are afraid of. ⁵I will save you, Ebed-Melech. You won't die from a sword, but you will escape and live. That will happen because you have trusted in me.'" This message is from the Lord.

Gedaliah Gedaliah was the man that Nebuchadnezzar appointed as his governor for the land of Judah.
Ebed-Melech See Jeremiah 38:7-13.

Jeremiah Is Set Free

40 The message from the Lord came to Jeremiah after he was set free at the city of Ramah. Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylon's special guards, found Jeremiah in Ramah. Jeremiah was bound with chains. He was with all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah. Those captives were being taken away in captivity to Babylon. ²When commander Nebuzaradan found Jeremiah, he spoke to him. He said, "Jeremiah, the Lord, your God, announced that this disaster would come to this place. ³And now the Lord has done everything just as he said he would do. This disaster happened because you people of Judah sinned against the Lord. You people didn't obey the Lord. ⁴But now, Jeremiah, I will set you free. I am taking the chains off your wrists. If you want to, come with me to Babylon, and I will take good care of you. But if you don't want to come with me, then don't come. Look, the whole country is open to you. Go anywhere you want. ⁵Or* go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan. The king of Babylon has chosen Gedaliah to be governor over the towns of Judah. Go and live with Gedaliah among the people. Or you can go anywhere you want."

Then Nebuzaradan gave Jeremiah some food and a present and let him go. ⁶So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. Jeremiah stayed with Gedaliah among the people that were left behind in the land of Judah.

The Short Rule of Gedaliah

¹There were some soldiers from the army of Judah, officers and their men, still out in the open country when Jerusalem was destroyed. Those soldiers heard that the king of Babylon had put Gedaliah son of Ahikam in charge of the people that were left in the land. The people that were left were men, women, and children that were very poor and were not carried off to

Or The Hebrew of the beginning of this verse is obscure. It reads, "He had not yet returned. Return!"

Babylon as captives. "So those soldiers came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. Those soldiers were: Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan, and his brother Jonathan, sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite, and the men that were with them.

"Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, made an oath to make those soldiers and their men feel more secure. This is what Gedaliah said: "You soldiers, don't be afraid to serve the Babylonian people. Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon. If you do this, things will go well for you. "I, myself, will live in Mizpah. I will speak for you before the Chaldean people that come here. You people leave that work to me. You should harvest the wine, the summer fruit, and the oil. Put what you harvest in your storage jars. Live in the towns that you have taken control of."

"All the people of Judah that were in the countries of Moab, Ammon, Edom, and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left some people of Judah in the land. And they heard that the king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, to be governor over them. "When those people of Judah heard that news, they came back to the land of Judah. They came back to Gedaliah at Mizpah from all the countries where they had been scattered. So they came back and gathered a large harvest of wine and summer fruit.

"Johanan son of Kareah and all the officers of the army of Judah that were still in the open country came to Gedaliah. Gedaliah was at the town of Mizpah. "Johanan and those officers with him said to Gedaliah, "Do you know that Baalis, the king of the Ammonite people, wants to kill you? He has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to kill you." But Gedaliah son of Ahikam didn't believe them.

"Then Johanan son of Kareah spoke to Gedaliah in private at Mizpah. Johanan said to Gedaliah, "Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. No person will know anything about it. We should not let Ishmael kill you. That would cause all the people of Judah that are gathered around you to be scattered to

different countries again. And that would mean that the few survivors of Judah would be lost."

"But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, "Don't kill Ishmael. The things you are saying about Ishmael are not true."

41 In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah (the son of Elishama) came to Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael came with ten of his men. Those men came to the town of Mizpah. Ishmael was a member of the king's family. He had been one of the officers of the king of Judah. Ishmael and his men ate a meal with Gedaliah. "While they were eating together, Ishmael and his ten men got up and killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam with a sword. Gedaliah was the man that the king of Babylon had chosen to be governor of Judah. "Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah that were with Gedaliah at the town of Mizpah. Ishmael also killed the Babylonian soldiers that were there with Gedaliah.

"The day after Gedaliah was murdered, 80 men came to Mizpah. They were bringing grain offerings and incense* to the Lord's temple.* Those 80 men had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes, and cut themselves.* They came from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria. None of these men knew that Gedaliah had been murdered. "Ishmael went out from the town of Mizpah to meet those 80 men. He cried* while he walked to meet them. Ishmael met those 80 men and said, "Come with me to meet with Gedaliah son of Ahikam." "Those 80 men went into the city of Mizpah. Then Ishmael and his men killed 70 of those men. Ishmael and his men threw the bodies of those 70 men into a deep cistern!* "But the ten men that were left said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley. And we have oil and honey. We

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

shaved ... themselves The men did this to show that they were sad about the destruction of the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.

He cried Ishmael was acting like he was sad about the destruction of the temple.

cistern A deep hole in the ground used to store water.

have hidden those things in a field." So Ishmael left those ten men alone. He didn't kill them with the others. ³(That cistem was very big. It had been built by a king of Judah named Asa. King Asa had made the cistem so that during war there would be water in the city.* Asa did this to protect his city from Baasha, the king of Israel. Ishmael put dead bodies in that cistem until it was full.)

¹¹Ishmael captured all the other people in the town of Mizpah. Those people included the king's daughters, and all the other people that were left there. Those were the people that Nebuzaradan had chosen Gedaliah to watch over. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon's special guards. So Ishmael captured those people and started to cross over to the country of the Ammonite people.

¹²Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers that were with him, heard about all the evil things Ishmael had done. ¹³So Johanan and the army officers with him took their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught Ishmael near the big pool of water that is at the town of Gibeon. ¹⁴The captives* that Ishmael had taken captive saw Johanan and the army officers. Those people became very happy. ¹⁵Then all those people that Ishmael had taken captive at the town of Mizpah ran to Johanan son of Kareah. ¹⁶But Ishmael and eight of his men escaped from Johanan. They ran away to the Ammonite people.

¹⁷So Johanan son of Kareah and all his army officers rescued the captives.* Ishmael had murdered Gedaliah and then he had taken those people from Mizpah. Among the survivors* were soldiers, women, children, and court officials. Johanan brought them back from the town of Gibeon.

The Escape to Egypt

¹¹⁻¹⁸Johanan and the other army officers were

afraid of the Chaldeans.* The king of Babylon had chosen Gedaliah to be governor of Judah. But Ishmael murdered Gedaliah, and Johanan was afraid that the Chaldeans would be angry. So they decided to run away to Egypt. On the way to Egypt, they stayed at Geruth Kimham. Geruth Kimham is near the town of Bethlehem.

42 While they were at Geruth Kimham, Johanan and a man named Jezaniah son of Hoshaiiah went to Jeremiah the prophet. All the army officers went with Johanan and Jezaniah. All the people, from the least important to the most important person, went to Jeremiah. ³All those people said to him, "Jeremiah, please listen to what we ask. Pray to the Lord your God for all these people that are survivors* from the family of Judah. Jeremiah, you can see that there are not many of us left. At one time there were many of us. ³Jeremiah, pray that the Lord your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

⁴Then Jeremiah the prophet answered, "I understand the things you want me to do. I will pray to the Lord your God, like you asked me to do. I will tell you everything the Lord says. I will not hide anything from you."

⁵Then those people said to Jeremiah, "If we don't do everything the Lord your God tells us, then we hope the Lord will be a true and faithful witness against us. We know the Lord your God will send you to tell us what to do. ⁶It does not matter if we like the message or if we don't like the message. We will obey the Lord our God. We are sending you to the Lord for a message from him. We will obey what he says. Then good things will happen to us. Yes, we will obey the Lord our God."

⁷At the end of ten days, the message from the Lord came to Jeremiah. ⁸Then Jeremiah called together Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers that were with him. Jeremiah also called all the other people together, from the least important to the most important person. ⁹Then Jeremiah said to them, "This is what the Lord, the God of the people of Israel, says. You

King Asa ... city King Asa lived about 300 years before the time of Gedaliah. See 1 Kings 15:22 for the story about Asa building defenses for Mizpah.

captives People that were taken away like prisoners.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster.

Chaldeans The Chaldeans were the family group to which King Nebuchadnezzar belonged. They were the group that controlled the land of Babylon at this time.

sent me to him. I asked the Lord what you wanted me to ask. This is what the Lord says: ¹⁰"If you people will stay in Judah, I will make you strong—I will not destroy you. I will plant you, and I will not pull you up. I will do this because I am sad about the terrible things that I made happen to you. ¹¹"Now you are afraid of the king of Babylon. But don't be afraid of him. Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon," this is the message of the Lord, "because I am with you. I will save you. I will rescue you. He will not get his hands on you. ¹²"I will be kind to you. And the king of Babylon will also treat you with mercy. And he will bring you back to your land." ¹³But you might say, "We will not stay in Judah." If you say that, you will disobey the Lord your God. ¹⁴"And you might say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt. We will not be bothered with war in that place. We will not hear the trumpets of war. And in Egypt we will not be hungry.'" If you say those things, then listen to the message of the Lord, you survivors* from Judah. This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: "If you decide to go to live in Egypt, then these things will happen: ¹⁵"You are afraid of the sword of war, but it will defeat you there. And you are worried about hunger, but you will be hungry in Egypt. You will die there. ¹⁶"Every person that decides to go live in Egypt will die by a sword, or hunger, or terrible sickness. Not one person that goes to Egypt will survive. Not one of them will escape the terrible things that I will bring to them."

¹⁷"The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says: 'I showed my anger against Jerusalem. I punished the people that lived in Jerusalem. In the same way, I will show my anger against every person that goes to Egypt. People will use you as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other people. You will become like a curse word. People will be ashamed of you. People will insult you. And you will never see Judah again.'

¹⁸"Survivors* of Judah, the Lord told you: 'Don't go to Egypt.' I warn you right now, ¹⁹"you people are making a mistake that will cause your deaths. You people sent me to the Lord your God. You said to me, 'Pray to the Lord our God for us. Tell us everything the Lord says to do. We will obey the Lord.'" ²⁰So today, I have told you the message from the Lord. But you have not obeyed the Lord your God. You have not done all that he sent me to tell you to do. ²¹So now, be sure you understand this: You people want to go live in Egypt. But these things will happen to you in Egypt: You will die by a sword, or hunger, or terrible sickness."

43 So Jeremiah finished telling the people the message from the Lord their God. Jeremiah told them everything that the Lord had sent him to tell the people.

²Azariah son of Hoshaiiah, Johanan son of Kareah, and some other men were proud and stubborn. Those people became angry at Jeremiah. Those men said to Jeremiah, "Jeremiah, you are lying! The Lord our God didn't send you to say to us, 'You people must not go to Egypt to live there.'" ³Jeremiah, we think that Baruch son of Neriah is encouraging you to be against us. He wants you to give us to the Babylonian people. He wants you to do this so they can kill us. Or he wants you to do this so that they can make us captives* and carry us to Babylon."

⁴So Johanan, the army officers, and all the people disobeyed the Lord's command. The Lord had commanded them to stay in Judah. ⁵But instead of obeying the Lord, Johanan and the army officers took those survivors* from Judah to Egypt. In the past, the enemy had taken those survivors to other countries. But they had come back to Judah. ⁶Now, Johanan and all the army officers took all the men, women, and children and led them to Egypt. Among those people were the king's daughters. (Nebuzaradan had put Gedaliah in charge of those people. Nebuzaradan was the commander of the king of Babylon's special guards.)

Johanan also took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah. ⁷Those people didn't listen to the Lord. So all those people went to Egypt. They went to the town of Tahpanhes.*

⁸In the town of Tahpanhes, Jeremiah received this message from the Lord: ⁹"Jeremiah, get some large stones. Take them and bury them in the clay and brick sidewalk in front of Pharaoh's official building in Tahpanhes. Do this while the men of Judah are watching you. ¹⁰Then say to those men of Judah that are watching you: 'This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: I will send for Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to come here. He is my servant. And I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here. Nebuchadnezzar will spread his canopy* above these stones. ¹¹Nebuchadnezzar will come here and attack Egypt. He will bring death to those that are to die. He will bring captivity to those that are to be taken captive. And he will bring the sword to those that are to be killed with a sword. ¹²Nebuchadnezzar will start a fire in the temples of the false gods of Egypt. He will burn those temples and he will take those idols away. A shepherd picks the bugs and stickers off of his clothes to make them clean. In the same way, Nebuchadnezzar will pick Egypt clean. Then he will safely leave Egypt. ¹³Nebuchadnezzar will destroy the memorial stones* that are in the temple of the Sun God* in Egypt. And he will burn down the temples of the false gods of Egypt.'"

The Lord's Messages to the People of Judah in Egypt

44 Jeremiah received a message from the Lord. This message was for all the people of Judah living in Egypt. The message was for the people of Judah living in the towns of Migdol, Tahpanhes, Memphis, and southern

Egypt. This was the message: ²The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says, "You people saw the terrible happenings that I brought on the city of Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. Those towns are empty piles of stones today. ³Those places were destroyed because the people living in them did evil things. Those people gave sacrifices to other gods – and that made me angry! Your people and your ancestors* did not worship those gods in the past. ⁴I sent my prophets to those people again and again. Those prophets were my servants. Those prophets spoke my message and said to the people, 'Don't do this terrible thing. I hate for you to worship idols.' ⁵But those people didn't listen to the prophets. They didn't pay attention to those prophets. Those people didn't stop doing wicked things. They didn't stop making sacrifices to other gods. ⁶So, I showed my anger against those people. I punished the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. My anger made Jerusalem and the towns of Judah the empty piles of stone they are today."

⁷So, the Lord God All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "Why are you hurting yourselves by continuing to worship idols? You are separating the men and women, the children and babies from the family of Judah. And so you leave yourselves without any survivors* from the family of Judah. ⁸Why do you people want to make me angry by making idols? Now you are living in Egypt. And now you are making me angry by offering sacrifices to the false gods of Egypt. You people will destroy yourselves. It will be your own fault. You will make yourselves something that people of other nations will speak evil of. And all the other nations on the earth will make fun of you. ⁹Have you forgotten about the wicked things your ancestors* did? And have you forgotten about the wicked things the kings and queens of Judah did? Have you forgotten about the wicked things you and your wives did in Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? ¹⁰Even to this

Tahpanhes A town in northeastern Egypt.

canopy A temporary covering used for shade. It is like a tent without sides.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Sun God This was the most important god in Egypt.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster.

day, the people of Judah have not made themselves humble. They have not shown any respect for me. And those people have not followed my teachings. They have not obeyed the laws I gave you and your ancestors.*"

¹¹So, this is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel, says: "I have decided to make terrible things happen to you. I will destroy the whole family of Judah. ¹²There were a few survivors from Judah. Those people came here to Egypt. But I will destroy those few survivors from the family of Judah. They will be killed with swords or die from hunger. They will be something that people of other nations will speak evil about. Other nations will be afraid at what happened to those people. Those people will become a curse word. Other nations will insult those people of Judah. ¹³I will punish those people that have gone to live in Egypt. I will use swords, hunger, and terrible sicknesses to punish them. I will punish those people just like I punished the city of Jerusalem. ¹⁴Not one of the few survivors of Judah that have gone to live in Egypt will escape my punishment. None of them will survive to come back to Judah. Those people want to come back to Judah and live there. But not one of those people will go back to Judah, except maybe a few people that escape."

¹⁵Many of the women of Judah that lived in Egypt were making sacrifices to other gods. Their husbands knew it, but didn't stop them. There was a large group of people of Judah meeting together. They were the people of Judah that were living in southern Egypt. The husbands of those women that were making sacrifices to other gods said to Jeremiah, ¹⁶"We will not listen to the message from the Lord that you spoke to us. ¹⁷We promised to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven.* And we will do everything we promised. We will offer sacrifices and pour out drink offerings in

worship to her. We did that in the past. And our ancestors, our kings, and our officials did that in the past. All of us did those things in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At the time we worshiped the Queen of Heaven, we had plenty of food. We were successful. Nothing bad happened to us. ¹⁸But then we stopped making sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven. And we stopped pouring out drink offerings to her. Since we have stopped doing those things in worship to her, we have had problems. Our people have been killed by swords and hunger."

¹⁹Then the women spoke up.* They said to Jeremiah, "Our husbands knew what we were doing. We had their permission to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven. We had their permission to pour out drink offerings to her. Our husbands also knew that we were making cakes that looked like her."

²⁰Then Jeremiah spoke to all those men and women. He spoke to the people that had just said those things. ²¹Jeremiah said to those people, "The Lord remembered that you made sacrifices in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. You and your ancestors,* your kings, your officials, and the people of the land did that. The Lord remembered what you had done, and thought about that. ²²Then the Lord could not be patient with you any longer. The Lord hated the terrible things you did. So the Lord made your country an empty desert. No person lives there now. Other people say bad things about that country. ²³All of those bad things happened to you because you made sacrifices to other gods. You sinned against the Lord. You didn't obey the Lord. You didn't follow his teachings or the laws he gave you. You didn't keep your part of the Agreement.*"

²⁴Then Jeremiah spoke to all those men and women. Jeremiah said, "All you people of Judah that are now in Egypt, listen to the message from the Lord: ²⁵The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel,

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Queen of Heaven Probably the false god Astarte. She was the goddess of sex and war. People in Mesopotamia worshipped her. They thought she was the planet Venus, which looks like a star in the sky.

Then ... up This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew does not have this sentence.

Agreement This is probably the Law of Moses, the Agreement between God and the people of Israel.

says: 'You women did what you said you would do. You said, "We will keep the promises we made. We promised to make sacrifices and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven." So, go ahead. Do the things you promised you would do. Keep your promises. ²⁸But, listen to the message from the Lord, all you people of Judah that are living in Egypt: 'I use my great name and make this promise: I promise none of the people of Judah that are now living in Egypt will ever again use my name to make promises. They will never again say, "As surely as the Lord lives"

²⁹I am watching over those people of Judah. But I am not watching over them to take care of them. I am watching over them to hurt them. The people of Judah that live in Egypt will die from hunger and be killed by swords. They will continue to die until they are finished. ³⁰Some people of Judah will escape being killed by the sword. They will come back to Judah from Egypt. But there will be very few people of Judah that escape. Then those survivors* of Judah that came to live in Egypt will know whose word will come true. They will know whether my word or their word came true. ³¹I will give you people proof – this is the message of the Lord – 'that I will punish you here in Egypt. Then you will know for sure that my promises to hurt you will really happen. ³²This will be your proof that I will do what I say.' This is what the Lord says: 'Pharaoh Hophra is the king of Egypt. His enemies want to kill him. I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemies. Zedekiah was the king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar was Zedekiah's enemy. And I gave Zedekiah to his enemy. In the same way, I will give Pharaoh Hophra to his enemy.'"

A Message to Baruch

45 Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah. In the fourth year Jehoiakim was king of Judah.* Jeremiah the prophet told these things

to Baruch son of Neriah. Baruch wrote these things on a scroll.* This is what Jeremiah said to Baruch: ²"This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you: ³"Baruch, you have said: It is very bad for me. The Lord has given me sorrow along with my pain. I am very tired. I am worn out because of my suffering. I can't find rest.' ⁴Jeremiah, say this to Baruch: 'This is what the Lord says: I will tear down what I have built. And I will pull up what I have planted. I will do that everywhere in Judah. ⁵Baruch, you are looking for great things for yourself. But don't look for those things. Don't look for them, because I will make terrible things happen to all the people.' The Lord said these things. 'You will have to go many places. But I will let you escape alive wherever you go.'"

Messages from the Lord About the Nations

46 These messages came to Jeremiah the prophet. These messages are about different nations.

Messages About Egypt

²This message is about the nation of Egypt. This message is about the army of Pharaoh Neco. Neco was the king of Egypt. His army was defeated at the town of Carchemish. Carchemish is on the Euphrates River. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon defeated the army of Pharaoh Neco at Carchemish in the fourth year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah.* Jehoiakim was the son of King Josiah. This is the Lord's message to Egypt:

- ³ "Get your large and small shields ready.
March out for battle.
- ⁴ Get the horses ready.
Soldiers, get on your horses.
Go to your places for battle.
Put your helmets on.
Sharpen your spears.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

fourth ... Judah This was 605 B.C.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

fourth year ... Judah This was about 605 B.C.

- Put your armor on.
 5 What do I see?
 That army is scared.
 The soldiers are running away.
 Their brave soldiers are defeated.
 They run away in a hurry.
 They don't look back.
 There is fear all around."
 The Lord said these things.
 6 "The fast men can't run away.
 The strong soldier can't escape.
 They will all stumble and fall.
 This will happen in the north, by the
 Euphrates River.
 7 Who is coming like the Nile River?
 Who is coming like that strong, fast
 river?
 8 It is Egypt that comes like the rising Nile
 River.
 It is Egypt that comes like that strong,
 fast river.
 Egypt says, 'I will come and cover the
 earth.
 I will destroy cities and the people in
 them.'
 9 Horse soldiers, charge into battle.
 Chariot drivers, drive fast.
 March on, brave soldiers.
 Soldiers from Cush and Put, carry your
 shields.
 Soldiers from Lydia, use your bows.
 10 "But that day our Master, the Lord
 All-Powerful, will win.
 At that time, he will give the
 punishment those people should
 have.
 The Lord's enemies will get the
 punishment they should have.
 The sword will kill until it is finished.
 The sword will kill until it satisfies its
 thirst for blood.
 This will happen because there is a
 sacrifice for our Master, the Lord
 All-Powerful.
 That sacrifice is Egypt's army, in the
 land of the north, by the Euphrates
 River.

- 11 "Egypt, go to Gilead and get some
 medicine.
 You will make up many medicines,
 but they will not help.
 You will not be healed.
 12 The nations will hear you crying.
 Your cries will be heard all over the
 earth.
 One 'brave soldier' will run into another
 'brave soldier.'
 And both 'brave soldiers' will fall down
 together."
 "This is the message the Lord spoke to
 Jeremiah the prophet. This message is about
 Nebuchadnezzar coming to attack Egypt.
 14 "Announce this message in Egypt.
 Preach it in the city of Migdol.
 Preach this message also in Memphis
 and Tahpanhes:
 'Get ready for war.
 Why? Because people all around you
 are being killed with swords.'
 15 Egypt, why will your strong soldiers be
 killed?
 They can't stand,
 because the Lord will push them
 down.
 16 Those soldiers will stumble again and
 again.
 They will fall over each other.
 They will say,
 'Get up, let us go back to our own
 people.
 Let us go back to our homeland.
 Our enemy is defeating us.
 We must get away.'
 17 In their homelands, those soldiers will
 say,
 'Pharaoh king of Egypt is only a lot of
 noise.
 His time of glory is over.'"
 18 This message is from the King.
 The King is the Lord All-Powerful.
 "As surely as I live, a powerful leader,
 will come.
 He will be great like Mount Tabor and
 Mount Carmel near the sea.

- ¹⁹ People of Egypt, pack your things.
Get ready for captivity.
Why? Because Memphis will become a
ruined, empty land.
The cities will be destroyed,
and no person will live there.
- ²⁰ "Egypt is like a beautiful cow.
But a horsefly* is coming from the
north* to bother her.
- ²¹ The hired soldiers in Egypt's army are
like fat calves.
They will all turn and run away.
They will not stand strong against the
attack.
Their time of destruction is coming.
They will soon be punished.
- ²² Egypt is like a snake hissing and trying to
escape.
The enemy comes closer and closer,
and the Egyptian army is trying to run
away.
The enemy will come against Egypt with
axes.
They are like men that cut down trees."
- ²³ The Lord says these things.
"The enemy will chop down Egypt's
forest (*army*).
That forest (*army*) has many trees
(*soldiers*),
but it will be cut down.
There are more enemy soldiers than
locusts.*
There are so many soldiers, no one can
count them.
- ²⁴ Egypt will be ashamed.
The enemy from the north will defeat
her."
- ²⁵ The Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel,

says: "Very soon I will punish Amon,* the god
of Thebes. And I will punish Pharaoh, Egypt,
and her gods. I will punish the kings of Egypt.
And I will punish the people that depend on
Pharaoh. ²⁶I will let all those people be defeated
by their enemies—and those enemies want to
kill them. I will give those people to
Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and his
servants.

"Long ago, Egypt lived in peace. And after
all these times of trouble, Egypt will live in
peace again." The Lord said these things.

A Message for North Israel

- ²⁷ "Jacob,* my servant, don't be afraid.
Don't be scared, Israel.
I will surely save you from those faraway
places.
I will save your children from the
countries where they are captives.*
Jacob will have peace and safety again.
And no person will make him afraid."
- ²⁸ The Lord says these things.
"Jacob, my servant, don't be afraid.
I am with you.
I sent you away to many different places.
And I will completely destroy all those
nations.
But I will not completely destroy you.
You must be punished for the bad things
you did.
So I will not let you escape your
punishment.
I will discipline you,
but I will be fair."

A Message About the Phillistine People

47 This is the message from the Lord that
came to Jeremiah the prophet. This
message is about the Philistine people. This

horsefly A large insect that often flies around and bites cows
and horses.

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the
north to attack the nation of Judah.

locusts Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large
crop very quickly.

Amon For many centuries Amon was the most important god
of Egypt. At the time of this prophecy he was not worshiped
as much in northern Egypt. But he was still the most
important god in southern Egypt, especially around the old
Egyptian capital city of Thebes.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

captives People that were taken away like prisoners.

message came before Pharaoh attacked the city of Gaza.

² The Lord says:

"See, the enemy soldiers are grouping together, in the north.*

They will come like a fast river spilling over its banks.

They will cover the whole country like a flood.

They will cover the towns and the people living in them.

Everyone living in that country will cry for help.

³ "They will hear the sound of the running horses.

They will hear the noisy chariots.

They will hear the rumbling wheels.
Fathers will not help their children to safety.

Those fathers' will be too weak to help.

⁴ "The time has come to destroy all the Philistine people.

The time has come to destroy Tyre and Sidon's remaining helpers.

The Lord will destroy the Philistine people very soon.

He will destroy the survivors from the Island of Crete.*

⁵ The people from Gaza will be sad and shave their heads.

The people from Ashkelon will be made silent.

Survivors from the valley, how long will you cut yourselves?*

⁶ "Sword of the Lord, you have not quit.

How long will you keep fighting?

Go back into your scabbard!*

Stop! Be still!

north This refers to the army of Babylon coming from the north to attack the nation of Judah.

Island of Crete Literally, "Island of Captor." Sometimes this means Crete, and sometimes it means Cyprus. The Bible says the Philistines originally came from Caphtor.

sad ... yourselves The people did these things to show their sadness.

scabbard A holder for a sword.

⁷ But how can the sword of the Lord rest?

The Lord gave it a command.

The Lord has ordered it

to attack the city of Ashkelon and the seacoast."

A Message About Moab

48 This message is about the country of Moab. This is what the Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says:

"It will be bad for Mount Nebo.*

Mount Nebo will be ruined.

The town of Kiriathaim will be humbled.

It will be captured.

The strong place will be humbled.

It will be shattered.

² Moab will not be praised again.

Men in the town of Heshbon will plan Moab's defeat.

They will say: 'Come, let us put an end to that nation.'

Madmenah, you will also be silenced.

The sword will chase you.

³ Listen to the cries from the town of Horonaim.

They are cries of much confusion and destruction.

⁴ Moab will be destroyed.

Her little children will cry for help.

⁵ Moab's people go up the path to Luhith.

They are crying bitterly as they go.

On the road down to the town of

Horonaim,

Cries of pain and suffering can be heard.

⁶ Run away!

Run for your lives!

Run away like a bush*

blowing, through the desert.

⁷ "You trust in the things you made and in your wealth.

Mount Nebo A mountain in Moab, a country east of Israel.

bush This is a word play. This word is like the name "Aroer," an important city in Moab.

So you will be captured.
The god Chemosh*
will be taken into captivity.

And his priests and officials will be
taken with him.

- ⁸ The Destroyer will come against every
town.

Not one town will escape.

The valley will be ruined.

The high plain will be destroyed.

The Lord said this would happen,
so it will happen.

- ⁹ Spread salt*
over the fields in Moab.

The country will be an empty desert.

Moab's towns will become empty.

No people will live in them.

- ¹⁰ If a person does not do what the Lord
says,
if he does not use his sword to kill those
people,
then bad things will happen to that
person.

- ¹¹ "Moab has never known trouble.
Moab is like wine left to settle.
Moab has never been poured from one jar
to another.

He has not been taken into captivity.

So he tastes like he did before.

And his smell has not changed."

- ¹² The Lord says these things.
"But I will soon send men to pour you
from your jars.*
Those men will empty Moab's jars.
And then they will smash those jars."

¹³ Then the people of Moab will be ashamed
of their false god, Chemosh*. The people of
Israel trusted that false god, in Bethel.* And
the people of Israel were embarrassed when

that false god did not help them. Moab will be
like that.

- ¹⁴ "You can't say,
'We are good soldiers.
We are brave men in battle.'

- ¹⁵ The enemy will attack Moab.
The enemy will enter those towns and
destroy them.

Her best young men will be killed in the
slaughter."

This message is from the King.

The King's name is the Lord
All-Powerful.

- ¹⁶ "The end of Moab is near.

Moab will soon be destroyed.

- ¹⁷ All of you people living around Moab
should cry for that country.
You people know how famous Moab is.
So cry for him.

Say,

'The ruler's power is broken.
Moab's power and glory is gone.'

- ¹⁸ "You people living in Dibon,*
come down from your place of honor.
Sit on the ground in the dust.
Why? Because the Destroyer is coming.
And he will destroy your strong cities.

- ¹⁹ "You people living in Aroer,
stand next to the road and watch.
See the man running away.
See that woman running away.
Ask them what happened.

- ²⁰ "Moab will be ruined and filled with
shame.

Moab will cry and cry.
Announce at the Arnon River,*
that Moab is destroyed.

- ²¹ People on the high plain have been
punished.
Judgment has come
to the towns of Holon, Jahzah, and
Mephaath,

Chemosh This god was the god of the people of Moab.

salt This is a word play, and we are not sure of the exact
meaning of this Hebrew word.

jars This probably means the cities in Moab.

in Bethel This means the temple that King Jeroboam built in
the town of Bethel. See 1 Kings 12:28-33. It is not clear
whether the people still worshiped the Lord there, but in a
wrong way. Or whether they worshiped a false god, perhaps
the Canaanite god El or Baal.

Dibon A town in the country of Moab.

Arnon River An important river in Moab.

- ²² to the towns of Dibon, Nebo, and Beth Diblathaim,
²³ to the towns of Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul, and Beth Meon,
²⁴ to the towns of Keriath and Bozrah. Judgment has come to all the towns of Moab, far and near.
²⁵ Moab's strength has been cut off. Moab's arm has been broken." The Lord said these things.
- ²⁶ "Moab thought he was more important than the Lord.
 So punish Moab until he is like a drunk person.
 Moab will fall and roll around in his vomit.
 People will make fun of Moab.
- ²⁷ "Moab, you made fun of Israel. Israel was caught by a gang of thieves. Every time you spoke about Israel, you shook your head and acted like you were better than Israel.
- ²⁸ People in Moab, leave your towns. Go live among the rocks; be like a dove that makes its nest at the opening of a cave."
- ²⁹ "We have heard about Moab's pride. He was very proud. He thought he was important. He was always bragging. He was very, very proud."
- ³⁰ The Lord says,
 "I know that Moab becomes angry quickly and brags about himself. But his boasts are lies. He can't do the things he says.
- ³¹ So, I cry for Moab.
 I cry for everyone in Moab.
 I cry for the men from Kir Hareseth.
- ³² I cry with the people of Jazer for Jazer. Sibmah, in the past your vines spread all the way to the sea.
 They reached as far as the town of Jazer.
 But the Destroyer has taken your fruit and grapes.

- ³³ Joy and happiness are gone from the large vineyards* of Moab.
 I have stopped the flow of wine from the winepresses.*
 There is no singing and dancing from people walking on the grapes to make wine.
 There are no shouts of joy.

³⁴"The people of the towns of Heshbon and Elealeh are crying. Their cry is heard even as far away as the town of Jahaz. Their cry is heard from the town of Zoar, as far away as the towns of Horonaim and Eglath Shelishiyah. Even the waters of Nimrim are dried. ³⁵I will stop Moab from making burnt offerings on the high places.* I will stop them from making sacrifices to their gods." The Lord said those things.

³⁶"I am very sad for Moab. My hearts cries like the sad sound of a flute playing a funeral song. I am sad for the people from Kir Hareseth. Their money and riches have all been taken away. ³⁷Everyone has a shaved head. Everyone's beard is cut off. Everyone's hands are cut and bleeding.* Everyone is wearing their clothes of sadness around their waists. ³⁸People are crying for the dead everywhere in Moab—on every housetop and in every public square. There is sadness because I have broken Moab like an empty jar." The Lord said these things.

³⁹"Moab is shattered. The people are crying. Moab surrendered. Now Moab is ashamed. People make fun of Moab—but the things that happened fill them with fear."

- ⁴⁰ The Lord says,
 "Look! An eagle is diving down from the sky.

vineyard(s) A garden for growing grapes.

winepresses A place for squeezing the juice from grapes. Sometimes this was only a shallow hole in a large rock in the ground.

high places Special places where the people worshiped false gods. These places were often on hilltops, but not always. Some 'high places' were in valleys.

Everyone ... bleeding The people did these things to show their sadness for people that had died.

It is spreading its wings over Moab.

- 41 The towns of Moab will be captured.
The strong hiding places will be defeated.

At that time, Moab's soldiers will be scared,

like a woman that is having a baby.

- 42 The nation of Moab will be destroyed.
Why? Because they thought they were more important than the Lord."

- 43 The Lord says these things:
"People of Moab, fear, deep holes, and traps,*
wait for you.

- 44 People will be afraid and run away,
and they will fall into the deep holes.
If anyone climbs out of the deep holes,
he will be caught in the traps.
I will bring the year of punishment to Moab." The Lord said these things.

- 45 "People have run from the powerful enemy.
They ran to safety in the town Heshbon.
„But there was no safety.,
A fire started in Heshbon.
That fire started in Sihon's town*
And it is destroying the leaders of Moab.

It is destroying those proud people.

- 46 It will be bad for you, Moab.
Chemosh's* people are being destroyed.
Your sons and daughters are being taken away as prisoners and captives.*

47 "Moab's people will be taken away as captives. But in days to come, I will bring Moab's people back." This message is from the Lord.

fear ... traps This is a word play in Hebrew. The Hebrew words are: "Pahad, Pahat, and Pah."

Sihon's town This was Heshbon. See Numbers 21:25-30.

Chemosh The national god of the land of Moab, even though Milcom was the god of the Ammonite people.

captives People that were taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Moabite people.

This ends the judgment on Moab.

A Message About Ammon

49 This message is about the Ammonite people.

The Lord says:

"Ammonite people, do you think that the people of Israel don't have children?
Do you think there are no people to take the land when the parents die?
Maybe that is why Milcom* took Gad's* land?"

- 2 The Lord says,
"The time will come that the people in Rabbah-Ammon* will hear the sounds of battle.
Rabbah-Ammon will be destroyed.
It will be a hill covered with destroyed buildings.
And the towns around it will be burned.
Those people forced Israel to leave that land.
But the people of Israel will force them to leave."
The Lord said these things.

- 3 "People in Heshbon, cry!
Why? Because the town of Ai is destroyed.
Women in Rabbah-Ammon, cry!
Put on your clothes of sadness and cry.
Run to the city for safety.
Why? „Because the enemy is coming.,
They take away the god, Milcom.*
„The enemy, will take away Milcom's priests and officials.
4 You brag about your strength.
But you are losing your strength.
You trust your money will save you.

Milcom The god of the Ammonite people.

Gad's One of the family groups of Israel. Their land was on the east side of the Jordan River, near the country of Ammon.

Rabbah-Ammon The capital city of the Ammonite people.

You think no one would even think of attacking you."

- ⁵ But the Lord All-Powerful says this:
"I will bring troubles to you from every side.

You will all run away.

And no one will be able to bring you together again."

"The Ammonite people will be taken away as captives. But the time will come that I will bring the Ammonite people back." This message is from the Lord.

A Message About Edom

¹ This message is about Edom.

The Lord All-Powerful says:

"Is there no more wisdom in the town of Teman*?

Are the wise men of Edom not able to give good advice?

Have they lost their wisdom?

- ⁶ You people living in Dedan, run away!
Hide!

Why? Because I will punish Esau* for the things he did.

- ⁹ "Workers come and pick the grapes from your grapevines,
but they leave a few grapes on the plants.

If thieves come at night,
they take only as much as they want.

- ¹⁰ But I will take everything from Esau.*
I will find all of his hiding places.
He will not be able to hide from me.
His children, relatives, and neighbors will die.

- ¹¹ No person will be left to care for his children.
His wives will have no one to trust in."

¹² This is what the Lord says, "Some people don't deserve to be punished—but they suffer. But Edom, you deserve to be punished—so you

will really be punished. You will not escape the punishment you deserve. You will be punished." ¹³ The Lord says, "By my own power, I make this promise: I promise that the city of Bozrah will be destroyed. That city will become a ruined pile of rocks. People will use that city as an example when they ask for bad things to happen to other cities. People will insult that city. And all the towns around Bozrah will become ruins forever."

- ¹⁴ I heard a message from the Lord:
The Lord sent a messenger to the nations. This is the message:

"Gather your armies together!

Get ready for battle!

March against the nation of Edom!

- ¹⁵ Edom, I will make you become not important.

Every person will hate you.

- ¹⁶ Edom, you scared other nations.
So you thought you were important.
But you were fooled.

Your pride has tricked you.

Edom, you live high in the hills.

You live in places protected by big rocks and hills.

But even if you build your home as high as an eagle's nest,

I will get you,
and I will bring you down from there."

The Lord said these things.

- ¹⁷ "Edom will be destroyed.
People will be shocked to see the destroyed cities.

People will whistle from amazement at the destroyed cities.

- ¹⁸ Edom will be destroyed like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* and the towns around them.

No people will live there."

The Lord said these things.

¹⁹ "Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River. And that lion will go into the fields where people put

Teman This town was in the northern part of Edom.

Esau Jacob's twin brother. But here this means Edom because the people of Edom are descendants of Esau.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

their sheep and cattle. I am like that lion. I will go to Edom. And I will scare those people. I will make them run away. None of their young men will stop me. No one is like me. No one will challenge me. None of their shepherds (*leaders*) will stand up against me."

²⁰ So listen to what the Lord has planned to do against Edom.

Listen to what the Lord has decided to do to the people in Teman.*

The enemy will drag away the young ones of Edom's flock (*people*).

Edom's pastures will be shocked at what has happened.

²¹ At the sound of Edom's fall, the earth will shake.

Their cry will be heard all the way to the Red Sea.

²² The Lord will be like an eagle flying over the animal it will attack.

The Lord is like an eagle spreading its wings over the city of Bozrah.

At that time, Edom's soldiers will become very scared.

They will be crying from fear like a woman having a baby.

A Message About Damascus

²³This message is about the city of Damascus:

"The towns of Hamath and Arpad are afraid.

They are afraid because they have heard bad news.

They are discouraged.

They are worried and scared.

²⁴ The city of Damascus has become weak. The people want to run away.

The people are ready to panic.

The people feel pain and suffering like a woman having a baby.

²⁵ "Damascus, is a happy city.

The people have not left that 'fun city' yet.

²⁶ So the young men will die in the public squares of that city.

All of her soldiers will be killed at that time."

The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

²⁷ "I will set the walls of Damascus on fire.

The fire will completely burn up the strong forts of Ben-Hadad."*

A Message About Kedar and Hazor

²⁸This message is about the family group of Kedar and the rulers of Hazor.* Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, defeated them.

The Lord says:

"Go and attack the family group of Kedar.

Destroy the people of the East.

²⁹ Their tents and flocks will be taken away.

Their tent and all their things will be carried off.

Their enemy will take away the camels.

Men will shout this to them:

"Terrible things are happening all around us."

³⁰ Run away quickly!

People in Hazor, find a good place to hide."

This message is from the Lord.

"Nebuchadnezzar made plans against you.

He thought of a smart plan to defeat you.

³¹ "There is a nation that is comfortable. That nation is sure that no one will defeat it.

That nation does not have gates or fences to protect it.

Ben-Hadad This was the name of several of the kings of Aram-Damascus.

family ... Hazor Kedar was the name of an Arab family group that lived in the desert southeast of the land of Judah.

Teman This town was in the northern part of Edom.

Those people live alone.

The Lord says,
'Attack that nation!'

- ³² The enemy will steal their camels and their large herds of cattle.
The enemy will steal their large herds.
I will send those people who have the corners of their hair cut off* to every part of the earth.
And I will bring terrible happenings to them from everywhere."

This message is from the Lord.

- ³³ "The land of Hazor will become a place where wild dogs live.
It will become an empty desert forever.
No person will live there.
No person will live in that place."

A Message About Elam

³⁴ Early in the time when Zedekiah was king of Judah, Jeremiah the prophet received a message from the Lord. This message is about the nation of Elam.*

- ³⁵ The Lord All-Powerful says,
"I will break Elam's bow very soon.
The bow is Elam's strongest weapon.
³⁶ I will bring the four winds against Elam.
I will bring them from the four corners of the skies.
I will send the people of Elam to every place on the earth where the four winds blow.
And Elam's captives will go to every nation.
³⁷ I will break Elam to pieces while their enemies are watching.
I will break Elam in front of those that want to kill them.
I will bring terrible happenings to them.
I will show them how angry I am."
This message is from the Lord.
"I will send a sword to chase Elam.
The sword will chase them until I have killed them all.

- ³⁸ I will show Elam that I am in charge.
And I will destroy her king and her royal officials."

This message is from the Lord.

³⁹ "But I will make good things happen to Elam in the future." This message is from the Lord.

A Message About Babylon

50 This is the message the Lord spoke about the nation of Babylon and the Babylonian people. The Lord spoke this message through Jeremiah.

- ¹ "Announce this to all nations!
Lift up a flag and announce the message!
Speak the whole message and say,
'The nation of Babylon will be captured.
The god Bel* will be put to shame.
The god Marduk* will be very afraid.
Babylon's idols will be put to shame.
Her idol gods will be filled with terror.'
³ A nation from the north will attack Babylon.
That nation will make Babylon like an empty desert.
No people will live there.
Both men and animals will run away from there."
⁴ The Lord says,
"At that time, the people of Israel and the people of Judah will be together.
They will cry and cry together.
And together, they will go to look for the Lord their God.
⁵ Those people will ask how to go to Zion.*"

Bel This is one of the names of the god Marduk, the most important god of the Babylonians.

Marduk Marduk was the most important god of the Babylonians.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

those ... off This is another name for the Arab people.
Elam A nation east of Babylon.

- They will start to go in that direction.
The people will say,
'Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord.
Let us make an agreement that will
last forever.
Let us make an agreement that we will
never forget.'
- ⁴ "My people have been like lost sheep.
Their shepherds (*leaders*) have led them
in the wrong way.
Their leaders made them wander around
in the mountains and hills.
They forgot where their resting place is.
⁷ Whoever found my people hurt them.
And those enemies said, 'We did
nothing wrong.'
Those people sinned against the Lord.
The Lord was their true resting place.
The Lord was the God their fathers
trusted in.
- ⁸ "Run away from Babylon.
Leave the land of the Babylonian
people.
Be like the goats that lead the flock.
⁹ I will bring many nations together from
the north.
This group of nations will get ready for
war against Babylon.
Babylon will be captured by people from
the north.
Those nations will shoot many arrows at
Babylon.
And those arrows are like soldiers that
don't come back from war with
their hands empty.
¹⁰ The enemy will take all the wealth from
the Chaldean people.
Those enemy soldiers will get all they
want."
The Lord said these things.
- ¹¹ "Babylon, you are excited and happy.
You took my land.
You dance around like a young cow in
the grain.
Your laughter is like the happy sounds
that horses make.
- ¹² Now your mother will be very ashamed.
The woman that gave you birth will be
embarrassed.
Babylon will be the least important of all
the nations.
She will be an empty, dry desert.
¹³ The Lord will show his anger,
so no people will live there.
The city of Babylon will be
completely empty.
Everyone that passes by Babylon will be
afraid.
They will shake their heads when they
see how it has been destroyed.
- ¹⁴ "Prepare for war against Babylon.
All you soldiers with bows, shoot your
arrows at Babylon.
don't save any of your arrows.
Babylon has sinned against the Lord.
¹⁵ Soldiers around Babylon, shout the war
cry.
Now, Babylon has surrendered!
Her walls and towers have been pulled
down!
The Lord is giving those people the
punishment they should have.
You nations should give Babylon what
she should have.
Do to her what she has done to other
nations.
- ¹⁶ Don't let the people from Babylon plant
their crops.
Don't let them gather the harvest.
The soldiers of Babylon brought many
prisoners to their city.
Now the enemy soldiers have come,
So those prisoners are going back
home.
Those prisoners are running back to
their own countries.
- ¹⁷ "Israel is like a flock of sheep that are
scattered all over the country.
Israel is like sheep that have been
chased away by lions.
The first lion to eat him up was the king
of Assyria.

The last lion to crush his bones was
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon."

¹⁸ So the Lord All-Powerful, the
God of Israel, says:

"I will soon punish the king of Babylon
and his country.

I will punish him like I punished the
king of Assyria.

¹⁹ "But I will bring Israel back to his own
fields.

He will eat food that grows on Mount
Carmel and in the land of Bashan.

He will eat and be full.

He will eat on the hills in the lands of
Ephraim and Gilead."

²⁰ The Lord says,

"At that time, people will try to find
Israel's guilt,
but there will be no guilt.

People will try to find Judah's sins,
but no sins will be found.

Why? Because I am saving the few
survivors* from Israel and Judah.

And I am forgiving them for all of their
sins."

²¹ The Lord says,

"Attack the country of Merathaim!

Attack the people that live in the land of
Pekod!

Attack them!

Kill them and completely destroy them!

Do everything I commanded you!

²² "The noise of battle can be heard all over
the country.

It is the noise of much destruction.

²³ Babylon was the 'Hammer of the Whole
Earth.'

But now the 'Hammer' is broken and
shattered.

Babylon is truly the most ruined of the
nations.

²⁴ Babylon, I set a trap for you.

And you were caught before you knew
it.

You fought against the Lord,
so you were found and captured.

²⁵ The Lord has opened up his storeroom.

The Lord has brought out from the
storeroom the weapons of his anger.

The Lord God All-Powerful has brought
out those weapons because he has
work to do.

He has work to do in the land of the
Chaldean people.

²⁶ "Come against Babylon from far away.

Break open the storehouses where she
keeps her grain.

Completely destroy Babylon and don't
leave anyone alive.

Pile her dead bodies like big piles of
grain.

²⁷ Kill all the young bulls (*men*) in Babylon.

Let them be slaughtered.*

The time has come for them to be
defeated,
so it will be very bad for them.

It is time for them to be punished.

²⁸ People are running from the country of
Babylon.

They are escaping from that country.

Those people are coming to Zion.*

And those people are telling everyone
about the things the Lord is doing.

They are telling about the Lord giving
Babylon the punishment it should
have.

Babylon destroyed the Lord's temple,
so now the Lord is destroying Babylon.

²⁹ "Call for the men that shoot arrows to
come against Babylon.

Tell those men to surround the city.

Don't let anyone escape.

Pay her back for the bad things she has

slaughter(ed) Usually, this word means to kill an animal
and cut it into pieces of meat. But it often means to kill people
like they are animals.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this
means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of
Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

done.

Do to her what she has done to other nations.

Babylon did not respect the Lord.

Babylon was very rude to the Holy One of Israel.

So punish Babylon.

³⁰ Babylon's young men will be killed in the streets.

All her soldiers will die on that day."

The Lord says these things.

³¹ "Babylon, you are too proud.
And I am against you."

Our Master, the Lord All-Powerful, says these things.

"I am against you,
and the time has come for you to be punished.

³² Proud Babylon will stumble and fall.
And no person will help her get up.

I will start a fire in her towns.

That fire will completely burn everyone around her."

³³ The Lord All-Powerful says:

"The people of Israel and Judah are slaves.

The enemy took them,
and the enemy will not let Israel go.

³⁴ But God will get those people back.

His name is the Lord God All-Powerful.

He will defend those people very strongly.

He will defend them so that he can give rest to the earth.

But he will not give rest to people living in Babylon."

³⁵ The Lord says,

"Let a sword kill the people living in Babylon.

Let a sword kill the king's officials and wise men of Babylon.

³⁶ Let a sword kill the priests of Babylon.
Those priests will become like foolish people.

Let a sword kill the soldiers of Babylon.
Those soldiers will be full of terror.

³⁷ Let a sword kill the horses and chariots of Babylon.

Let a sword kill all the soldiers hired from other countries.

Those soldiers will be like frightened women.

Let there be a sword against the treasures of Babylon.

Those treasures will be taken away.

³⁸ Let there be a sword against the waters of Babylon.

Those waters will be dried up.

The country of Babylon has many, many idols.

Those idols show that the people of Babylon are foolish.

So bad things will happen to those people.

³⁹ "Babylon will never be filled with people again.

Wild dogs, ostriches,*
and other desert animals will live there.

But no people will live there ever again.

⁴⁰ God completely destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* and the towns around them.

And no person lives in those towns now.

In the same way, no people will live in Babylon.

And no people will ever go to live there.

⁴¹ "Look! There are people coming from the north.

They come from a powerful nation.

Many kings are coming together from all around the world.

⁴² Their armies have bows and spears.
The soldiers are cruel.

They have no mercy.

The soldiers come riding on their horses,
and the sound is loud like the roaring

ostriches Large birds that live in the desert. These birds can't fly.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

sea.

They stand in their places, ready for battle.

They are ready to attack you, city of Babylon.

- 43 The king of Babylon heard about those armies.

And he became very scared.

He is so afraid,

his hands will not move.

His fear makes his stomach hurt,
like a woman having a baby."

- 44 The Lord says, "Sometimes a lion will come from the thick bushes near the Jordan River.

That lion will walk into the fields where people have their animals.

and the animals will all run away.

I will be like that lion,

I will chase Babylon from its land.

Who should I choose to do this?

There is no person like me.

There is no person that can challenge me.

So I will do it.

No shepherd will come to chase me away.

I will chase away the people of Babylon."

- 45 Listen to what the Lord has planned to do against Babylon.

Listen to what the Lord has decided to do against the Babylonian people.

The Lord will take his young sheep
(people) back.

He will take those young sheep back home.

Then the Lord will completely destroy Babylon's pastures.

Babylon will be shocked at what has happened.

- 46 Babylon will fall,
and that fall will shake the earth.
People in all nations will hear about the destruction of Babylon.

I will cause it to blow against Babylon and the Babylonian people.

- 1 I will send people to winnow* Babylon.

They will winnow* Babylon.

Those people will make Babylon empty.

Armies will surround the city,
and terrible destruction will happen.

- 3 The Babylonian soldiers will not use their bows and arrows.

Those soldiers will not even put on their armor.

Don't feel sorry for the young men of Babylon.

Completely destroy her army.

- 4 Babylon's soldiers will be killed in the land of the Chaldeans.

They will be badly wounded in Babylon's streets."

- 5 The Lord All-Powerful did not leave Israel and Judah alone,
like a woman whose husband has died.
God did not leave those people.

No! Those people are guilty of leaving the Holy One of Israel.

They left him,

But he has not left them.

- 6 Run away from Babylon.

Run to save your lives!

Don't stay and be killed because of Babylon's sins!

It is time for the Lord to punish the people of Babylon for the bad things they did.

Babylon will get the punishment she should have.

- 7 Babylon was like a golden cup in the Lord's hand.

Babylon made the whole earth drunk.

The nations drank Babylon's wine.

So they went crazy.

51 The Lord says:
"I will cause a powerful wind to blow.

winnow To separate grain, which is good to eat, from the shell that the grain is in. Farmers winnowed the grain by throwing the grain and the hulls in the air. The air blew the hulls away. And the good grain fell back to the ground.

- ⁸ Babylon will fall and be broken very suddenly.
Cry for her!
Get medicine for her pain!
Maybe she can be healed!
- ⁹ We tried to heal Babylon,
but she can't be healed.
So let us leave her,
and let each of us go to our own country.
God in heaven will decide Babylon's punishment.
He will decide what will happen to Babylon.
- ¹⁰ The Lord got even for us.
Come, let us tell about that in Zion.*
Let us tell about the things the Lord our God has done.
- ¹¹ Sharpen the arrows!
Put your shields on!
The Lord has stirred up the kings of the Medes.*
He has stirred them up because he wants to destroy Babylon.
The Lord will give the people of Babylon the punishment they deserve.
The army from Babylon destroyed the Lord's temple* in Jerusalem.
So the Lord will give them the punishment they should have.
- ¹² Lift up a flag against the walls of Babylon.
Bring more guards.
Put the watchmen in their places.
Get ready for a secret attack.
The Lord will do what he has planned.
He will do what he said he would do against the people of Babylon.
- ¹³ Babylon, you live near much water.
You are rich with treasures.
But your end as a nation has come.

- It is time for you to be destroyed.
- ¹⁴ The Lord All-Powerful used his name to make this promise:
"Babylon, I will surely fill you with many enemy soldiers.
They will be like a swarm of locusts.*
Those soldiers will win their war against you.
And they will stand over you and shout from victory."
- ¹⁵ The Lord used his great power and made the earth.
He used his wisdom to build the world.
He used his understanding to stretch out the skies.
- ¹⁶ When he thunders, the waters in the skies roar.
He makes clouds go up from all over the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain.
He brings out the wind from his storehouses.
- ¹⁷ But people are so stupid.
They don't understand what God has done.
Skilled workers make statues of false gods.
Those statues are only false gods.
So they show how foolish that worker is.
Those statues are not alive.
- ¹⁸ Those idols are worthless.
People made those idols,
and they are nothing but a joke.
Their time of judgment will come,
and those idols will be destroyed.
- ¹⁹ But Jacob's Portion (*God*) is not like those worthless statues.
People didn't make God,
God made his people.
God made everything.
His name is the Lord All-Powerful.
- ²⁰ The Lord says, "Babylon, you are my

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
Medes People from the Medo-Persian Empire. This empire defeated the country Babylon.
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

locusts Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop very quickly.

- club.
 I use you to smash nations.
 I use you to destroy kingdoms.
- ²¹ I use you to smash horse and rider.
 I use you to smash chariot and driver.
- ²² I use you to smash men and women.
 I use you to smash old men and young men.
 I use you to smash young men and young women.
- ²³ I use you to smash shepherds and flocks.
 I use you to smash farmers and cows.
 I use you to smash governors and important officials.
- ²⁴ But I will pay Babylon back.
 I will pay all the Babylonian people back.
 I will pay them back for all the bad things they did to Zion.*
 I will pay them back so that you can see it, Judah.”
 The Lord said those things.
- ²⁵ The Lord says,
 “Babylon, you are a destroying mountain,
 and I am against you.
 Babylon, you have destroyed the whole land,
 and I am against you.
 I will put my hand out against you.
 I will roll you off the cliffs.
 I will make you into a burned-up mountain.
- ²⁶ People will not find any rocks big enough for cornerstones.
 People will not take any rocks from Babylon to use for the foundation of a building.
 Why? Because your city will be just a pile of broken rocks forever.”
 The Lord said these things.
- ²⁷ “Lift up the war flag in the land!

- Blow the trumpet in all the nations!
 Get the nations ready for battle against Babylon!
 Call these kingdoms to come fight against Babylon:
 Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
 Choose a commander to lead the army against her.
 Send so many horses that they are like a swarm of locusts.*
- ²⁸ Get the nations ready for battle against her.
 Get the kings of the Medes* ready.
 Get their governors and all their important officials ready.
 Get all the countries they rule ready for battle against Babylon.
- ²⁹ The land shakes and moves like it is in pain.
 It will shake when the Lord does what he planned to Babylon.
 The Lord’s plan is to make the land of Babylon into an empty desert.
 No person will live there.
- ³⁰ Babylon’s soldiers have stopped fighting.
 They stay in their forts.
 Their strength is gone.
 They have become like scared women.
 Babylon’s houses are burning.
 The bars of her gates are broken.
- ³¹ One messenger follows another.
 Messenger follows messenger.
 They announce to the king of Babylon, that his whole city has been captured.
- ³² The places where the rivers are crossed have been captured.
 The swamplands are burning.
 All of Babylon’s soldiers are afraid.”
- ³³ The Lord All-Powerful, the God of the people of Israel, says:
 “The City of Babylon is like a threshing floor.*

locusts Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop very quickly.

Medes People from the Medo-Persian Empire. This empire defeated the country Babylon.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

At harvest time, people beat grain to separate the good parts from the chaff.*

And the time to harvest (*destroy*)
Babylon is coming soon.

- ³⁴ "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,
destroyed us in the past.

In the past, Nebuchadnezzar hurt us.

In the past, he took our people away,
and we became like an empty jar.

He took our best things.

He was like a giant monster that ate
everything until it was full.

He took our best things,
and threw us away.

- ³⁵ Babylon did terrible things to hurt us.
Now I want those things to happen to
Babylon."

The people living in Zion* said these
things:

"The people of Babylon are guilty of
killing our people.

Now they are being punished for the
bad things they did."

The city of Jerusalem said those things.

- ³⁶ So the Lord says:

"I will defend you, Judah.

I will make sure that Babylon is
punished.

I will dry up Babylon's sea.

And I will make her water springs
become dry.

- ³⁷ Babylon will become a pile of ruined
buildings.
Babylon will be a place for wild dogs to
live.
People will look at that pile of rocks and
be amazed.
People will shake their heads about
Babylon.
Babylon will be a place where no
people live.

- ³⁸ "Babylon's people are like roaring young
lions.

They growl like baby lions.

- ³⁹ Those people are acting like powerful
lions.

I will give a party for them.

I will make them drunk.

They will laugh and have a good time.

And then they will sleep forever.

They will never wake up."

The Lord said these things.

- ⁴⁰ "I will take the people of Babylon to be
killed.

Babylon will be like sheep, rams, and
goats waiting to be killed.

- ⁴¹ "Sheshach* will be defeated.

The best and proudest country of the
whole earth will be taken captive.

People from other nations will look at
Babylon,

and the things they see will make them
afraid.

- ⁴² The sea will rise over Babylon.

Its roaring waves will cover her.

- ⁴³ Babylon's towns will be ruined and
empty.

Babylon will become a dry, desert land.
It will become a land where no people
live.

People will not even travel through
Babylon.

- ⁴⁴ I will punish the god Bel* in Babylon.

I will make him vomit out the people he
swallowed.

Other nations will not come to Babylon.

And the wall around the city of Babylon
will fall.

- ⁴⁵ Come out of the city of Babylon, my
people.

Run to save your lives.

Run from the Lord's great anger.

- ⁴⁶ "Don't be sad, my people.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but left the wind blow the useless chaff away.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Sheshach This name was created as a word play on the name Babylon.

Bel This is one of the names of the god Marduk, the most important god of the Babylonians.

- Rumors will spread, but don't be afraid.
One rumor comes this year.
Another rumor will come next year.
There will be rumors about terrible fighting in the country.
There will be rumors about rulers fighting against other rulers.
- 41 The time will surely come,
that I will punish the false gods of Babylon.
And the whole land of Babylon will be put to shame.
There will be many, many dead people,
lying in the streets of that city.
- 42 Then heaven and earth and all that is in them
will shout with joy about Babylon.
They will shout because the army came from the north
and fought against Babylon."
The Lord said these things.
- 43 "Babylon killed people from Israel.
Babylon killed people from everywhere on earth.
So Babylon must fall!
- 44 You people escaped being killed with swords.
You must hurry and leave Babylon.
Don't wait!
You are in a faraway land.
But remember the Lord where you are.
And remember Jerusalem.
- 45 "We people of Judah are ashamed.
We are ashamed because we have been insulted.
Why? Because strangers have gone into the Holy Places of the Lord's temple."
- 46 The Lord says,
"The time is coming, that I will punish the idols of Babylon.
At that time, wounded people will cry with pain everywhere in that country.
- 47 Babylon might grow until she touches the sky.
Babylon might make her forts strong.
But I will send people to fight against that city.
And those people will destroy her."
The Lord said these things.
- 48 "We can hear people crying in Babylon.
We hear the sound of people destroying things in the land of the Babylonian people.
- 49 The Lord will destroy Babylon very soon.
He will make the loud sounds of the city become silent.
Enemies will come roaring in like ocean waves.
People all around will hear that roar.
- 50 The army will come and destroy Babylon.
Babylon's soldiers will be captured.
Their bows will be broken.
Why? Because the Lord punishes people for the bad things they do.
The Lord gives them the full punishment they deserve.
- 51 I will make Babylon's important officials and wise men drunk.
I will make her governors, officers, and soldiers drunk too.
Then they will sleep forever.
They will never wake up."
The King said these things.
His name is the Lord All-Powerful.
- 52 The Lord All-Powerful says:
"Babylon's thick, strong wall will be pulled down.
Her high gates will be burned.
The people of Babylon will work hard, but it will not help.
They will become very tired trying to save the city,
but they will only become fuel for the flames."

Jeremiah Sends a Message to Babylon

This is the message that Jeremiah gave to the officer Seraiah. Seraiah was the son of Neriah. Neriah was the son of Mahseiah. Seraiah went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah. This happened in the fourth year that

Seraiah Seraiah was a brother of Baruch, Jeremiah's secretary.

Zedekiah was king of Judah.* At that time, Jeremiah gave this message to Seraiah, the officer. ⁶⁰Jeremiah had written on a scroll* all the terrible things that would happen to Babylon. He had written all these things about Babylon.

⁶¹Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "Seraiah, go to Babylon. Be sure to read this message so all the people can hear you. ⁶²Then say, 'O Lord, you have said that you will destroy this place, Babylon. You will destroy it so that no people or animals will live in it. This place will be an empty ruin forever.' ⁶³After you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it. Then throw this scroll* into the Euphrates River. ⁶⁴Then say, 'In the same way, Babylon will sink. Babylon will rise no more. Babylon will sink because of the terrible things that I will make happen here.'"

The words of Jeremiah end here.

The Fall of Jerusalem

52 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king of Judah. Zedekiah ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah.* Hamutal's family was from the town of Libnah. ²Zedekiah did evil things, just like King Jehoiakim had done. The Lord did not like Zedekiah doing those evil things. ³Terrible things happened to Jerusalem and Judah because the Lord was angry with them. Finally, the Lord threw the people of Jerusalem and Judah away from his presence.

Zedekiah turned against the king of Babylon. ⁴So, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's rule, on the tenth day of the tenth month* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, marched against Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar had his whole army with him. The army of Babylon set up their camp outside of Jerusalem. Then they built ramps all around the city walls, so they

could get over those walls. ⁵The city of Jerusalem was surrounded by the army of Babylon until the eleventh year that Zedekiah was king.* ⁶By the ninth day of the fourth month of that year, the hunger in the city was very bad. There was no food left for the people in the city to eat. ⁷On that day, the army of Babylon broke into Jerusalem. The soldiers of Jerusalem ran away. They left the city at night. They went through the gate between the two walls. That gate was near the king's garden. Even though the army of Babylon had surrounded the city, the soldiers of Jerusalem still ran away. They ran away toward the desert.

⁸But the Babylonian army chased King Zedekiah. They caught him on the plains of Jericho. All of Zedekiah's soldiers ran away. ⁹The army of Babylon captured King Zedekiah. They took him to the king of Babylon at the city of Riblah. Riblah is in the land of Hamath. At Riblah the king of Babylon announced his judgment on King Zedekiah. ¹⁰There at the city of Riblah, the king of Babylon killed Zedekiah's sons. Zedekiah was forced to watch his sons being killed. The king of Babylon also killed all the king's officials of Judah. ¹¹Then the king of Babylon tore out Zedekiah's eyes. He put bronze chains on him. Then he carried Zedekiah away to Babylon. In Babylon he put Zedekiah into prison. Zedekiah stayed in prison until the day he died.

¹²Nebuzaradan, the commander of the king of Babylon's special guard, came to Jerusalem. This was on the tenth day of the fifth month, in the 19th year that Nebuchadnezzar was king.* Nebuzaradan was an important leader in Babylon. ¹³Nebuzaradan burned the Lord's temple. He also burned down the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem. He burned down every important building in Jerusalem. ¹⁴The whole Babylonian army broke down the walls around Jerusalem. That army was under the commander of the king's special guard. ¹⁵Nebuzaradan, the commander, took the rest of

fourth ... Judah That is, 594 B.C.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

Jeremiah This is not Jeremiah the prophet, but a different man with the same name.

ninth year ... tenth month That is, January of 588 B.C.

eleventh year ... king That is, 587 B.C.

19th year ... king That is, 587 B.C.

the people that were still in Jerusalem* into captivity. He also carried away those that had surrendered to the king of Babylon earlier. He also carried away the skilled craftsmen that were left in Jerusalem. ¹⁶But Nebuzaradan left some of the poorest people behind in the land. He left those people to work in the vineyards and the fields.

¹⁷The Babylonian army broke up the bronze columns of the temple. They also broke up the stands and the Bronze Tank* that were in the Lord's temple. They carried all that bronze away to Babylon. ¹⁸The army of Babylon also took these things from the temple: pots, shovels, wick trimmers, large bowls, pans, and all the bronze things that were used in the temple service. ¹⁹The commander of the king's special guards took these things away: basins, firepans, large bowls, pots, lampstands, pans, and bowls used for drink offerings. He took everything that was made of gold or silver. ²⁰The two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the moveable stands were very heavy. King Solomon had made those things for the Lord's temple. The bronze that those things were made of was so heavy it could not be weighed.

²¹Each of the bronze pillars was 27 feet* high. Each pillar was 18 feet* around. Each pillar was hollow. The walls of each pillar was 4 inches* thick. ²²The bronze capital on top of the first pillar was 7½ feet* high. It was decorated with a net design and bronze pomegranates* all around it. The other pillar had pomegranates too. It was like the first pillar. ²³There were 96 pomegranates on the

sides of the pillars. All together, there were 100 pomegranates above the net design that went around the pillars.

²⁴The commander of the king's special guards took Seraiah and Zephaniah as prisoners. Seraiah was the high priest, and Zephaniah was the next highest priest. The three doorkeepers were also taken as prisoners. ²⁵The commander of the king's special guards also took the officer in charge of the fighting men. He also took seven of the king's advisers as prisoners. Those men were still there in Jerusalem. He also took the scribe* that was in charge of putting people in the army. And he took 60 of the ordinary people that were there in the city. ²⁶Nebuzaradan, the commander, took all those officials. He brought them to the king of Babylon. The king of Babylon was at the city of Riblah. Riblah is in the country of Hamath. There at the city of Riblah, the king ordered all those officials to be killed.

So the people of Judah were taken from their country. ²⁷This is how many people Nebuchadnezzar carried into captivity:

In the 7th year of King Nebuchadnezzar:*
3,023 men from Judah.

²⁸ In Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year:*
832 people from Jerusalem.

²⁹ In Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year:*
Nebuzaradan took 745 men of Judah into
captivity. Nebuzaradan was the
commander of the king's special
guards.

In all, 4,600 people were taken captive.

Jehoiachin Is Set Free

¹Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, was in prison in Babylon for 37 years. In the 37th year

the rest ... Jerusalem This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew adds, "some of the poorest people" before this line. This seems to have been accidentally copied from the next verse.

bronze columns ... Bronze Tank These verses list the things that the Babylonian army took away from the Lord's temple. For a description of the temple furniture, see 1 Kings 7:13-26.

27 feet Literally, "18 cubits."

18 feet Literally, "12 cubits."

4 inches Literally, "4 fingers."

7½ feet Literally, "7 cubits."

pomegranate A red fruit containing many tiny seeds covered with a soft, juicy part of the fruit.

scribe A man that wrote down and copied books and letters. He often became an expert at the meaning of those writings ("scriptures").

7th ... Nebuchadnezzar That is from the middle of 598 B.C. to the middle of 597 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar's 18th year That is from the middle of 588 B.C. to the middle of 587 B.C.

Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year That is from the middle of 582 B.C. to the middle of 581 B.C.

of his imprisonment,* Evil-Merodach, the king of Babylon, was very kind to Jehoiachin. He let Jehoiachin out of prison in that year. This was the same year that Evil-Merodach became king of Babylon. Evil-Merodach set Jehoiachin free from prison on the 25th day of the 12th month. "Evil-Merodach spoke in a kind way to

Jehoiachin. He gave Jehoiachin a place of honor higher than the other kings that were with him in Babylon. "So Jehoiachin took his prison clothes off. For the rest of his life, he ate regularly at the king's table. "Every day the king of Babylon gave Jehoiachin an allowance. This continued until Jehoiachin died.

Lamentations

Jerusalem Cries Over Her Destruction

- 1** Jerusalem once was a city full of people.
But now the city is so deserted!
Jerusalem once was a great city among the nations.
But now she* has become like a widow.
She was once a princess among cities.
But now she has been made a slave.
2 She cries bitterly in the night.
Her tears are on her cheeks.
She has no one to comfort her.
None of the nations that were friendly to her comforts her.
All of her friends turned their backs on her.
Her friends became her enemies.
3 Judah has gone into captivity after much suffering.
Judah has gone into captivity after much work.
Judah lives among other nations.
But she has found no rest.
The people that chased her caught her.
Those people caught her in the narrow valleys.
4 The roads to Zion* are very sad.
They are sad because no person comes to Zion for the holidays anymore.
All of Zion's gates have been destroyed.

- All of Zion's priests groan.
Zion's young women have been taken away.*
And all of this is a bitter sadness to Zion.
5 Jerusalem's enemies have won.
Her enemies have been successful.
This happened because the Lord punished her.
He punished Jerusalem for her many sins.
Her children have gone away.
They have gone away, captives of their enemies.
6 The beauty of the Daughter of Zion* has gone away.
Her princes became like deer.
They were like deer that can't find a meadow to feed in.
They ran away without strength.
They ran away from those people that chased them.
7 Jerusalem thinks back.
Jerusalem remembers the time when she was hurt and when she became homeless.
She remembers all the nice things that she had in the past.
She remembers those nice things she had in the old days.

she Throughout this poem, the city of Jerusalem is figuratively portrayed as a woman.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

have been taken away Following the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew has "are upset."

Daughter of Zion This is a figurative name for the city of Jerusalem.

She remembers when her people were
captured by the enemy.

She remembers when there was no
person to help her.

When her enemies saw her, they laughed.
They laughed because she was
destroyed.

- ⁸ Jerusalem sinned very badly.
Because Jerusalem sinned, she has
become something that people shake
their heads about.

All those people that respected her, hate
her now.

They hate her because they have seen
her naked.

Jerusalem groans.

She turns away.

- ⁹ Jerusalem's skirts were dirty.
She didn't think about the things that
would happen to her.

Her fall was amazing.

She had no person to comfort her.

"O Lord," she says, "see how I am hurt!
See how my enemy thinks he is so great!"

- ¹⁰ The enemy stretched out his hand.
He took all of her nice things.

In fact, she saw the foreign nations
go inside her sanctuary.* You, Lord,
had given this order:

"Those people will not enter your
assembly."

- ¹¹ All of Jerusalem's people are groaning.
All of her people are looking for food.
They are giving away all their nice things
for food.

They are doing this to keep alive.

"Look, Lord," says Jerusalem; "look at
me!

See how people hate me.

- ¹² "All you people that pass by on the road,
you don't seem to care.

But look at me and see.

Is there any pain like my pain?

Is there any pain like the pain that has
come to me?

Is there any pain like the pain the Lord
has punished me with?

He has punished me on the day of his
great anger.

- ¹³ The Lord sent fire from above.
That fire went down into my bones.

He stretched out a net for my feet.

He turned me all the way around.

He made me into a wasteland.

I am sick all day.

- ¹⁴ "My sins were tied up like a yoke.*
My sins were tied up in the Lord's hands.
The Lord's yoke is on my neck.

The Lord has made me weak.

The Lord has given me to people
that I can't stand up against.

- ¹⁵ "The Lord rejected all my strong soldiers.
Those soldiers were inside the city.
Then the Lord brought a group of people
against me.

He brought those people to kill my young
soldiers.

The Lord has stepped on the grapes in the
winepress.

That winepress belongs to the virgin
daughter of Jerusalem.*

- ¹⁶ "I cry about all these things.
My eyes, my eyes run down with water.
There is no comforter near me.

There is no person that can make me
feel better.

My children are like a wasteland.

They are like that because the enemy
has won."

- ¹⁷ Zion* spread out her hands.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals
to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a
person was a slave.

virgin ... Jerusalem This is another figurative name for
the city of Jerusalem.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sanctuary A building used to worship God in. The
sanctuary referred to here is the temple of the Lord that was in
Jerusalem. That temple had been destroyed by the army of
Babylon in 587 B.C. That was shortly before this poem was
written.

There was no person to comfort her.
The Lord had given orders to Jacob's*
enemies.

The Lord had ordered Jacob's enemies
to surround him.

Jerusalem has become something dirty.
She is something dirty among those
enemies.

- ¹⁸ "The Lord is in the right," she says,
"because I refused to listen to him.

So listen, all you people!

Look at my pain!

My young women and men
have gone into captivity.

- ¹⁹ "I called out to my lovers.

But they tricked me.

My priests and my elders
have died in the city.

They were looking for food for
themselves.

They wanted to keep themselves alive.

- ²⁰ "Look at me, Lord. I am in distress!
My insides are upset!

My heart feels like it has turned upside
down inside me!

My heart feels this way because I have
been so stubborn!

In the streets, the sword killed my
children.

Inside the houses, death was there.

- ²¹ "Listen to me, because I am groaning!
I have no person to comfort me.

All my enemies have heard of my trouble.

They are happy.

They are happy that you have done this
to me.

Now bring on that day that you have
announced.

On that day, let my enemies be like I am
now.

- ²² "Let the evil of my enemies come before
you.

Then you can treat them

the same way you treated me
because of all my sins.

Do this because I am groaning over and
over again.

Do this because my heart is sick."

The Lord Destroyed Jerusalem

- 2** Look how the Lord has set
the Daughter of Zion* under a
cloud.

He has thrown the glory of Israel
from the sky to the ground.

The Lord didn't keep in mind that Israel
was his footstool,
on the day of his anger.

- ² The Lord swallowed up the houses of
Jacob.*

He swallowed them up without mercy.

He destroyed in his anger
the fortresses of the Daughter of
Judah.*

The Lord threw the kingdom of Judah
and its rulers
to the earth. He ruined the kingdom.

- ³ The Lord has cut off in his anger
all the strength of Israel.

He took away his right hand from Israel.

He did this when the enemy came.

He burned like a flaming fire in Jacob.*

He was like a fire that burns all around.

- ⁴ The Lord bent his bow like an enemy.
The holder for his sword was in his
right hand.

He killed all the good looking men of
Judah.

The Lord killed them as if he were the
enemy.

The Lord poured out his anger.

He poured it out on the tents of Zion.

- ⁵ The Lord has become like an enemy.

Daughter of Zion This is a figurative name for the city
of Jerusalem.

Daughter of Judah This is a figurative name for the
nation of Judah.

He has swallowed up Israel.
 He has swallowed up all her palaces.
 He has swallowed up all her fortresses.
 He has made much sadness and crying for
 the dead
 in the Daughter of Judah.*

- ⁶ The Lord has destroyed his own tent* as
 if it were a garden.
 He has ruined the place where the
 people used to meet to worship him.
 The Lord has made people forget
 special assemblies and special days of
 rest* in Zion.
 The Lord has rejected king and priest.
 He has rejected them in his great anger.
- ⁷ The Lord has rejected his altar.
 He has rejected his Holy Place of
 worship.
 He has given the walls of Jerusalem's
 palaces
 over to the enemy.
 The enemy made noise in the Lord's
 temple.
 They made noise, as if it were a holiday.
- ⁸ The Lord planned to destroy
 the wall of the Daughter of Zion.
 He marked the wall off with a measuring
 line.
 He didn't stop himself from destroying.
 So he made the outer walls and other
 walls cry out in sadness.
 Together they wasted away.
- ⁹ Jerusalem's gates have sunk into the
 ground.
 He destroyed and smashed the bars of
 the gates.
 Her king and her princes are among the
 nations.
 There is no more teaching for them.

Also Jerusalem's prophets have not found
 any visions from the Lord.

- ¹⁰ The elders of Zion* sit on the ground.
 They sit on the ground and are quiet.
 They pour dust on their heads.
 They put on sackcloth.*
 The young women of Jerusalem
 bow their heads to the ground in sorrow.
- ¹¹ My eyes are worn out with tears!
 My insides are upset!
 My heart feels like it has been poured on
 the ground!
 I feel this way because of the
 destruction of my people.
 Children and babies are fainting.
 They are fainting in the public squares
 of the city.
- ¹² Those children say to their mothers,
 "Where is bread and wine?"
 They ask this question as they die.
 They die while they are lying on their
 mother's laps.
- ¹³ What can I liken you to, Daughter of
 Zion*?
 What can I compare you to?
 What can I compare you to, Virgin
 Daughter of Zion*?
 How can I comfort you?
 Your destruction is as big as the sea!
 I don't think anyone can heal you.
- ¹⁴ Your prophets saw visions for you.
 But their visions were only worthless
 lies.
 They didn't preach against your sins.
 They didn't try to make things better.
 They preached messages for you,
 but they were false messages that fooled
 you.

Daughter of Judah This is a figurative name for the nation of Judah.

tent This is a reference to the Lord's temple in Jerusalem.

special days of rest Or, "Sabbaths." This might mean Saturday, or it might mean all of the special days when the people were not supposed to work.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

sackcloth A kind of cloth that people wore to show they were sad or crying for dead people.

(Virgin) Daughter of Zion This is a figurative name for the city of Jerusalem.

- ¹⁵ The people that pass by on the road
clap their hands at you in shock.
They whistle and shake their heads
at the Daughter of Jerusalem.
"Is this the city," they ask, "that people
called
'The Perfectly Beautiful City,'
and, 'The Joy of all the Earth'?"
- ¹⁶ All your enemies
open their mouths at you.
They whistle and grind their teeth at you.
They say, "We have swallowed them up!
This is truly the day we were hoping for.
We have finally seen this happen."
- ¹⁷ The Lord did what he planned to do.
He has done what he said he would do.
He has done what he commanded from
times of long ago.
He destroyed, and he had no pity.
He made your enemies happy because of
you.
He raised up the strength of your
enemies.
- ¹⁸ Cry out* with your hearts to the Lord!
O wall of the Daughter of Zion;
let tears roll down like a stream!
Let your tears roll down day and night.
Don't stop!
Don't let your eyes be still!
- ¹⁹ Get up! Cry out in the night!
Cry out at the beginning of each of the
parts of the night!
Pour out your heart as if it were water!
Pour out your heart before the Lord!
Lift up your hands in prayer to the Lord.
Ask him to let your children live.
Ask him to let your children live that are
fainting with starvation.
They are fainting with starvation in all
the streets of the city.
- ²⁰ Look at me, Lord!
See who it is that you have treated this
way!

Let me ask this question:
Should women eat the children they have
given birth to?
Should women eat the children that they
have cared for?
Should priest and prophet
be killed in the temple of the Lord?

- ²¹ Young men and old men
lie on the ground in the streets of the
city.
My young women and young men
have been killed by the sword.
You, Lord, killed them on the day of your
anger!
You killed them without mercy!
- ²² You invited terror to come to me from all
around.
You invited terror like you were
inviting it to a holiday.
There was no person that escaped or that
got away
on the day of the Lord's anger.
My enemy has killed
those that I raised and brought up.

A Man Considers the Meaning of His Suffering

- 3** I am a man that has seen much
trouble.
I have seen trouble under the rod of the
Lord's anger.
- ² The Lord led and brought me
into darkness, not light.
- ³ The Lord turned his hand against me.
He did this again and again, all day.
- ⁴ He wore out my flesh and skin.
He broke my bones.
- ⁵ The Lord built up bitterness and trouble
against me.
He made bitterness and trouble come all
around me.
- ⁶ He made me sit in the dark.
He made me like some person that has
been dead a long time.
- ⁷ The Lord shut me in, so I could not get

out.

He put heavy chains on me.

⁸ Even when I cry out and ask for help,
the Lord does not listen to my prayer.

⁹ He has blocked up my path with stones.
He has made my path crooked.

¹⁰ The Lord is like a bear about to attack
me.

He is like a lion that is in a hiding place.

¹¹ The Lord led me off my path. He tore me
to pieces.

He ruined me.

¹² He made his bow ready.

He made me the target for his arrows.

¹³ He shot me in the stomach.

He shot me with his arrows.

¹⁴ I have become a joke to all of my people.

All day long they make fun of me with
songs.

¹⁵ The Lord filled me with bitter things to
drink.

He made me full of bitter drink.

¹⁶ The Lord pushed my teeth into rocky
ground.

He pushed me into the dirt.

¹⁷ I thought I would never have peace again.
I forgot about good things.

¹⁸ I said to myself,

"I no longer have any hope that the
Lord will help me."

¹⁹ Remember, O Lord, my sadness and how
I have no home.

Remember the bitter drink and the
poisoned drink you have given me.

²⁰ I remember well all my troubles.
And I am very sad.

²¹ But then I think of something else,
then I have hope. What I think of is this:

²² The Lord's love and kindness never
ends.*

The Lord's mercies are never over.

²³ They are new every morning.

Your faithfulness, O Lord, is great.

²⁴ I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion.
Because of this I will have hope."

²⁵ The Lord is good to those that wait for
him.

The Lord is good to the person that
looks for him.

²⁶ It is good for a person to wait quietly
for the Lord to save him.

²⁷ It is good for a person to wear the yoke*
of the Lord.

It is good for a person to wear that yoke
from the time he is young.

²⁸ That person should sit alone and be quiet
when the Lord puts his yoke on him.

²⁹ That person should bow to the Lord with
his face to the ground.

Maybe there is still hope.

³⁰ That person should turn his cheek to the
one that hits him.

That person should be ready to be
insulted.

³¹ That person should remember that the
Lord does not reject people forever.

³² When the Lord punishes, he also has
mercy.

He has mercy because of his great love
and kindness.

³³ The Lord does not want to punish people.
He does not like to make people
unhappy.

³⁴ The Lord does not like these things:
He does not like for someone to crush
all the prisoners of the earth under his
feet.

³⁵ He does not like for someone to be unfair
to a person.
Some people do that right in front of the
Most High God.

³⁶ He does not like for someone to hurt a
person's good cause.
The Lord does not like any of these
things.

³⁷ Nobody can say something and have it
happen,
unless the Lord orders it to happen.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals
to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a
person was a slave.

never ends The Hebrew reads, "we don't come to an end."

38 Both bad and good things
come from the mouth of the Most High
God.

39 What living person can complain
because the Lord has punished him for
his sins?

40 Let us check and look at what we have
done.
Then let us turn back to the Lord.

41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to the God of heaven.

42 Let us say to him: "We have sinned and
have been stubborn.
Because of this, you have not forgiven
us.

43 You wrapped yourself with anger. You
chased us.
You killed us without mercy!

44 You wrapped yourself in a cloud.
You did that so that no prayer could get
through.

45 You made us like garbage and dirt
to the other nations.

46 All of our enemies
speak angrily to us.

47 We have been frightened. We have fallen
into a pit.
We have been hurt bad! We have been
broken!"

48 My eyes flow with streams of tears!
I cry because of the destruction of my
people!

49 My eyes will flow without stopping!
I will keep on crying!

50 I will keep on crying until you look down
and see us, O Lord!
I will keep crying until you see us from
heaven!

51 My eyes make me sad,
when I see what has happened to the
daughters of my city.

52 Those people that are my enemies for no
good reason
hunted for me as if I were a bird.

53 They threw me into a pit while I was still
alive.
They threw stones at me.

54 Water came up over my head.
I said to myself, "I am lost."

55 I called out your name, O Lord.
I called out your name from the bottom
of the pit.

56 You heard my voice. You didn't close
your ears.
You didn't refuse to rescue and save
me.

57 You came close to me on the day that I
called out to you.
You said to me, "Don't be afraid."

58 You, O Lord, have taken my side of the
case.
You have bought my life back for me.

59 You have seen my trouble, O Lord.
Now judge my case for me.

60 You have seen how my enemies have
hurt me.
You have seen all the evil plans they
made against me.

61 You have heard how they insult me, O
Lord.
You have heard all the evil plans they
made against me.

62 The words and the thoughts of my
enemies
are against me all the time.

63 When they sit down and when they stand
up.
Look, O Lord, how they make fun of
me!

64 Give them back what they deserve, O
Lord!
Pay them back for what they have done!

65 Give them stubbornness of heart!
Then put your curse on them!

66 Chase them in anger! Destroy them!
Destroy them from under the sky, O
Lord!

The Horrors of the Attack on Jerusalem

4 See how the gold has grown dark.
See how the good gold is changed.
There are jewels*

scattered around.

Those jewels are scattered at every street corner.

- ² The people of Zion* were worth a lot.

They were worth their weight in gold.

But now the enemy treats those people like old clay jars.

The enemy treats them like clay jars made by a potter.

- ³ Even the jackal gives her breast to her young.

Even the jackal lets her pups suck at her breast.

But the daughter of my people* is cruel.

She is like the ostrich that lives in the desert.

- ⁴ The little baby's tongue sticks to the roof of its mouth from thirst.

Young children ask for bread.

But no one gives any bread to them.

- ⁵ The people that at one time ate rich food now are dying in the streets.

The people that grew up wearing nice red clothes

now pick through garbage piles.

- ⁶ The sin of the daughter of my people* was very great.

Their sin was greater than the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed suddenly.

No human hand caused that destruction.*

- ⁷ The men of Judah that were specially dedicated to God were whiter than snow.

They were whiter than milk.

Their bodies were red like coral.

Their beards were dark like the stone called lapis lazuli.

- ⁸ But now their faces are blacker than soot. No one even recognizes those men in the streets.

Their skin is wrinkled over their bones.

Their skin is like wood.

- ⁹ The people that were killed by the sword had it better than the people that were killed by famine.

The starving people were very sad. They were hurt.

They died because they had no food from the field.

- ¹⁰ At that time, even very nice women cooked their own children.

Those children became food for their mothers.

This happened when my people were destroyed.

- ¹¹ The Lord used all of his anger.

He poured out all his anger.

He made a fire in Zion.*

That fire burned down Zion to its foundations.

- ¹² The kings of the earth could not believe what had happened.

The people of the world could not believe what had happened.

They could not believe that enemies would be able to come through the city gates of Jerusalem.

- ¹³ This happened because Jerusalem's prophets sinned.

This happened because Jerusalem's priests did evil things.

Those people were shedding blood in the city of Jerusalem.

They were shedding the blood of good people.

- ¹⁴ The prophets and priests walked around blind in the streets.

They had become dirty with blood.

No one could even touch their clothes because they were dirty.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

daughter ... people This is a figurative way of referring here to the women of Jerusalem.

daughter of my people These words refer to all the people of Jerusalem.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

No human ... destruction The Hebrew of this line is unclear.

- ¹⁵ "Get away. Get away. Do not touch us."
Those people wandered around and had no home.
People in other nations said, "We don't want them to live with us."
- ¹⁶ The Lord himself has destroyed those people.
He didn't look after them anymore.
He didn't respect the priests.
He was not friendly to the elders of Judah.
- ¹⁷ Our eyes stop working.
They get tired because we look for help, but no help comes.
We kept on looking out for a nation to save us.
We kept watch from our watch tower, but no nation saved us.
- ¹⁸ Our enemies hunted us all the time.
We could not even go out into the streets.
Our end came near. Our time was up.
Our end came!
- ¹⁹ The men that chased us were faster than eagles in the sky.
Those men chased us into the mountains.
They hid in the desert to catch us.
- ²⁰ The king, that was like breath in our noses, was captured in their pit.
The king was the person that had been chosen by the Lord.
We had said about the king, "We will live in his shadow.
We will live in his shadow among the nations."
- ²¹ Be happy and be glad, people of Edom.
Be happy, you people that live in the land of Uz.
But remember, the cup of the Lord's anger, will come around to you, too.
When you drink it, you will get drunk and will make yourselves naked.
- ²² Your punishment is complete, Zion.*
You will not go into captivity again.

But the Lord will punish your sins, people of Edom.
He will uncover your sins.

A Prayer to the Lord

- 5** Remember, Lord, what happened to us.
Look and see our disgrace.
- ² Our land has been turned over to strangers.
Our houses have been given to foreigners.
- ³ We have become orphans. We have no father.
Our mothers have become like widows.
- ⁴ We have to buy the water that we drink.
We have to pay for the wood that we use.
- ⁵ We are forced to wear a yoke* on our necks.
We get tired, and we have no rest.
- ⁶ We made an agreement with Egypt.
We also made an agreement with Assyria to get enough bread.
- ⁷ Our ancestors sinned against you. Now they are dead.
We are suffering now because of their sins.
- ⁸ Slaves have become our rulers.
There is no person that can save us from them.
- ⁹ We risk our lives to get our food.
We risk our lives because of the men with swords in the desert.
- ¹⁰ Our skin is hot like an oven.
Our skin is hot because of the hunger we have.
- ¹¹ The enemy raped the women of Zion.
They raped the women of the cities of Judah.
- ¹² The enemy hanged our princes.
They didn't honor our elders.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

- ¹³ The enemy made our young men grind
grain at the mill.
Our young men stumbled under loads of
wood.
- ¹⁴ The elders no longer sit at the gates of the
city.
The young men no longer make music.
- ¹⁵ We have no more joy in our hearts.
Our dancing has turned into crying for
the dead.
- ¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head.
Things have gone bad for us because we
have sinned.
- ¹⁷ Because of this, our hearts have become
sick.

- Because of these things, our eyes
have become dim.
- ¹⁸ Mount Zion is a wasteland.
On Mount Zion, foxes walk about.
- ¹⁹ But you rule forever, Lord.
Your kingly chair lasts forever and ever.
- ²⁰ You seem to have forgotten us forever,
Lord.
You seem to have left us alone for such
a long time.
- ²¹ Bring us back to you, Lord. We will
gladly come back to you.
Make our days like they were before.
- ²² Have you completely rejected us?
You have been very angry with us.

Ezekiel

INTRODUCTION

1 ¹⁻³I am the priest, Ezekiel son of Buzzi. I was in exile.* I was by Kebar Canal in Babylonia when the skies opened up and I saw visions* of God. This was on the fifth day of the fourth month (*June*) of the thirtieth year.*

During King Jehoiachin's fifth year in exile,* on the fifth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel. The Lord's power came on him at that place.

The Chariot of the Lord—God's Throne

⁴I (*Ezekiel*) saw a dust storm coming from the north. It was a big cloud, and there was fire flashing from it. Light was shining out all around it. It looked like hot metal* glowing in a fire. ⁵Inside, there were four animals. They looked like a person. ⁶But each animal had four faces and four wings. ⁷Their legs were straight. Their feet looked like cow's feet. And they glittered like polished brass. ⁸Under their wings were human arms. There were four animals. And each animal had four faces and four wings.

⁹And now I will tell about their faces. The animals were all joined together where their

wings touched. They did not turn when they moved. They went in the direction they were looking. ¹⁰Each animal had four faces. In the front, they each had a man's face. On the right side there was a lion's face. On the left side there was a bull's face. And on the back there was an eagle's face. Each animal looked the same. ¹¹The animals used their wings to cover themselves. They used two wings to cover their head and two wings to cover their body. ¹²The animals did not turn when they moved. They went in the direction they were looking. They went wherever the wind* caused them to go.

¹³The animals were shining like burning coals. And there was a fire like lightning that flashed from one animal to another. ¹⁴The animals ran back and forth—fast like lightning!

¹⁵⁻¹⁶I looked at the animals and I saw four wheels. There was one wheel for each face. The wheels touched the ground. The wheels looked like they were made from a clear yellow jewel. They looked like there was a wheel inside a wheel. ¹⁷The wheels did not change direction when they moved.

¹⁸And now I will tell about their backs. They were tall and they could see with their backs. All four animals were the same.

¹⁹The wheels always moved with the animals. If the animals went up into the air, the wheels went with them. ²⁰They went wherever the wind wanted them to go, and the wheels went with them. Why? Because the wind (*power*) of the animal was in the wheels. ²¹So if the animals moved, the wheels moved. If the

exile Being forced to live in a foreign country. King Nebuchadnezzar forced many Jewish people to leave Judah and live in foreign countries.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

thirtieth year We are not sure what year this is. It might be the same as the fifth year of exile, or it might be that Ezekiel is beginning his book with the last vision he saw of God, and it was the same as the first vision he saw.

hot metal We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word. It might mean, "melted copper" or "amber."

wind Or, "Spirit."

animals stopped, the wheels stopped. If the wheels went into the air, the animals went with them. Why? Because the wind* was in the wheels.

²²There was an amazing thing over the animals. It was like a bowl* turned upside down. And the bowl was clear like ice. It was hanging in the air over the animals' heads.

²³Under this bowl each animal had four straight wings. Two wings covered one part of its body and two wings covered the other part.

²⁴Then I heard the wings. Every time the animals moved, their wings made a very loud noise. They were loud like a lot of water rushing by. They were loud like God, All-Powerful walking by. They were loud like an army or a crowd of people. And when the animals stopped moving, they put their wings down by their side.

²⁵The animals stopped moving and lowered their wings. And there was another loud sound. That sound came from above the bowl over their heads. ²⁶There was something above that bowl. It looked like a throne. It was blue like sapphire. And there was something that looked like a man sitting on that throne! ²⁷I looked at him from his waist up. He looked like hot metal.* It looked like fire all around him! And I looked at him from his waist down. It looked like fire. And it was shining all around him. ²⁸The light shining around him was like a rainbow. It looked like the Glory of the Lord. So I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face to the ground. And then I heard a voice speaking to me.

2 The voice said, "Son of man,* stand up and I will speak with you."

³Then a wind came and lifted me up on my feet. And I listened to the person (God) that spoke to me. ⁴He said to me, "Son of man, I am sending you to speak to the family of Israel.

Those people turned against me many times. And their ancestors turned against me. They have sinned against me many times—and they are still sinning against me today. ⁵I am sending you to speak to those people. But they are very stubborn. They are very hard headed. But you must speak to those people. You must say, 'The Lord our Master says these things.' ⁶But those people won't listen to you. They won't stop sinning against me. Why? Because they are very rebellious people—they always turn against me! But you must say those things so they will know that there is a prophet* living among them.

⁷"Son of man,* don't be afraid of those people. Don't be afraid of the things they say. It is true, they will turn against you and try to hurt you. They will be like thorns. You will think you are living with scorpions.* But don't be afraid of the things they say. They are a rebellious people. But don't be afraid of them. ⁸You must tell them the things I say. I know they won't listen to you. And they won't stop sinning against me! Why? Because they are a rebellious people.

⁹"Son of man,* you must listen to the things I say to you. Don't turn against me like those rebellious people. Open your mouth and accept the words I give you and then speak those words to the people. Eat these words."

¹⁰Then I (Ezekiel) saw an arm reach out towards me. It was holding a scroll* with words written on it. ¹¹I rolled the scroll open and there were words written on the front and on the back. There were all kinds of sad songs, sad stories, and warnings.

3 God, said to me, "Son of man,* eat what you see. Eat this scroll,* and then go tell these things to the family of Israel."

²So I opened my mouth and put the scroll in my mouth. ³Then God, said, "Son of man, I

wind Or, "Spirit."

bowl This Hebrew word is the same word used in Gen. 1:6-7 to describe the dome over the sky.

hot metal We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word. It might mean, "melted copper" or "amber."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

scorpion(s) Insects with stingers in their tails that cause pain.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

am giving you this scroll. Swallow it! Let that scroll fill your body."

So I ate the scroll.* It was as sweet as honey in my mouth.

"Then God, said to me, "Son of man,* go to the family of Israel. Speak my words to them. 'I am not sending you to some foreigners you can't understand. You don't have to learn another language. I am sending you to the family of Israel!' 'I am not sending you to many different countries where people speak languages you can't understand. If you went to those people and spoke to them, they would listen to you. But you won't have to learn those hard languages. 'No! I am sending you to the family of Israel. Only, these people have hard heads—they are very stubborn! And the people of Israel will refuse to listen to you. They don't want to listen to me! 'But I will make you just as stubborn as they are. Your head will be just as hard as theirs! 'A diamond is harder than flint rock. In the same way, your head will be harder than theirs. You will be more stubborn, so you won't be afraid of those people. You won't be afraid of those people that always turn against me."

"Then God, said to me, "Son of man,* you must listen to every word I say to you. And you must remember those words. "Then go to all of your people that are in exile.* Go to them and say, 'The Lord our Master says these things.' They won't listen and they won't stop sinning, but you must tell them these things."

"Then the wind* lifted me up. Then I heard a voice behind me. It was very loud, like thunder. It said, "Blessed is the Glory of the Lord!" "Then the wings of the animals began moving. The wings made a very loud noise as they touched each other. And the wheels in front of them began making a loud noise—it was

loud like thunder. "The wind* lifted me and took me away. I left that place. My spirit* was very excited! The Lord's power was very strong in me! "I went to the people of Israel that were forced to live in Tel Aviv.* These people lived by Kebar Canal. I said hello to the people living there. I stayed there seven days and told them the things God said.

"After seven days, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* I am making you a watchman* for Israel. I will tell you about bad things that will happen to them. And you must warn Israel about those things. "If I say, 'This bad man will die!' Then you must warn him! You must tell him to change his life and stop doing bad things. If you don't warn that person, then he will die. He will die because he sinned. But I will also make you responsible for his death! Why? Because you did not go to him and save his life.

"Maybe you will warn a person and tell him to change his life and stop doing bad things. If that person refuses to listen to you, then that person will die. He will die because he sinned. But you warned him, so you saved your own life.

"Or maybe a good man will stop being good. I might put something in front of him that causes him to fail (*sin*). He will start to do bad things, so he will die. He will die because he is sinning and you did not warn him. I will make you responsible for his death. And people won't remember all the good things he did.

"But if you warn the good person and tell him to stop sinning, and if he stops sinning, then he won't die. Why? Because you warned him and he listened. In this way, you saved your own life."

"Then the Lord's power came to me in that place. He said to me, "Get up and go to the valley. I will speak to you in that place."

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (paper) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

exile Being forced to live in a foreign country. King Nebuchadnezzar forced many Jewish people to leave Judah and live in foreign countries.

wind Or, "Spirit."

spirit Or, "wind."

Tel Aviv This was a place outside of Israel. We are not sure where it is exactly. The name means "Spring Hill."

watchman A guard that stood on the city wall and looked for enemy soldiers. If he saw trouble coming, he would warn the people in the city.

²So I got up and went out to the valley. The Glory of the Lord* was there—just like I had seen it by Kebar Canal. So I bowed with my face to the ground. ³But a wind* came and lifted me up on my feet. He said to me, “Go home and lock yourself in your house. ⁴Son of man,* people will come with ropes and tie you up. They won’t let you go out among the people. ⁵I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth—you won’t be able to talk. So those people won’t have any person to teach them that they are doing wrong. Why? Because those people are always turning against me. ⁶But I will talk to you. And then I will allow you to speak. But you must say to them, ‘The Lord our Master says these things.’ If a person wants to listen, then fine. If a person doesn’t want to listen, then fine. But those people always turn against me.

4 Son of man,* take a brick. Scratch a picture on it. Draw a picture of a city—the city Jerusalem. ²And then act like you are an army surrounding the city. Build a dirt wall around the city to help you attack it. Build a dirt road leading up to the city wall. Bring battering rams* and set up army camps around the city. ³And then take an iron pan and put it between you and the city. It will be like an iron wall separating you and the city. In this way, you will show that you are against that city. You will surround and attack that city. Why? Because this is an example for the family of Israel. It will show that I (God) will destroy Jerusalem.

⁴“Then you must lie down on your left side. You must do the thing that shows that you, are taking the sins of the people of Israel on yourself. You will carry that guilt for as many days as you lie on your left side. ⁵You must bear the guilt of Israel for 390 days.* In this

way, I am telling you how long Israel will be punished, one day equals one year.

⁶“After that time, you will lie on your right side for 40 days. This time you will bear the guilt of Judah for 40 days. One day equals one year. I am telling you how long Judah must be punished.”

⁷God again spoke. He said, “Now, roll up your sleeve and raise your arm over the brick. Act like you are attacking the city Jerusalem. Do this to show that you are speaking as my messenger to the people. ⁸Now look, I am tying ropes on you. You won’t be able to roll over from one side to another until your attack against the city* is finished.”

⁹God also said, “You must get some grain to make bread. Get some wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Mix all those things together in one bowl and grind them to make flour. You will use this flour to make bread. You will eat only this bread during the 390 days that you lie on your side. ¹⁰You will be allowed to use only 1 cup* of that flour each day to make bread. You will eat that bread from time to time throughout the day. ¹¹And you will only be allowed a little water every day. You can drink only 3 cups* of water each day. ¹²You must make your bread each day. You must get dry human dung and burn it. Then you must cook the bread over this burning dung. You must eat this bread in front of the people.” ¹³Then the Lord said, “This will show that the family of Israel will eat unclean bread* in foreign countries. And I forced them to leave Israel and go to those countries!

¹⁴“Then I (Ezekiel) said, “Oh, but Lord my Master, I have never eaten any unclean food. I have never eaten meat from an animal that died from a disease or from an animal that was killed by a wild animal. I have never eaten

Glory of the Lord One of the forms God used when he appeared to people. This was like a bright shining light.
wind Or, “Spirit.”

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

battering rams Heavy logs that soldiers used to break holes into the gates or walls around a city.

390 days The ancient Greek translation has, “190 days.”

your ... city This is a word play in Hebrew. The Hebrew word can mean, “time of hunger,” “time of trouble,” or “attack against a city.”

1 cup Literally, “20 shekels.”

3 cups Literally, “1/6 hin.”

unclean bread Bread that touched something unclean. If a person ate this bread, then that person could not join in worshipping God. See Lev. 11-15 for rules about clean and unclean things.

unclean meat—not from the time I was a little baby until today. None of that bad meat ever entered my mouth.”

“Then God said to me, “Ok! I will let you use dry cow dung to cook your bread. You don’t have to use dry human dung.”

“Then God said to me, “Son of man,* I am destroying Jerusalem’s supply of bread. People will have only a little bread to eat. They will be very worried about their food supply. And they will have only a little water to drink. They will be very scared when they drink that water. “Why? Because there won’t be enough food and water for the people. People will be terrified of each other—they will see each other wasting away because of their sins.

5 “Son of man,* after your time of hunger* you must do these things. You must get a sharp sword. Use that sword like a barber’s razor. Shave off your hair and beard. Put the hair on a scale and weigh it. Separate your hair into three equal parts. Put one third of your hair on the city (*brick*). Burn that hair in that city. This shows that some of the people will die from disease. Then use a sword and cut one third of your hair into small pieces. Put that hair around that city (*brick*). This will show that some of the people will die from hunger. Then throw one third of your hair into the air—let the wind blow it far away. This will show that I will chase some of the people into faraway countries. But then you must go and get a few of those hairs. Bring those hairs back and cover them and protect them. This will show that I will bring a few of my people back to me. And then get some more of those hairs that blew away. Throw those hairs into the fire. This shows that, a fire will burn and destroy the whole house of Israel.”

“Then the Lord my Master said to me, “I have taken the people from this city of

Jerusalem. And I have spread them among other nations. Those people are now in the other countries around Israel. “Those people rebelled against my commands. They were worse than any of the other nations! They broke more of my laws than any of the people in the countries around them. They refused to listen to my commands! They did not obey my laws!”

“So, the Lord my Master says, “I will do terrible things to you! Why? Because you did not obey my laws. You did not obey my commands. You broke more of my laws than the people that live around you! And you even did things those people say are wrong!” “So the Lord my Master says, “So now I will show you what justice means—I will punish you so those other people can see. “I will do things to you that I have never done before. And I will never do those terrible things again! Why? Because you did so many terrible things. “People in Jerusalem will be so hungry that fathers will eat their own children. And children will eat their own fathers. I will punish you in many ways. And the people that are left alive, I will scatter them to the winds.

“The Lord my Master says, “Jerusalem, I promise by my life that I will punish you! I promise that I will punish you! Why? Because you did terrible things to my Holy Place. You did horrible things that made it dirty! I will punish you! I won’t show any mercy. I will not feel sorry for you! “One third of your people will die from diseases. One third of your people will die from hunger. And I will scatter one third of your people to the winds. Your enemy will chase them with swords. And the people living around you will kill them in war! Only then will I stop being angry at you. “Only then will I stop being angry at your people. I will know that they have been punished for the bad things they did to me. And they will know that I am the Lord, and that I spoke to them because of my strong love* for them!”

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

your time of hunger Or, “your attack on the city.” See Ez. 4:8.

house of Israel This probably means the people of the northern ten family groups of Israel.

strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

¹⁴God said, "Jerusalem, I will destroy you—you will be nothing but a pile of rocks. The people around you will make fun of you. Every person that walks by will make fun of you. ¹⁵People around you will make fun of you, but you will also be a lesson for them. They will see that I was angry and punished you. I was very angry. I warned you. I, the Lord, told you what I would do! ¹⁶I told you I would send you terrible times of hunger. I told you I would send you things that would destroy you! And those times of hunger came again and again. I took away your supply of food. ¹⁷I sent that time of hunger—and it was like a wild animal that killed your children. There was disease and death all through the city. And I brought those enemy soldiers to fight against you. I, the Lord, told you all these things would happen—and they all happened!"

6 Then the word of the Lord came to me again. ¹He said, "Son of man,* turn towards the mountains of Israel. Speak against them for me. ²Tell those mountains these things:

"Mountains of Israel, listen to this message from the Lord my Master! The Lord my Master says these things to the hills and mountains, and to the ravines and valleys. Look! I (God) am bringing the enemy to fight against you. I will destroy your high places.* ⁴Your altars* will be broken into pieces! Your incense* altars will be smashed! And I will throw down your dead bodies in front of your filthy idols. ⁵I will put the dead bodies of the people of Israel in front of their filthy idols. I will scatter your bones around your altars. ⁶Bad things will happen wherever your people live. Their cities will become piles of rock. Their high places will be destroyed. Why? So that those places of worship will never be used again. Those altars

will all be destroyed. People will never worship those filthy idols again. Those incense altars will be smashed. All the things you made will be completely destroyed! ⁷Your people will be killed. And then you will know that I am the Lord!"

⁸God said, "But I will let a few of your people escape. They will live in other countries for a short time. I will scatter them and force them to live in other countries. ⁹Then those survivors* will be taken prisoners. They will be forced to live in other countries. But those survivors will remember me. I broke their spirit.* They will hate themselves for the bad things they did. In the past, they turned away from me and left me. They chased after their filthy idols. They were like a woman leaving her husband and running after some other man. They did many terrible things. ¹⁰But they will know that I am the Lord. And they will know that if I say that I will do something, then I will do it! They will know that I caused all of the bad things that happened to them."

¹¹Then the Lord my Master said to me, "Clap your hands and stamp your feet. Speak against all the terrible things that the people of Israel have done. Warn them that they will be killed by disease and hunger. Tell them they will be killed in war. ¹²People far away will die from disease. People near this place will be killed with swords. And the people that are left in the city will starve to death. Only then will I stop being angry. ¹³And only then will you know that I am the Lord. You will know this when you see your dead bodies in front of your filthy idols and around their altars. Those bodies will be near every one of your places of worship—on every high hill and mountain, under every green tree and every oak tree with leaves. In all those places you offered your sacrifices. They were a sweet smell for your filthy idols. ¹⁴But I raised my arm over you people and punished you! I destroyed your

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

spirit Literally, "heart."

country! It is more empty than Diblah Desert.* Now, in every place that your people live, they know that I am the Lord!"

7 Then the word of the Lord came to me. ¹He said, "Now, Son of man,* here is a message from the Lord my Master. This message is for the land of Israel.

The end.

The end has come.

The whole country is destroyed.

² Now, your end has come.

I will show how angry I am at you.

I will punish you for the bad things you did.

I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did.

³ I won't show you any mercy.

I won't feel sorry for you.

I am punishing you for the bad things you did.

You have done such terrible things.

Now, you will know that I am the Lord."

⁴ The Lord my Master said these things.

"There will be one disaster. One bad thing will happen: the end is coming! The end is coming. And it will happen very soon! ⁵You people living in Israel, do you hear the whistle? The enemy is coming. That time of punishment is coming very soon! The noise of the enemy is getting louder and louder on the mountains. ⁶Very soon now, I will show you how angry I am. I will show all of my anger against you. I will punish you for the bad things you did. I will make you pay for all the terrible things you did. ⁷I won't show you any mercy. I won't feel sorry for you. You have done such terrible things. Now you will know that I am the Lord and that I punished you.

⁸"That time of punishment has come. Do you hear the whistle? God gave the signal. The punishment is starting. The walking stick has

started sprouting.* The proud king, (*Nebuchadnezzar*) has already begun to grow more powerful. ⁹"That violent man is ready to punish those evil people. There are very many people in Israel,—but he is not one of them. He is not a person in that crowd. He is not some important leader from those people.

¹⁰"That time of punishment has come. That day is here. People that buy things won't be happy. And people that sell things won't feel bad about selling them. Why? Because that terrible punishment will happen to every person. ¹¹"The people that sold their property* will never go back to it. Even if a person escapes alive, he will never go back to his property. Why? Because this vision* is for the whole crowd of people. So even if a person escapes alive, it won't make people feel better.

¹²"They will blow the trumpet to warn the people. The people will get ready for battle. But they won't go out to fight. Why? Because I will show the whole crowd how angry I am. ¹³The enemy with his sword is outside the city. Disease and hunger is inside the city. If a person goes out into the fields, then an enemy soldier will kill him. If he stays in the city, hunger and disease will destroy him.

¹⁴"But some of the people will escape. Those survivors will run to the mountains. But those people won't be happy. They will be sad for all their sins. They will cry and make sad noises like doves. ¹⁵People will be too tired and sad to raise their arms. Their legs will be like water. ¹⁶They will wear clothes of sadness and be covered with fear. You will see the shame on every face. They will shave their heads to show their sadness. ¹⁷They will throw their gold and silver idols into the streets. Why?

The ... sprouting This might refer to the time God made Aaron's walking grow buds. During this time, some Levites turned against Moses and Aaron, and God completely destroyed those Levites. See Num. 16:1-17:11.

sold their property In ancient Israel property did not belong to a person, it belonged to a family. A person might sell his property, but at the time of Jubilees his family would get the land back. Here, Ezekiel says the people will never get their property again.

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Diblah Desert This is probably "Riblah Desert."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

Because those statues could not save them when the Lord showed his anger. Those statues were nothing but a trap that caused the people to fall (*sin*). Those statues will not give food to the people. Those statues won't put food in their bellies.

²⁰"Those people used their beautiful jewelry and made an idol. They were proud of that statue. They made their terrible statues. They made those filthy things. So I (*God*) will throw them away like a dirty rag. ²¹I will let strangers take them. Those strangers will make fun of them. Those strangers will kill some of the people and take others away as prisoners. ²²I will turn my head away from them—I won't look at them. Those strangers will ruin my temple—they will go into the secret parts of that holy building and make it not holy.

²³"Make chains for the prisoners! Why? Because many people will be punished for killing other people. There will be violence every place in the city. ²⁴I will bring evil people from other nations. And those evil people will get all the houses of the people of Israel. I will stop all of you powerful people from being so proud. Those people from other nations will get all your places of worship.

²⁵"You people will shake with fear. You will look for peace, but there will be none. ²⁶You will hear one sad story after another. You will hear nothing but bad news. You will look for a prophet and ask him for a vision.* But there won't be one. The priests will have nothing to teach you. And the elders (*leaders*) won't have any good advice to give you. ²⁷Your king will be crying for the people that died. The leaders will wear clothes of sadness. The common people will be very scared. Why? Because I will pay them back for the things they did. I will decide their punishment. And I will punish them. Then those people will know that I am the Lord."

8 One day I (*Ezekiel*) was sitting in my house, and the elders (*leaders*) of Judah were sitting there in front of me. This was on

the fifth day of the sixth month (*August*) of the sixth year of exile. Suddenly, the power of the Lord my Master came on me. ¹I saw something that looked like fire. It looked like a man's body. From the waist down, he was like fire. From the waist up, he was bright and shining like hot metal* in a fire. ²Then I saw something that looked like an arm. The arm reached out and grabbed me by the hair on my head. Then the wind* lifted me into the air. And in God's vision,* he took me to Jerusalem. He took me to the inner gate—the gate that is on the north side. That statue that makes God jealous is by that gate. ³But the Glory of the God of Israel was there. The Glory looked just like the vision I saw in the valley by Kebar Canal.

⁴God spoke to me. He said, "Son of man,* look towards the north!" So I looked towards the north. And there, north of the Altar Gate by the entrance, was that statue that made God jealous.

⁵Then God said to me, "Son of man,* do you see what terrible things the people of Israel are doing? They built that thing here, right next to my temple! And if you come with me, you will see even more terrible things!"

⁶So I went to the entrance to the courtyard, and I saw a hole in the wall. ⁷God said to me, "Son of man,* go through that hole in the wall." So I went through the hole in the wall. And there I saw a door.

⁸Then God said to me, "Go in and look at the terrible, evil things that the people are doing here." ⁹So I went in and looked. I saw statues of all kinds of reptiles* and animals that you hate to think about. Those statues were the filthy idols that the people of Israel worshiped. There were pictures of those animals carved all around on every wall!

¹⁰Then I noticed that Jaazaniah son of Shapham and the 70 elders (*leaders*) of Israel

hot metal We are not sure of the meaning of this Hebrew word. It might mean, "melted copper" or "amber."

wind Or, "Spirit."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

reptiles The Hebrew word can mean, "lizards," "snakes," and "all kinds of bugs and insects."

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

were there with the people worshiping in that place. There they were, right at the front of the people! And each leader had his own incense* dish in his hand. The smoke from the burning incense was rising into the air. ¹²Then God, said to me, "Son of man,* do you see what the elders of Israel do in the dark? Each man has a special room for his own false god! Those men say to themselves, 'The Lord can't see us. The Lord left this country.'"¹³Then God, said to me, "If you come with me, you will see those men doing even more terrible things!"

¹⁴Then God, led me to the entrance to the Lord's temple. This gate was on the north side. And there I saw women sitting and crying. They were sad about the false god Tammuz!*

¹⁵God, said to me, "Son of man,* do you see these terrible things? Come with me and you will see things that are even worse than this!" ¹⁶Then he led me to the inner courtyard of the Lord's temple. At that place, I saw 25 men bowing down and worshiping. They were between the porch and the altar—but they were facing the wrong way! Their backs were to the Holy Place. They were bowing down to worship the sun!

¹⁷Then God, said, "Son of man,* do you see this? The people of Judah think my temple is so unimportant that they will do these terrible things here in my temple! This country is filled with violence. And they constantly do things to make me mad. Look, they are wearing rings in their noses to honor the moon like a false god!*" ¹⁸"I will show them my anger! I won't show them any mercy! I will not feel sorry for them! They will shout to me—but I refuse to listen to them!"

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

Tammuz People thought this false god died and his wife Ishtar asked everyone to be sad and cry with her. Ishtar hoped this would bring him back to life. This ceremony was on the 2nd day of the fourth month (June/July). This month was named Tammuz because of this holiday.

Look ... god Or, "Look at them putting that cut branch in their noses."

⁹ Then God, shouted to the leaders in charge of punishing, the city. Each leader had his own destructive weapon in his hand.* ²Then I saw six men walking on the road from the upper gate. This gate is on the north side. Each man had his own deadly weapon in his hand. One of the men wore linen clothes.* He wore a scribe's pen and ink set* at his waist. Those men went to the bronze altar in the temple, and stood there. ³Then the Glory of the God of Israel rose from above the Cherubim* where he had been. Then the Glory* went to the door of the temple. He stopped: when he was over the threshold. Then the Glory called to the man wearing the linen clothes and the scribe's pen and ink set.

⁴Then the Lord (Glory) said to him, "Go through the city of Jerusalem. Put a mark on the forehead of every person that feels sad and upset about all the terrible things people are doing in this city."

⁵Then I heard God, say to the other men, "I want you to follow the first man. You must kill every person that does not have the mark on his forehead. It does not matter if they are elders (leaders), young men or young women; children or mothers—you must use your weapon and kill every person that does not have the mark on his forehead. Don't show any mercy. Don't feel sorry for any person! Start here at my temple." So they started with the elders (leaders) in front of the temple.

⁶God said to them, "Make this place unclean*—fill this courtyard with dead bodies: Now go!" So they went and killed the people in the city.

⁷I stayed there while those men went to kill the people. I bowed with my face to the ground and said, "Oh Lord my Master, in showing your anger against Jerusalem, are you killing all the survivors in Israel?"

Each ... hand In Hebrew, this is like Ez. 8:11.

linen clothes Priests usually wore these clothes.

scribe's ... set A scribe was a person that copied official documents and counted supplies and things. He often carried a small board with dry ink in it and a pen. He could put water on the ink and then write with it.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

⁹God, said, "The family of Israel and Judah have done many, many very bad sins! People are being murdered everywhere in this country. And this city is filled with crime. Why? Because the people say to themselves, 'The Lord left this country. He can't see the things we are doing.' ¹⁰And I won't show any mercy. I won't feel sorry for these people. They brought it on themselves—I am only giving these people the punishment they deserve!"

¹¹Then the man wearing linen clothes and a scribe's pen and ink set* spoke up. He said, "I have done what you commanded."

10 Then I looked up at the bowl* over the heads of the Cherub angels.* The bowl looked clear blue like sapphire. And there was something that looked like a throne over the bowl. He (God) could be seen there. ²Then he said to the man dressed in linen clothes, "Come into the stormcloud.* Come to the area under the Cherub angels. Take some of the burning coals from between the Cherub angels. Carry the coals in your hands and go throw them over the city of Jerusalem."

The man walked past me. ³The Cherub angels* were standing in the area south of the temple when the man walked into the cloud. The cloud filled the inner courtyard. ⁴Then the Glory of the Lord rose up off of the Cherub angels. Those angels were standing on the threshold of the door of the temple. Then the cloud filled the temple. And the bright light from the Glory of the Lord filled the whole courtyard. ⁵Then I heard the wings of the Cherub angels. The sound was very loud—like the thundering voice when God All-Powerful speaks. The noise of the wings could be heard all the way out in the outer courtyard.

scribe's ... set A scribe was a person that copied official documents and counted supplies and things. He often carried a small board with dry ink in it and a pen. He could put water on the ink and then write with it.

bowl This Hebrew word is the same word used in Gen. 1:6-7 to describe the dome over the sky.

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

stormcloud This is probably the windstorm or cloud described in chapter 1. The Hebrew word might also mean "wheel" or possibly "chariot."

⁶God, had given the man dressed in linen clothes a command. ⁷God, had told him to go into the stormcloud* and get some hot coals from between the Cherub angels.* So the man went into the stormcloud, and stood by one of the wheels. ⁸One of the Cherub angels reached out his arm and took some of the hot coals from the area between the Cherub angels. He poured the coals into the man's hands. And the man left. (⁹The Cherub angels had what looked like human arms under their wings.)

¹⁰Then I noticed that there were four wheels. There was one wheel by each Cherub angel.* And the wheels looked like a clear yellow jewel. ¹¹There were four wheels, and all the wheels looked the same. They looked like there was a wheel in a wheel. ¹²Whenever they moved, all four of them moved at the same time. But the Cherub angels, did not turn around when they moved. They went in the direction that the head was looking. They did not turn around when they moved. ¹³There were eyes all over their bodies. There were eyes on their backs, on their arms, on their wings, and on their wheels. Yes, there were eyes on, all four wheels! ¹⁴The stormcloud* spoke to the four wheels—I heard it!

¹⁵Each Cherub angel* had four faces. The first face was a Cherub's face.* The second face was a man's face. The third face was a lion's face. And the fourth face was an eagle's face. The Cherub angels were the animals I saw in the vision by Kebar Canal.*

Then the Cherub angels* rose into the air. ²And the wheels rose with them. The wheels did not change direction when the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. ³If the Cherub angels flew into the air, the wheels went with them. If the Cherub angels stood still, so did the wheels. Why? Because the wind* (power) of the animal was in them.

Cherub angel Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

Cherub's face This is the bull's face mentioned in Ez. 1:10. See Ez. 10:22.

vision ... Canal See Ez. 1.

wind Or, "Spirit."

"Then the Glory of the Lord rose from the threshold of the temple, moved to the place over the Cherub angels* and stopped there. "Then the Cherub angels raised their wings and flew into the air. I saw them leave, the temple, the wheels went with them. Then they stopped at the East Gate of the Lord's temple. The Glory of the God of Israel was in the air above them.

"Then I remembered the animals under the Glory of the God of Israel in the vision at Kebar Canal. And I realized those animals were Cherub angels. "Each animal had four faces, four wings, and something that looked like human arms under their wings. "The faces of the Cherub angels were the same as the four faces on the animals in the vision by Kebar Canal. And they all looked straight ahead in the direction they were going.

11 Then the wind* carried me to the East Gate of the Lord's temple. This gate faces the east, where the sun comes up. I saw 25 men there at the entrance of this gate. Jaazaniah son of Azzur was with those men. And Pelatiah son of Benaiah was there. Pelatiah was the leader of the people.

"Then God, spoke to me. He said, "Son of man,* these are the men who make evil plans for this city. These men always tell the people to do bad things. "These men say, 'We will be building our houses again very soon. We are as safe in this city as meat in a pot!' "They are telling these lies. So you must speak to the people for me. Son of man, go prophesy to the people."

"Then the Spirit of the Lord came on me. He said to me, "Tell them that the Lord said these things: House of Israel, you are planning big things. But I know what you are thinking! "You have killed many people in this city. You have filled the streets with dead bodies. "Now, the Lord our Master says these things, "Those dead

bodies are the meat. And the city is the pot. But he (*Nebuchadnezzar*) will come and take you out of this safe pot! "You are afraid of the sword. But I am bringing the sword against you!" The Lord our Master said these things. So they will happen!

"God also said, "I will take you people out of this city. And I will give you to strangers. I will punish you! "You will die by the sword. I will punish you here in Israel, so you will know that I am the One punishing you. I am the Lord. "Yes, this place will be the cooking pot! And you will be the meat cooking in it! I will punish you here in Israel. "Then you will know that I am the Lord. It was my law that you broke! You did not obey my commands. You decided to live like the nations around you."

"As soon as I finished speaking for God, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died! I fell to the ground. I bowed with my face touching the ground and said, "Oh, Lord my Master, you are going to completely destroy all the survivors of Israel!"

"But then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* remember your brothers, the family of Israel, that were forced to leave this country. Those people live in a country far away from here. But the people living here in Jerusalem are really the people that are far away from the Lord. Israel does not belong to these bad people. This land belongs to us!

"So tell those people these things: The Lord our Master says, "It is true, I forced my people to go far away to other nations. I did scatter them among many countries. And they will be sad about my temple for a short time in those other countries. "So you must tell those people that the Lord their Master will bring them back. I have scattered you among many nations. But I will gather you together and bring you back from those nations. I will give the land of Israel back to you! "And when my people come back, they will destroy all the terrible, filthy idols that are here now. "I will bring them together and make them like one person. I will put a new spirit* in them. I will take away that

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.
wind Or, "Spirit."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

spirit Or, "Spirit."

heart of stone, and I will put a real heart in its place. ²⁰Then they will obey my laws. They will obey my commands. They will do the things I tell them. They will truly be my people, and I will be their God."

²¹Then God said, "But now, their hearts belong to those terrible, filthy idols. And I must punish those people for the bad things they did." The Lord my Master said those things. ²²And then the Cherub angels* raised their wings and flew into the air. The wheels went with them. And the Glory of the God of Israel was above them. ²³The Glory of the Lord rose into the air and left Jerusalem. He stopped for a moment on the hill east of Jerusalem.* ²⁴Then the wind* lifted me into the air and brought me back to Babylonia. It brought me back to the people that were forced to leave Israel. Then, in the vision, the Spirit* of the Lord rose into the air and left me. I saw all of those things in the vision. ²⁵And I spoke to the people in exile. I told them about all the things the Lord showed me.

12 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"Son of man,* you live among rebellious people—they always turn against me. They have eyes to see the things I have done for them. But they don't see those things. They have ears to hear the things I told them to do. But they don't hear my commands. Why? Because they are rebellious people. ³So, Son of man,* pack your bags. Act like you are going to a faraway country. Do this so the people can see you. Maybe they will see you—but they are very rebellious people.

⁴"During the day, take your bags outside so the people can see you. Then in the evening, act like you are going away like a prisoner to a faraway country. ⁵While the people are watching, make a hole in the wall and go out through that hole in the wall. ⁶At night, put

your bag on your shoulder and leave. Cover your face so you can't see where you are going. You must do these things so the people can see you. Why? Because I am using you as an example to the family of Israel."

⁷So I (Ezekiel) did as I was commanded. During the day, I took my bags and acted like I was going to a faraway country. That evening I used my hands and made a hole in the wall. During the night I put my bag on my shoulder and left. I did this so all the people could see me.

⁸The next morning, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ⁹"Son of man,* did those rebellious people of Israel ask you what you were doing? ¹⁰Tell them that the Lord their Master said these things. This sad message is about the leader of Jerusalem and all the people of Israel living there. ¹¹Tell them, 'I (Ezekiel) am an example for all you people. The things I have done will really happen to you.' You really will be forced to go to a faraway country as prisoners. ¹²And your leader will make a hole in the wall and sneak out at night. He will cover his face so people won't recognize him. His eyes won't be able to see where he is going. ¹³He will try to escape. But I (God) will catch him! He will be caught in my trap. And I will bring him to Babylonia—the land of the Chaldean people. But he will not be able to see where he is going. The enemy will poke out his eyes and make him blind. ¹⁴I will force the king's people to live in the foreign countries around Israel. And I will scatter his army to the winds. And the enemy soldiers will chase after them. ¹⁵Then those people will know that I am the Lord. They will know that I scattered them among the nations. They will know that I forced them to go to other countries.

¹⁶"But I will let a few of the people live. They won't die from the disease, hunger, and war. I will let those people live so they can tell other people about the terrible things they did against me. And then they will know that I am the Lord."

¹⁷Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹⁸"Son of man,* you must act like you are very scared. You must shake when you eat your

Cherub angels Special angels from God. Statues of these angels were on top of the Box of the Agreement.

hill ... Jerusalem This is the Mount of Olives.

wind Or, "Spirit."

spirit Or, "wind."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

food. You must act worried and afraid when you drink your water. ¹⁹You must tell these things to the common people. You must say, 'The Lord our Master says these things to the people living in Jerusalem and in the other parts of Israel. You people will be very worried while you eat your food. You will be terrified while you drink your water. Why? Because all the things in your country will be destroyed! The enemy will be very cruel to all the people living there. ²⁰Many people live in your cities now—but those cities will be ruined. Your whole country will be destroyed! Then you will know that I am the Lord.'

²¹Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²²"Son of man,* why do people say this poem about the land of Israel:

Trouble won't come soon,
the visions won't happen.

²³"Tell those people that the Lord their Master will stop that poem. They won't say those things about Israel any more. Now they will say this poem:

Trouble will come soon,
the visions will happen.

²⁴It is true, there won't be any more false visions in Israel. There won't be any more magicians telling things that don't come true. ²⁵Why? Because I am the Lord. And I will say what I want to say, and that thing will happen! And I won't let the time stretch out. Those troubles are coming soon—in your own lifetime. You rebellious people, when I say something, I make it happen." The Lord my Master said those things.

²⁶Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²⁷"Son of man,* the people of Israel think that the visions I give you are for a time far in the future. They think you are talking about things that will happen many, many years from now. ²⁸So you must tell them these things, 'The Lord my Master says: I won't delay any longer. If I say something will happen, then it will

happen!'" The Lord my Master said those things.

13 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"Son of man,* you must speak to the prophets of Israel for me. [Those prophets are not really speaking for me.] Those prophets are saying things they want to say. So you must speak to them. Tell them these things, 'Listen to this message from the Lord! ³The Lord my Master says these things. Bad things will happen to you foolish prophets. You are following your own spirits. You are not telling people what you really see in visions.'

⁴"Israel, your prophets will be like foxes running through empty, destroyed buildings. ⁵You have not put soldiers near the broken walls of the city. You have not built walls to protect the family of Israel. So when the day comes for the Lord to punish you, you will lose the war!

⁶"False prophets said they saw visions. They did their magic and said things would happen—but they lied. They said the Lord sent them—but they lied. They are still waiting for their lies to come true.

⁷"False prophets, the visions you saw were not true. You did your magic and said things would happen. But you lied! You said that the Lord said those things. But I did not speak to you!"

⁸So now, the Lord my Master really will speak! He says, "You told lies. You saw visions that were not true. So now I (God) am against you!" The Lord my Master said these things. ⁹The Lord says, "I will punish these prophets that saw false visions and told lies. I will remove them from my people. Their names won't be in the list of the family of Israel. They will never again come to the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord and Master!

¹⁰"Again and again those false prophets lied to my people. The prophets said there would be peace. And there is no peace. The people need to fix the walls and prepare for war. But they only slap a thin coat of plaster* over the broken

plaster A type of cement people put on stone walls to make them smooth and waterproof. This is also a word play. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning, "It will fall."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

walls. ¹¹Tell those men that I will send hail and a strong rain (*enemy army*). The wind will blow hard and a tornado will come. Then the wall will fall down. ¹²The wall will fall down. And the people will ask the prophets, "What happened to the plaster you put on the wall?"

¹³The Lord my Master says, "I am angry and I will send a storm against you. I am angry and I will send a strong rain. I am angry and I will make hail fall from the sky and completely destroy you! ¹⁴You put plaster* on the wall. But I will destroy the whole wall. I will pull it to the ground. The wall will fall on you. And then you will know that I am the Lord. ¹⁵I will finish showing my anger against the wall and the people that put plaster on it. Then I will say, 'There is no wall. And there are no workers to put plaster on it.'

¹⁶All those things will happen to the false prophets of Israel. Those prophets speak to the people of Jerusalem. Those prophets say there will be peace, but there is no peace." The Lord my Master said those things.

¹⁷God said, "Son of man,* look at the women prophets in Israel. Those women prophets don't speak for me. They say the things they want to say. So you must speak against them for me. You must say these things to them. ¹⁸The Lord my Master says these things: Bad things will happen to you women. You sew cloth bracelets for people to wear on their arms. You make special scarves for people to wear on their heads. You say those things have magic powers, to control people's lives. You trap those people only to keep yourselves alive! ¹⁹You make the people think I am not important. You turn them against me for a few handfuls of barley and a few scraps of bread. You tell lies to my people. Those people love to listen to lies. You kill people that should live. And you let people live that should die. ²⁰So the Lord and Master says these things

to you: You make those cloth bracelets to trap people—but I will set those people free. I will tear those bracelets off your arms, and the people will be free from you. They will be like birds flying from a trap! ²¹And I will tear up those scarves, and save my people from your power. Those people will escape from your trap. And you will know that I am the Lord.

²²"You prophets tell lies. Your lies hurt good people—I did not want to hurt those good people! You support bad people and encourage them. You don't tell them to change their lives. You don't try to save their lives! ²³So you won't see any more useless visions. You won't do any more magic. I will save my people from your power. And you will know that I am the Lord."

14 Some of the elders (*leaders*) of Israel came to me. They sat down to talk with me. ²The word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* these men came to talk to you. (They wanted you to ask me for advice.) But these men still have their filthy idols. They kept the things that made them sin. They still worship those statues. So why do they come to me for advice? Should I answer their questions? No! 'But I will give them an answer. I will punish them.' You must tell those people these things. 'The Lord my Master says: If any Israelite comes to a prophet and asks me for advice, then the prophet won't give that person an answer. I myself will answer that person's question. I will answer him even if he still has his filthy idols, even if he kept the things that made him sin, and even if he still worships those statues. I will speak to him in spite of all his filthy idols. 'Why? Because I want to touch their heart. I want to show them I love them, even though they left me for their filthy idols.'

³"So tell the family of Israel these things. Tell them, 'The Lord my Master says: Come back to me, and leave your filthy idols. Turn away from those terrible false gods. 'If any Israelite or foreigner living in Israel comes to me for advice, I will give him an answer. I will answer him even if he still has his filthy idols and even if he kept the things that made him sin

***plaster** A type of cement people put on stone walls to make them smooth and waterproof. This is also a word play. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning, "It will fall."

***son of man** This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

and even if he worships those statues. And this is the answer I will give him: 'I will turn against that person. I will destroy him. He will be an example to other people. People will laugh at him. I will remove him from my people. Then you will know that I am the Lord!' And if a prophet is foolish enough to give his own answer, then I will show him how foolish he is! I will use my power against him. I will destroy him and remove him from among my people, Israel. "So, both the person that came for advice and the prophet that gave an answer will get the same punishment. "Why? So those prophets will stop leading my people away from me. And so my people will stop becoming filthy with their sins. Then they will be my special people. And I will be their God.'" The Lord my Master said those things.

"Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* I will punish any nation that leaves me and sins against me. I will stop their food supply. I might cause a time of hunger and remove the people and animals from that country. "I would punish that country, even if Noah, Danel, and Job* lived there. Those men could save their own lives by their goodness, but they could not save the whole country." The Lord my Master said these things.

"God said, "Or, I might send wild animals through that country. And those animals might kill all the people. No person would travel through that country because of the wild animals. "If Noah, Danel, and Job lived there, then I would save those three good men. Those three men could save their own lives. But by my life I promise, they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed!" The Lord my Master said these things.

"God said, "Or, I might send an enemy army to fight against that country. Those soldiers would destroy that country—I would remove all the people and animals from that country. "If Noah, Danel, and Job lived there, then I would save those three good men. Those three men could save their own lives. But by my life I promise, they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters! That evil country would be destroyed!" The Lord my Master said these things.

"God said, "Or, I might send a disease against that country. I will pour my anger down on those people. I will remove all the people and animals from that country. "If Noah, Danel, and Job lived there, then I would save those three men, because they are good men. Those three men could save their own lives. But by my life I promise, they could not save the lives of other people—not even their own sons and daughters!" The Lord my Master said these things.

"Then the Lord my Master said, "So think how bad it will be for Jerusalem: I will send all four of those punishments against that city! I will send enemy soldiers, hunger, disease, and wild animals against that city. I will remove all the people and animals from that country!" Some of the people will escape from that country. They will bring their sons and daughters and come to you for help. Then you will see how bad those people really are. And you will feel better about all the troubles that I will bring to Jerusalem. "You will see the way they live and the bad things they do. And then you will know that I had a good reason for punishing those people." The Lord my Master said these things.

15 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* are the pieces of wood from a grapevine* any better than the little branches cut from trees in the forest? No! Can you use that wood from a grapevine to make anything? No! Can you use that wood to

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

Noah ... Job Three men from ancient times. They were famous for being very good and wise men. Stories about Noah and Job are in the Bible. Stories about Danel are in writings from Ras Shamra.

grapevine Many times the prophets said Israel was God's vineyard or grapevine.

hang dishes on? No! 'People only throw that wood into the fire. Some sticks begin to burn on the ends, the middles turn black from the fire, but the sticks don't burn completely. Can you make anything from that burnt stick? 'If you can't make anything from that wood before it is burned, then you surely can't make anything from that wood after it is burned! 'So the pieces of wood from a grapevine are just like pieces of wood from trees in the forest. People throw those pieces of wood into the fire. And the fire burns them. In the same way, I will throw the people living in Jerusalem into the fire!' The Lord my Master said these things. 'I will punish those people. But some of those people will be like the sticks that don't burn completely—they will be punished, but they won't be destroyed completely. You will see that I punished these people, and you will know that I am the Lord! 'I will destroy that country because the people left me to worship false gods.' The Lord my Master said those things.

16 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, 'Son of man,* tell the people of Jerusalem about the terrible things they have done. 'You must say, 'The Lord my Master says these things to Jerusalem: Look at your history. You were born in Canaan. Your father was an Amorite. Your mother was a Hittite. 'Jerusalem, on the day you were born, there was no one to cut your naval cord. No one put salt on you and washed you to make you clean. No one wrapped you in cloth. 'Jerusalem, you were all alone. No one felt sorry for you or took care of you. Jerusalem, on the day you were born, your parents threw you out in the field. You were still covered with the blood and afterbirth.

“Then I (God) passed by. I saw you lying here, kicking in the blood. You were covered with blood but I said, ‘Please live!’ Yes, you were covered with blood but I said, ‘Please live!’” I helped you grow like a plant in the field. You grew and grew. You became a

young woman: your periods began, your breasts grew, your hair began to grow. But you were still bare and naked. 'I looked you over. I saw you were ready for love. So I spread my clothes over you* and covered your nakedness. I promised to marry you. I made the agreement* with you. And you became mine.'” The Lord my Master said these things. “‘I washed you in water. I washed away your blood. And I rubbed oil on your skin. ’* I gave you a nice dress and soft leather shoes. I gave you a linen headband and a silk scarf. ’” Then I gave you some jewelry. I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck. ’” I gave you a nose ring, some earrings, and a beautiful crown to wear. ’” You were beautiful in your silver and gold jewelry, and your linen, silk, and embroidered material. You ate the best foods. You were very, very beautiful. And you became the queen! ’” You became famous for your beauty. And all because I made you so lovely!’” The Lord my Master said these things.

“God said, ‘But you began to trust in your beauty. You used the good name you had and became unfaithful to me. You acted like a prostitute* with every man that passed by. You gave yourself to them all! ’” You took your beautiful clothes and used them to decorate your places of worship. And you acted like a prostitute* in those places. You gave yourself to every man that came by! ’” Then you took your beautiful jewelry that I gave you. And you used that gold and silver to make statues of men. And you had sex with them too! ’” Then you took the beautiful cloth and made clothes for those statues. You took the perfume and incense I gave you, and you put it in front of those idols. ’” I gave you bread, honey, and oil.

spread ... you This showed that he was agreeing to protect her and care for her. See Ruth 3:1-15.

agreement Here this means the marriage agreement. But it also refers to the Agreement God made with the people of Israel.

Verses 10-13 All the materials in this list are the things used in building the Holy Tent. See Ex. 25-40.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

But you gave that food to your idols. You offered them as a sweet smell to please your false gods. You acted like a prostitute with those false gods!" The Lord my Master said these things.

²¹God said, "You and I had children together. But you took our children. You killed them and gave them to those false gods! But that is only some of the bad things you did when you cheated on me and went to those false gods. ²²You slaughtered* my sons and then passed them through the fire, to those false gods. ²³You left me and did all those terrible things. And you never remembered the time when you were young. You did not remember that you were naked and kicking in blood when I found you.

²⁴"After all those bad things, ... Oh Jerusalem, it will be very bad for you!" The Lord my Master said all these things. ²⁵"After all those things you made that mound for worshiping that false god. You built those places for worshiping false gods on every street corner. ²⁶You built your mounds at the head of every road. Then you degraded your beauty. You used it to catch every man that walked by. You raised your skirt so they could see your legs, and then you were like a prostitute* with those men. ²⁷Then you went to Egypt, your neighbor with the big sex organ. You had sex with him many times to make me angry. ²⁸So I punished you! I took away part of your allowance (*land*). I let your enemies, the daughters (*cities*) of the Philistines do what they wanted to you. Even they were shocked at the bad things you did. ²⁹Then you went to have sex with Assyria. You could not get enough. You were never satisfied. ³⁰So you turned to Canaan, and then to Babylonia. And still you were not satisfied. ³¹You are so weak. You let all those men (*countries*) cause you to sin. You acted just like a prostitute.*" The Lord my Master said those things.

³²God said, "But you were not exactly like a prostitute.* You built your mounds at the head of every road and you built your places of worship at every street corner. You had sex with all those men. But you did not ask them to pay you like a prostitute does. ³³You adulterous woman. You prefer having sex with strangers rather than your own husband. ³⁴Most prostitutes force men to pay them for sex. But you give yourself away to your many lovers. You invite all the men around to come in to have sex with you. ³⁵You are just the opposite of most prostitutes. Most prostitutes force men to pay them. But you pay the men to have sex with you."

³⁶Prostitute, listen to the message from the Lord. ³⁷The Lord my Master says these things: "You have spent your money* and let your lovers and filthy gods see your naked body and have sex with you. You have killed your children and poured out their blood. This was your gift to those false gods. ³⁸So I am bringing all of your lovers together. I will bring all the men you loved and all the men you hated. I will bring them all together and let them see you naked.* They will see you completely naked: ³⁹Then I will punish you. I will punish you as a murderer and a woman that did the sin of adultery. You will be punished as if by an angry and jealous husband. ⁴⁰I will let those lovers have you. They will destroy your mounds. They will burn your places of worship. They will tear off your clothes and take your beautiful jewelry. They will leave you bare and naked like you were when I found you. ⁴¹They will bring a crowd of people and throw rocks at you to kill you. Then they will cut you in pieces with their swords. ⁴²They will burn your house (*temple*). They will punish you so all the other women can see. I will stop you from living like a prostitute. I will stop you from paying money to your lovers. ⁴³Then I

slaughtered Usually, this word means to kill an animal and cut it into pieces for meat. But it often means to kill people like they are animals.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

spent your money Literally, "poured out your copper." This might also mean, "you have done the things that stain you with sin."

let ... naked The Hebrew words are like the word meaning, "to be carried away as a prisoner to a foreign country."

will stop being angry and jealous. I will calm down. I won't be angry any more. "Why will all these things happen? Because you did not remember what happened when you were young. You did all those bad things and made me angry. So I had to punish you for doing those bad things. But you planned even more terrible things." The Lord my Master said those things.

"All the people that talk about you will now have one more thing to say. They will say, 'Like mother, like daughter.' "You are your mother's daughter. You don't care about your husband or your children. You are just like your sister. Both of you hated your husband and your children. You are just like your parents. Your mother was a Hittite and your father was an Amorite. "Your older sister was Samaria. She lived to the north of you with her daughters (*towns*). And your younger sister was Sodom.* She lived to the south of you with her daughters (*towns*). "You did all the terrible things they did. But you also did things that were even worse! "I am the Lord and Master. I am alive. And by my life I promise, your sister Sodom and her daughters never did as many bad things as you and your daughters."

"God said, "Your sister Sodom and her daughters were proud, they had too much to eat, and too much time on their hands. And they did not help poor, helpless people. "Sodom and her daughters became too proud and began to do terrible things in front of me. And when I saw them doing those things, I punished them."

"God said, "And Samaria did only half as many bad things as you did. You did many more terrible things than Samaria! You have done so many more terrible things than your sisters. Sodom and Samaria seem good compared to you. "So you must bear your shame. You have made your sisters look good compared to you. You have done terrible things, so you should be ashamed."

"God said, "I destroyed Sodom and the towns around it. And I destroyed Samaria around it. And Jerusalem, I will destroy you. But I will build those cities again. And Jerusalem, I will build you again too. "I will comfort you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed. "So you and your sisters will be built again. Sodom and the towns around her, Samaria and the towns around her, and you and the towns around you will all be built again."

"God said, "In the past, you were proud and made fun of your sister Sodom. But you won't do that again. "You did that before you were punished, before your neighbors started making fun of you. The daughters (*towns*) of Edom* and Philistia are making fun of you now. "Now you must suffer for the terrible things you did." The Lord said these things.

"The Lord my Master said these things. "You broke your marriage promise. You did not respect our Agreement. "But I remember the agreement we made when you were young. I made an agreement with you that will continue forever! "I will bring your sisters to you, and I will make them your daughters. That was not in our agreement, but I will do that for you. Then you will remember the terrible things you did, and you will be ashamed. "So I will make my agreement with you. And you will know that I am the Lord. "I will be good to you, so you will remember me and be ashamed of the bad things you did. I will make you pure, and you will never have to be ashamed again!" The Lord my Master said those things.

17 Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* tell this story to the family of Israel. Ask them what it means. "Say to them:

A large eagle (*Nebuchadnezzar*) with big wings

Samaria ... Sodom Ezekiel is saying that the people in Judah are just as evil as the people that lived in Samaria and Sodom—And those people were so evil that God completely destroyed those cities.

Edom Or, "Aram."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

came to Lebanon.

The eagle had many feathers covered with spots.

- ⁴ That eagle broke the top out of that big cedar tree (*Lebanon*) and brought it to Canaan.

The eagle set down the branch in the town of businessmen.

- ⁵ Then the eagle took some of the seeds (*people*) from Canaan.

He planted them in good soil.

He planted them by a good river.

- ⁶ The seeds grew and became a grapevine. It was a good vine.

The vine was not tall, but it spread to cover a large area.

The vine grew stems, and smaller vines grew very long.

- ⁷ Then another eagle with big wings saw the grapevine. The eagle had many feathers.

The grapevine wanted this new eagle to care for it.

So it made its roots grow toward this eagle.

Its branches stretched toward this eagle.

The branches grew away from the field it was planted in.

The grapevine wanted the new eagle to water it.

- ⁸ The grapevine was planted in a good field.

It was planted near plenty of water.

It could have grown branches and fruit.

It could have become a very good grapevine."

- ⁹ The Lord my Master said these things. "Do you think that plant will succeed?

No! The new eagle will pull the plant from the ground.

And the bird will break the plant's roots.

It will eat up all the grapes.

Then the new leaves will become dry and die.

That plant will be very weak.

It won't take strong arms or a powerful nation to pull up that plant by the roots.

- ¹⁰ Will the plant grow where it is planted?

No! The hot east wind will blow

and the plant will become dry and die.

It will die there where it was planted."

"The word of the Lord came to me. He said,

¹²"Explain this story to the people of Israel—they always turn against me. Tell them these things: The first eagle is Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia. He came to Jerusalem and took away the king and other leaders. He brought them to Babylonia. "Then Nebuchadnezzar made an agreement with a man from the king's family. Nebuchadnezzar forced that man to make a promise. So this man promised to be loyal to Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah. Then he took all the powerful men away from Judah. "So Judah became a weak kingdom that could not turn against King Nebuchadnezzar. The people were forced to keep the agreement Nebuchadnezzar made with the new king of Judah. "But this new king tried to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar anyway! He sent messengers to Egypt to ask for help. The new king asked for many horse and soldiers. Now, do you think the new king of Judah will succeed? Do you think the new king will have enough power to break the agreement and escape punishment?"

"The Lord my Master says, "By my life, promise this new king will die in Babylonia! Nebuchadnezzar made this man the new king of Judah. But this man broke his promise with Nebuchadnezzar. This new king ignored the agreement. "And the king of Egypt won't be able to save the king of Judah. He might send many soldiers, but Egypt's great power won't save Judah. Nebuchadnezzar's army will build dirt roads and dirt walls to capture the city. Many people will die. "But the king of Judah won't escape. Why? Because he ignored his agreement. He broke his promise to Nebuchadnezzar. "The Lord my Master make this promise: "By my life, I promise I will

punish the king of Judah. Why? Because he ignored my warnings. He broke our agreement.

²⁰I will set my trap, and he will be caught in it. And I will bring him to Babylon and I will punish him in that place. I will punish him because he turned against me. ²¹And I will destroy his army. I will destroy his best soldiers. And I will scatter the survivors to the winds. Then you will know that I am the Lord and that I told you these things."

²²The Lord my Master said these things:

"Then I will take a branch from the tall cedar tree.

I will take a small branch from the top of the tree.

And I myself will plant it on a very high mountain.

²³ I myself will plant it on a high mountain in Israel.

That branch will grow into a tree.

It will grow branches and make fruit.

It will become a beautiful cedar tree.

Many birds will sit on its branches.

Many birds will live in the shadows under its branches.

²⁴ "Then the other trees will know that I make tall trees fall to the ground, and I make small trees grow and become tall.

I make green trees become dry, and I make dry trees become green.

I am the Lord.

If I say that I will do something, then I will do it!"

18 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"You people keep repeating this proverb. Why? You say:

The parents ate the sour grapes,
but the children got the sour taste.

You think you can sin, and some person in the future will be punished for it." ³But the Lord my Master says, "By my life, I promise that people in Israel won't think this proverb is true anymore! I will treat each person just the same. It won't matter if that person is the parent or the child. The person that sins is the

person that will die!

⁴"If a person is good, then he will live! That good person treats people fairly. ⁵That good person does not go to the mountains and share in foods offered to false gods. He does not pray to those filthy idols in Israel. He does not do the sin of adultery with his neighbor's wife. He does not have sex with his wife during her period. ⁶That good person does not take advantage of people. If a person borrows money from him, the good man takes the collateral* and gives the other person the money. And when that person pays him back, then the good man gives the collateral back. The good person gives food to hungry people. And he gives clothes to people that need them. ⁷If a person wants to borrow money, the good man lends him the money. And he does not charge interest on that loan. The good man refuses to be crooked. He is always fair with every person. People can trust him. ⁸He obeys my laws. He thinks about my decisions and learns to be fair and dependable. He is a good person, so he will live.

⁹"But that good person might have a son that does not do any of those good things. The son might steal things and kill people. ¹⁰The son might do any of these bad things. He might go to the mountains and share in foods offered to false gods. That evil son might do the sin of adultery with his neighbor's wife. ¹¹He might mistreat poor, helpless people. He might take advantage of people. He might not give back the collateral* when a person pays his debt. That evil son might pray to those filthy idols and do other terrible things. ¹²A person might need to borrow money from that evil son. The son might lend him the money, but he will force that person to pay interest on that loan. So that evil son won't live. He did terrible things, so he will be put to death. And he is responsible for his own death.

¹³"Now, that evil son might also have a son. But this son might see the bad things his father

collateral Things that a person uses to borrow money. If that person does not pay his debt, then the person he borrowed from can keep those things. It was against Moses' law to take a person's clothes as collateral. See Deuteronomy 24:12-13.

did, and he might refuse to live like his father. That good son treats people fairly. ¹⁵That good son does not go to the mountains and share in foods offered to false gods. He does not pray to those filthy idols in Israel. He does not do the sin of adultery with his neighbor's wife. ¹⁶That good son does not take advantage of people. If a person borrows money from him, the good son takes the collateral* and gives the other person the money. And when that person pays him back, then the good son gives the collateral back. The good son gives food to hungry people. And he gives clothes to people that need them. ¹⁷He helps poor people. If a person wants to borrow money, the good son lends him the money. And he does not charge interest on that loan! The good son obeys my laws and follows my laws. That good son will not be put to death for his father's sins! That good son will live. ¹⁸The father might hurt people and steal things. He might never do anything good for my people! That father will die because of his own sins. But the son won't be punished for his father's sins.

¹⁹"You might ask, 'Why won't the son be punished for his father's sins?' The reason is that the son was fair and did good things! He very carefully obeyed my laws! So he will live. ²⁰The person that sins is the person that will be put to death! A son won't be punished for his father's sins. And a father won't be punished for his son's sins. A good man's goodness belongs to him alone. And a bad man's evil belongs to him alone.

²¹"Now, if a bad person changes his life then he will live and not die. That person might stop doing all the bad things he did. He might begin to carefully obey all my laws. He might become fair and good. ²²God won't remember all the bad things he did. God will remember only his goodness! So that man will live!"

²³The Lord my Master says, "I don't want bad people to die. I want them to change their lives so they can live!"

²⁴"Now, maybe a good man might stop being good. He might change his life and begin to do all the terrible things that bad person had done in the past. (That bad person changed, so he can live!) So if that good person changes, and becomes bad, then God won't remember all the good things that person did. God will remember that that man turned against him and began to sin. So that man will die because of his sin."

²⁵God said, "You people might say, 'God, my Master can't be like that!' But listen, family of Israel. I am like that. You are the people who must change! ²⁶If a good person changes and becomes evil, then he must die for the bad things he does. ²⁷And if a bad man changes and become good and fair, then he will save his life. He will live! ²⁸That person saw how bad he was and came back to me. He stopped doing the bad things he did in the past. So he will live! He won't die!"

²⁹The people of Israel said, "That's not fair! The Lord, my Master can't be like that!"

God said, "I am like that! You are the people who must change! ³⁰Why? Because family of Israel, I will judge each person only for the things that person does!" The Lord my Master said these things. "So come back to me! Stop doing bad things! Don't let those terrible things cause you to sin! ³¹Throw away all the terrible things you made—they only cause you to sin! Change your heart and spirit! Why should you let yourselves die, people of Israel? ³²I don't want to kill you! Please come back and live!" The Lord my Master said those things.

19 God said to me, "You must sing this sad song about the leaders of Israel.

¹"What's wrong, mother lion?

You are lying there with the adult lions.

The mother lion lies down with the young lions.

She has many babies.

²One of those cubs gets up.

He has grown to be a strong young lion.

He has learned to catch his food.

collateral Things that a person uses to borrow money. If that person does not pay his debt, then the person he borrowed from can keep those things. It was against Moses' law to take a person's clothes as collateral. See Deuteronomy 24:12-13.

He killed and ate a man.

- ⁶ The people heard him roar.
And they caught him in their trap!
They put hooks in his mouth,
and carried the young lion to Egypt.

- ⁷ "The mother lion had hoped that cub
would become the leader.
But now she lost all hope.
So she took another of her cubs.
She trained him to be a lion.

- ⁸ He went on hunts with the adult lions.
He became a strong young lion.
He learned to catch his food.
He killed and ate a man.

- ⁹ He attacked the palaces.
He destroyed the cities.
Every person in that country was scared
speechless
when they heard his growl.

- ¹⁰ Then the people living around him
set a trap for him.

- And they caught him in their trap.
¹¹ They put hooks on him and locked him
up.
They had him in their trap.
So they took him to the king of
Babylon.

And now, you can't hear his roar
on the mountains of Israel.

- ¹² "Your mother was like a grapevine
planted by the water.
She had plenty of water,
so she grew many strong vines.

- ¹³ Then she grew a large branch.
That branch was like a walking stick.
That branch was like a king's scepter.*
The vine grew taller and taller.
It had many branches and reached to the
clouds.

- ¹⁴ But the vine was pulled up by the roots,
and thrown down to the ground.
The hot east wind blew and dried its fruit.

The strong branches broke.
And they were thrown into the fire.

- ¹⁵ Now that grapevine is planted in the
desert.
It is a very dry and thirsty land.
¹⁶ The fire from the large branch spread.
The fire destroyed all its twigs and fruit.
So there was no strong walking stick.
There was no king's scepter.*

This was a sad song about death, and it was
sung as a sad song about death."

20 One day, some of the elders (*leaders*)
of Israel came to me to ask the Lord
for advice. This was on the tenth day of the
fifth month (*July*), of the seventh year of
exile. The elders (*leaders*) sat down in front of
me.

Then the word of the Lord came to me. He
said, ¹"Son of man,* speak to the elders
(*leaders*) of Israel. Tell them 'The Lord my
Master says these things: Have you men come
to ask me advice? If you have, then I won't
give it to you. The Lord my Master said these
things.' ²"Should you judge them? Will you
judge them, Son of man?* You must tell them
about the terrible things their fathers have done.
³You must tell them, 'The Lord my Master says
these things: On the day I chose Israel, I raised
my hand to Jacob's family and made a promise
to them in Egypt. I raised my hand and said: 'I
am the Lord your God. ⁴On that day, I
promised to take you out of Egypt and lead you
to the land I was giving to you. That was a
good land filled with many good things.* It was
the most beautiful of all countries!

⁵"I told the family of Israel to throw away
their horrible idols. I told them not to become
filthy with those filthy statues from Egypt. I am
the Lord your God." ⁶But they turned against
me and refused to listen to me. They did not
throw away their horrible idols. They did not
leave their filthy statues in Egypt. So I (*God*)

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a
person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for
the man, Ezekiel.

a good land ... good things Literally, "a land flowing
with milk and honey."

scepter A special stick. Kings and leaders carried scepters to
show they were rulers.

decided to destroy them in Egypt—to let them feel the full force of my anger. ⁹But I did not destroy them. I had already told the people where they were living that I would bring my people out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ¹⁰I brought the family of Israel out of Egypt. I led them into the desert. ¹¹Then I gave them my laws. I told them all my rules. If a person obeys those rules, then he will live. ¹²I also told them about all the special days of rest. Those holidays were a special sign between me and them. They showed that I am the Lord and that I was making them special to me.

¹³“But the family of Israel turned against me in the desert. They did not follow my laws. They refused to obey my rules. And they are good rules,—if a person obeys those rules, then he will live. They treated my special days of rest as if they were not important. They worked on those days many, many times. I decided to destroy them in the desert—to let them feel the full force of my anger. ¹⁴But I did not destroy them. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ¹⁵I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised that I would not bring them into the land I was giving them. That was a good land filled with many good things.* It was the most beautiful of all countries!

¹⁶“The people of Israel refused to obey my rules. They did not follow my laws. They treated my days of rest as if they were not important. They did all these things because their hearts belonged to their filthy idols. ¹⁷But I felt sorry for them, so I did not destroy them. I did not completely destroy them in the desert. ¹⁸I spoke to their children. I told them, ‘Don’t be like your parents. Don’t make yourself filthy with their filthy idols. Don’t follow their laws. Don’t obey their commands. ¹⁹I am the Lord. I am your God. Obey my laws. Keep my

commands. Do the things I tell you. ²⁰Show that my days of rest are important to you. Remember, they are a special sign between me and you. I am the Lord. And those holidays show you that I am your God.

²¹“But those children turned against me. They did not obey my laws. They did not keep my commands. They did not do the things I told them. And those are good laws. If a person obeys them, then he will live. They treated my special days of rest like they were not important. So I decided to destroy them completely in the desert, to let them feel the full force of my anger. ²²But I stopped myself. The other nations saw me bring Israel out of Egypt. I did not want to ruin my good name, so I did not destroy Israel in front of those other people. ²³So I made another promise to those people in the desert. I promised to scatter them among the nations, to send them to many different countries.

²⁴“The people of Israel did not obey my commands. They refused to obey my laws. They treated my special days of rest like they were not important. And they worshiped the filthy idols of their fathers. ²⁵So I gave them laws that were not good. I gave them commands that would not bring life. ²⁶I let them make themselves filthy with their gifts. They even began to sacrifice their own firstborn children. In this way, I would destroy those people. Then they would know that I am the Lord. ²⁷So now, Son of man,* speak to the family of Israel. Tell them, ‘The Lord my Master says these things: The people of Israel said bad things about me and made evil plans against me. ²⁸But I still brought them to the land I promised to give to them. They saw all the hills and green trees, so they went to all those places to worship. They took their sacrifices and anger offerings* to all those places. They offered their sacrifices that made a

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

anger offerings The people called these meals “fellowship offerings,” but Ezekiel is making fun and saying that those meals only made God angry.

a good land ... good things Literally, “a land flowing with milk and honey.”

weet smell, and they offered their drink offerings at those places. ³¹I asked the people of Israel why they were going to those high places. ^{*} And those places of worship are still called "high places" today. ^{*}

³²God said, "The people of Israel did all those bad things. So speak to the family of Israel. Tell them, 'The Lord my Master says these things: You people have made yourselves filthy by doing the things your ancestors did. You have acted like a prostitute. ^{*} You have left me to be with the horrible gods your ancestors worshiped. ³³You are giving the same kind of gifts. You are putting your children in the fire as a gift to your false gods. You are still making yourself filthy with those filthy idols today! Do you really think that I should let you come to me and ask me for advice? I am the Lord and Master. By my life I promise, I won't answer your questions and give you advice! ³⁴You keep saying you want to be like the other nations. You live like the people in other nations. You serve pieces of wood and stone idols!'"

³⁵The Lord my Master says, "By my life, I promise that I will rule over you as king. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! ³⁶I will bring you out of these other nations. I scattered you among these nations. But I will gather you together and bring you back from these countries. But I will raise my powerful arm and punish you. I will show my anger against you! ³⁷I will lead you into a desert like I did before. But this will be a place where other nations live. We will stand face to face and I will judge you. ³⁸I will judge you just like I judged your ancestors ^{*} in the desert near Egypt." The Lord my Master said these things.

³⁹"I will judge you guilty and punish you

according to the Agreement. ^{*} ⁴⁰I will remove all the people that turned against me and sinned against me. I will remove those people from your homeland. They will never again come to the Land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

⁴¹Now, family of Israel, the Lord my Master says these things, "If any person wants to worship his filthy idols, then let him go and worship them. But later, don't think you will get any advice from me! You will not ruin my name any more! Not when you continue to give your gifts to your filthy idols."

⁴²The Lord my Master says, "People must come to my holy mountain—the high mountain in Israel—to serve me! The whole family of Israel will be on their land—they will be there in their country. That is the place you can come to ask me for advice. And you must come to that place to bring me your offerings. You must bring the first part of your crops to me there in that place. You must bring all your holy gifts to me in that place. ⁴³Then I will be pleased with the sweet smell of your sacrifices. That will happen when I bring you back. I scattered you among many nations. But I will gather you together and make you my special people again. And all those nations will see it. ⁴⁴Then you will know that I am the Lord. You will know this when I bring you back to the Land of Israel. That is the land I promised to give to your ancestors. ^{*} ⁴⁵In that country you will remember all the bad things you did that made you filthy. And you will be ashamed. "Family of Israel, you did many bad things. And you should be destroyed because of those bad things. But to protect my good name, I won't give you the punishment you really deserve. Then you will know that I am the Lord. The Lord my Master said these things."

⁴⁶Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ⁴⁷"Son of man, ^{*} look toward the Negev,

high places Places for worshiping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

the southern part of Judah. Speak against the Negev Forest.* "Say to the Negev Forest, 'Listen to the word of the Lord. The Lord my Master said these things: Look, I am ready to start a fire in your forest. The fire will destroy every green tree and every dry tree. The flame that burns won't be put out. All the land from south to north will be burned by the fire. "Then all people will see that I, the Lord, have started the fire. The fire won't be put out!"

"Then I (Ezekiel) said, "Oh, Lord my Master! If I say those things, then the people will say that I am only telling them stories. They won't think that it will really happen!"

21 So the word of the Lord came to me again. He said, "Son of man,* look toward Jerusalem and speak against their holy places. Speak against the land of Israel for me. "Say to the land of Israel, 'The Lord said these things: I am against you! I will pull my sword from its sheath!* I will remove all people from you—the good people and the evil people! 'I will cut both good people and evil people from you. I will pull my sword from its sheath and use it against all people from south to north. "Then all people will know that I am the Lord. And they will know that I have pulled my sword from its sheath. My sword won't go back into its sheath again until it is finished."

"God said to me, "Son of man,* make sad sounds like a sad person with a broken heart. Make these sad sounds in front of the people. "Then they will ask you, 'Why are you making these sad sounds?' Then you must say, 'Because of the sad news that is coming. Every heart will melt with fear. All hands will become weak. Every spirit will become weak. All knees will be like water.' Look, that bad news is coming. These things will happen! The Lord my Master said these things."

Negev Forest God is probably making fun. The Negev is a desert area, there are no forests in the Negev.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

sheath A place for the sword to be kept in when not in use. It was worn around the waist.

The Sword Is Ready

"The word of God came to me. He said, "Son of man,* speak to the people for me. Say these things, 'The Lord my Master says these things:

"Look, a sword, a sharp sword.

And the sword has been polished.

10 The sword was made sharp for killing. It was polished to flash like lightning.

"My son, you ran away from the stick I used to punish you. You refused to be punished with that wooden stick.

11 So the sword has been polished. Now it can be used. The sword was sharpened and polished. Now it can be put in the hand of the killer.

"Shout out and scream, Son of man! Why? Because the sword will be used against my people and all the rulers of Israel! Those rulers wanted war—so they will be with my people when the sword comes! So slap your thigh and make loud noises to show your sadness! "Why? Because it is not just a test: You refused to be punished with the wooden stick, so what else should I use to punish you,' Yes, the sword.' The Lord my Master said those things.

"God said, "Son of man,* clap your hands and speak to the people for me.

"Let the sword come down twice, Yes, three times!

This sword is for killing the people.

This is the sword for the great killing!

This sword will set the people on edge.

15 Their hearts will melt with fear. And many people will be killed by their city gates.

Yes, I chose that sword for killing the people!

The sword shines like lightning.

16 Sword, cut on the right side. Cut on the left side.

Go every place your edge was chosen to

go!

¹⁷ "Then I too will clap my hands.
And I will stop showing my anger.
I, the Lord, have spoken!"

Choosing the Way to Jerusalem

"The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹⁸"Son of man,* draw two roads that the sword if the king of Babylon can use to come to Israel. Both roads will come from the same country (*Babylon*). Then draw a sign at the head of the road to the city. ¹⁹Use the sign, to show which road the sword will use. One road leads to the Ammonite city of Rabbah. The other road leads to Judah, to the protected city, Jerusalem! ²⁰This shows that the king of Babylon is planning the way he wants to attack that area. The king of Babylon has come to the place where the two roads separate. The king of Babylon has used magic, signs to find the future. He shook some arrows. He asked questions from family idols. He looked at the liver* from an animal he killed.

²¹"The signs tell him to take the road on his right, the road leading to Jerusalem! He plans to bring the battering rams.* He will give the command, and his soldiers will begin the killing. They will shout the battle cry. Then they will build a wall of dirt around the city. They will build a dirt road leading up to the walls. They will build wooden towers to attack the city. ²²Those magic, signs mean nothing to the people of Israel. They have the promises they made. But the Lord, will remember their sin! Then the Israelites will be captured."

²³The Lord my Master says this, "You have done many bad things. Your sins are very clear. You forced me to remember that you are guilty. So the enemy will catch you in his hand. ²⁴And you, evil leader of Israel, you will be killed.

Your time of punishment has come! The end is here!"

²⁵The Lord my Master says these things, "Take off the turban!* Take off the crown! The time has come to change. The important leaders will be brought low. And people that are not important now will become important leaders. ²⁶I will completely destroy that city! But this won't happen until the right man becomes the new king. Then I will let him (*the king of Babylon*) have this city."

Prophecy Against Ammon

¹God said, "Son of man,* speak to the people for me. Say these things, 'The Lord my Master says these things to the people of Ammon and their shameful god:

"Look, a sword!

The sword is out of its sheath.*

The sword has been polished!

The sword is ready to kill.

It was polished to flash like lightning!

² Your visions* are useless.

Your magic won't help you.

It is only a bunch of lies.

The sword is now at the throats of evil men.

They will soon be only dead bodies.

Their time has come.

The time has come for their evil to end.

³"Now you can put the sword back in its sheath.* I will judge you in the place where you were created, in the land where you were born. ⁴I will pour out my anger against you. My anger will burn you like a hot wind. I will hand you over to cruel men.* Those men are skilled at killing people. ⁵You will be like fuel for the fire. Your blood will flow deep into the earth—people will never remember you again. I,

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

sheath A place for the sword to be kept in when not in use. It was worn around the waist.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

cruel men This is a word play. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning "to burn."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

arrows ... liver These were ways that people who believed in false gods tried to use to learn the future.

battering rams Heavy logs that soldiers used to break holes into the gates or walls around a city.

the Lord, have spoken!"

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

22 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²³"Son of man,* will you judge? Will you judge the city of murderers (*Jerusalem*)? Will you tell her about all the terrible things she has done? ²⁴You must say, 'The Lord my Master says this: The city is full of murderers. So her time of punishment will come! She made filthy idols for herself. And those idols made her filthy!'

²⁵"People of Jerusalem, you killed many people. You made filthy idols. You are guilty, and the time has come to punish you. Your end has come. Other nations will make fun of you. Those countries will laugh at you. ²⁶People far and near will make fun of you. You have ruined your name. You can hear the loud laughter.

²⁷"Look! In Jerusalem, every ruler of Israel made himself strong so he could kill other people. ²⁸People in Jerusalem don't respect their parents. They hurt foreigners in that city. They cheat orphans and widows* in that place. ²⁹You people hate my holy things. You treat my special days of rest like they are not important. ³⁰People in Jerusalem tell lies about other people. They do this to kill those innocent people. People go to the mountains to worship false gods, and then come to Jerusalem to eat their fellowship meals.

³¹"In Jerusalem, people do many sexual sins. ³²In Jerusalem, people do sexual sins with their father's wife. In Jerusalem, men rape women—even during their monthly time of bleeding. ³³One man does that terrible sin against his own neighbor's wife. Another man has sex with his own daughter-in-law and makes her unclean.* And another rapes his own sister, his father's daughter.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

orphans and widows Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

³⁴"In Jerusalem, you men take money to kill people. You people lend money and charge interest on those loans. You people cheat their neighbors just to make a little money. And you people have forgotten me." The Lord my Master said these things.

³⁵"God said, "Now look! I will slam my hand down and stop you! I will punish you for cheating and killing people. ³⁶'Will you be brave then? Will you be strong at the time I come to punish you? No! I am the Lord. I have spoken. And I will do the things I said! ³⁷I will scatter you among the nations. I will force you to go to many countries. I will completely destroy the filthy things in this city. ³⁸But Jerusalem, you will become unclean.* And the other nations will see all these things happen. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'

Israel Is Like Worthless Waste

¹"The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"Son of man,* bronze, iron, lead, and tin are worthless compared to silver. Workers put silver into fire to make it pure. The silver melts and the workers separate it from the waste., The nation of Israel has become like that worthless waste. ³So the Lord and Master says these things, 'All of you people have become like worthless waste. So I will gather you into Jerusalem. ⁴Workers put silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into a fire. They blow on the fire to make it hotter. Then the metals begin to melt. In the same way, I will put you in my fire and melt you. That fire is my hot anger. ⁵I will put you in that fire. I will blow on the fire of my anger. And you will begin to melt. ⁶Silver melts in the fire (and workers pour off the silver and save it.). In the same way, you will melt in the city. Then you will know that I am the Lord. And you will know that I have poured out my anger against you.'

Ezekiel Speaks Against Jerusalem

¹"The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"Son of man,* speak to Jerusalem. Tell her that she is not pure.* I am angry at that country, **not pure** This is a word play. The Hebrew word also means "not rained on."

so that country has not received its rain. ²The prophets in Jerusalem are making evil plans. They are like a lion—it roars when it begins to eat the animal it caught. Those prophets have destroyed many lives. They have taken many valuable things. They caused many women to become widows* in Jerusalem.

³"The priests have really hurt my teachings. They don't treat my holy things right—they don't show they are important. They treat holy things just like things that are not holy. They treat clean* things just like things that are unclean. They don't teach the people about these things. They refuse to respect my special days of rest. They treat me like I am not important.

⁴"The leaders in Jerusalem are like a wolf eating the animal it has caught. Those leaders attack and kill people just to get rich.

⁵"The prophets don't warn the people—they cover up the truth. They are like workers that don't really fix a wall—they only put plaster over the holes. They only see lies. They do their magic to learn the future, but they only tell lies. They say, 'The Lord my Master said these things.' But they are only lying—the Lord did not speak to them!

⁶"The common people take advantage of each other. They cheat and steal from each other. They treat poor, helpless people like they are not important. They cheat foreigners and they act like there are no laws against it.

⁷"I asked the people to change their lives and protect their country. I asked people to fix the walls. I wanted them to stand by those holes in the wall and fight to protect their city. But no person came to help! ⁸So I will show them my anger—I will completely destroy them! I will punish them for the bad things they have done. It is all their fault!" The Lord my Master said these things.

23 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹"Son of man,* (listen to this story about Samaria and Jerusalem.) There were two sisters. They were daughters of the same mother. ²They became prostitutes* in Egypt while they were still young girls. In Egypt, they first made love and let men touch their nipples and hold their young breasts. ³The older daughter was named Oholah.* And her sister was named Oholibah.* Those sisters became my wives. And we had children. (Oholah is really Samaria. And Oholibah is really Jerusalem.)

⁴"Then Oholah became unfaithful to me—she began to live like a prostitute. She began to want her lovers. She saw the Assyrian soldiers ⁵in their blue uniforms. They were all desirable young men riding horses. They were leaders and officers. ⁶And Oholah gave herself to all those men. All of them were hand-picked soldiers in the Assyrian army. And she wanted them all! She became filthy with their filthy idols. ⁷Besides that, she never stopped her love affair with Egypt. Egypt made love to her when she was a young girl. Egypt was the first lover to touch her young breasts. Egypt poured his untrue love on her. ⁸So I let her lovers have her. She wanted Assyria, so I gave her to them! ⁹They raped* her. They took her children. And they used a sword and killed her. They punished her. And women still talk about her.

¹⁰"Her younger sister, Oholibah, saw all these things happen. But Oholibah did more sins than her sister! She was more unfaithful than Oholah. ¹¹She wanted the Assyrian leaders and officers. She wanted those soldiers in blue uniforms riding their horses. They were all

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

prostitute(s) A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Oholah This name means "Tent." It probably refers to the Holy Tent where the people of Israel went to worship God.

Oholibah This name means "My Tent is in her country."

raped Literally, "revealed her nakedness." The Hebrew word meaning "revealed" is like the word meaning "carried away as a prisoner to a faraway country."

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died. Often these women had no one to care for them.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

desirable young men. ¹³I saw that both women were going to ruin their lives with the same mistakes.

¹⁴"Oholibah continued to be unfaithful to me. In Babylon, she saw pictures of men carved on the walls. These were pictures of Chaldean* men wearing their red uniforms. ¹⁵They wore belts around their waists and long turbans on their heads. All of those men looked like chariot* officers. They all looked like native born Babylonian men. ¹⁶And Oholibah wanted them. ¹⁷So those Babylonian men came to her love bed to have sex with her. They used her and made her so filthy that she became disgusted with them!

¹⁸"Oholibah let everyone see that she was unfaithful. She let so many men enjoy her naked body, that I became disgusted with her—just like I had become disgusted with her sister. ¹⁹Again and again Oholibah was unfaithful to me. And then she remembered the love affair she had as a young girl in Egypt. ²⁰She remembered her lover with the penis like a donkey and a flood of semen like a horse.

²¹"Oholibah, you dreamed of those times when you were young; when your lover touched your nipples and held your young breasts. ²²So Oholibah, the Lord my Master says these things, "You became disgusted with your lovers. But I will bring your lovers here. They will surround you. ²³I will bring all those men from Babylon, especially the Chaldeans. I will bring the men from Pekod, Shoa, and Koa. And I will bring all those men from Assyria. So I will bring all those leaders and officers. They were all desirable young men, chariot* officers and hand-picked soldiers riding their horses. ²⁴Those crowd of men will come to you. They will come riding on their horses and in their chariots.* There will be many, many people. They will have their spears, shields, and helmets. They will gather together around you. I will tell them what you have done to me. And they will punish you their own way. ²⁵I will

show you how jealous I am. They will be very angry and hurt you. They will cut off your nose and ears. They will use a sword and kill you. Then they will take your children, and burn whatever is left of you. ²⁶They will take your nice clothes and jewelry. ²⁷And I will stop your dreams about your love affair with Egypt. You will never again look for them. You will never remember Egypt again!"

²⁸The Lord my Master says these things, "I am giving you to the men you hate. I am giving you to the men you became disgusted with. ²⁹And they will show how much they hate you! They will take everything you worked for. And they will leave you bare and naked! People will clearly see your sins. They will see that you acted like a prostitute and dreamed wicked dreams. ³⁰You did those bad things when you left me to chase after those other nations. You did those bad things when you began to worship their filthy idols. ³¹You followed your sister and lived like her. You, yourself, took the cup of poison and held it in your hands. You caused your own punishment." ³²The Lord my Master says these things:

"You will drink your sister's cup of poison.

It is a tall, wide cup of poison.

That cup holds much poison
(punishment).

People will laugh at you and make fun of you.

³³ You will stagger like a drunk person.
You will become very dizzy.

That is the cup of destruction and devastation.

It is like the cup (punishment) your sister drank.

³⁴ You will drink the poison in that cup.
You will drink it to the last drop.

You will throw down the glass and break it to pieces.

And you will tear at your breasts from the pain.

This will happen because I am the Lord and Master.

And I said these things.

Chaldean An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply, "people from Babylonia."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

³³"So, the Lord my Master said these things, 'Jerusalem, you forgot me. You threw me away and left me behind. So now you must suffer for leaving me and living like a prostitute. You must suffer for your wicked dreams.'"

Judgment Against Oholah and Oholibah

^{*}The Lord my Master said to me, "Son of man,* will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then tell them about the terrible things they have done. ["]They have done the sin of adultery.* They are guilty of murder. They acted like prostitutes—they left me to be with their filthy idols. They had my children. But they forced them to pass through fire. They did this to give food to their filthy idols. ["]They also treated my special days of rest and my holy place like they were not important. ["]They killed their children for their idols,* and then they went into my holy place and made it filthy too! They did this inside my temple!"

["]They have sent for men from faraway places. You sent a messenger to these men. And those men came to see you. You bathed for them, painted your eyes, and put on your jewelry. ["]You sat on a fine bed with a table set before it. You put my incense* and my oil* on this table.

["]The noise in Jerusalem sounded like a crowd of people having a party.* Many people came to the party. People were already drinking as they came in from the desert. They gave bracelets and beautiful crowns to the women.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

my incense A special blend of spices that were burned as a gift to God. This special incense was to be burned only in the temple. See Ex. 30:34-38.

my oil This was the special oil that was to be used for anointing priests and things in the temple to make them holy (special). See Ex. 30:22-33.

party The Hebrew word is like the word for a fellowship offering, a time when people came to share a meal and enjoy themselves together with the Lord. Here it seems this time of worship turned into a wild party. See Deut. 14:22-29, 26:1-15.

["]Then I spoke to one of the women who was worn out from her sexual sins. I told her, 'Will they continue to do sexual sins with her, and she with them?' ["]But they kept going to her like they would go to a prostitute.* Yes, they went again and again to Oholah and Oholibah, those wicked women.

["]But good men will judge them guilty. They will judge those women guilty of the sin of adultery* and murder. Why? Because Oholah and Oholibah have done the sin of adultery* and the blood from people they killed is still on their hands!"

["]The Lord my Master said these things, "Gather the people together. Then let those people punish Oholah and Oholibah. This group of people will punish and make fun of these two women. ["]Then the group will throw stones at them and kill them. Then the group will cut the women to pieces with their swords. They will kill the women's children and burn their houses. ["]In this way, I remove that shame from this country. And all the other women will be warned not do the shameful things you have done. ["]They will punish you for the wicked things you did. And you will be punished for worshiping your filthy idols. Then you will know that I am the Lord and Master."

The Pot and the Meat

24 The word of the Lord my Master came to me. This was on the tenth day of the tenth month (*December*), in the ninth year of exile. He said, ["]Son of man,* write today's date and this note: 'Today the army of the king of Babylon surrounded Jerusalem.' ["]And tell this story to the family that refuses to obey (*Israel*). Tell them these things, 'The Lord my Master says this:

["]Put the pot on the fire.

Put on the pot and pour in the water.

["]Put in the pieces of meat.

Put in every good piece,

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

the thighs and the shoulders.
 Fill the pot with the best bones.
 Use the best animals in the flock.
 Pile the wood under the pot.
 And boil the pieces of meat.
 Boil the soup until even the bones are
 cooked!

“So the Lord my Master says these things:

“It will be bad for the city full of
 murderers.*
 Jerusalem is like, a pot that has spots of
 rust on it.

And those spots can't be removed!
 Take every piece of meat out of the pot!
 Don't eat that meat!
 Don't let the priests choose any of
 that ruined meat.

Jerusalem is like that rusty pot.
 Why? Because the blood from those
 murders is still there!
 She put the blood on the bare rock!
 She did not pour the blood on the
 ground
 and cover it with dirt.*

I put her blood on the bare rock,
 so it would not be covered.
 I did this so people would become angry
 and punish her for killing innocent
 people.”

So the Lord my Master says these things:

“It will be bad for the city full of
 murderers!
 I will pile up plenty of wood for the fire.
 Put plenty of wood under the pot.
 Light the fire.
 Cook the meat well done!
 Mix in the spices.*

And let the bones be burned up.

Then let the pot stand empty on the coals.
 Let it become so hot that its stains*
 begin to glow.
 Those stains will be melted away.
 The rust will be destroyed.

Jerusalem, might work hard to scrub
 away her stains.
 But that 'rust' won't go away!
 Only the fire (punishment) will
 remove that rust!

You sinned against me and became
 stained with sin.
 I wanted to wash you and make you
 clean.
 But the stains would not come out.
 I won't try washing you again
 until my hot anger is finished with you!

“I am the Lord. I said your punishment
 would come, and I will make it happen. I won't
 hold back the punishment. I won't feel sorry for
 you. I will punish you for the bad things you
 did.” The Lord my Master said those things.

The Death of Ezekiel's Wife

Then the word of the Lord came to me. He
 said, “Son of man,* you love your wife very
 much, but I am going to take her away from
 you. Your wife will die suddenly. But you must
 not show your sadness. You must not cry
 loudly. You will cry and your tears will fall,
 but you must make your sad sounds quietly.
 Don't cry out loud for your dead wife. You
 must wear the clothes you normally wear.
 Wear your turban* and your shoes. Don't cover
 your mustache to show your sadness. And
 don't eat the food people normally eat when a
 person dies.”

The next morning I told the people what
 God had said. That evening, my wife died. The

city ... murderers Literally, “bloody city.”

blood ... dust The Law of Moses teaches that if a person
 killed an animal for food, he must pour the blood on the
 ground and cover it with dirt. This showed that he was giving
 the life of that animal back to God. See Lev. 17:1-16 and
 Deut. 12:1-25. If the blood was not covered with dirt, then the
 blood was a witness against the killer. See Gen. 4:10,
 Job 15:18, and Isa. 26:21.

Mix ... spices We are not sure of the meaning of this
 sentence.

stains Or, “bronze.”

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a
 person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for
 the man, Ezekiel.

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece
 of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

next morning I did the things God commanded. ¹⁹Then the people said to me, "Why are you doing these things? What does it mean?"

²⁰Then I said to them, "The word of the Lord came to me. He told me ²¹to speak to the family of Israel. The Lord my Master said, 'Look, I will destroy my holy place. You are proud of that place and sing songs of praise about it. You love to see that place. You really love that place. But I will destroy that place, and your children that you left behind will be killed in battle. ²²But you will do the same things that I have done about my dead wife. You won't cover your mustache to show your sadness. You won't eat the food people normally eat when a person dies. ²³You will wear your turbans* and your shoes. You won't show your sadness. You won't cry. But you will be wasting away because of your sins. You will make your sad sounds quietly to each other. ²⁴So Ezekiel is an example for you. You will do all the same things he did. That time of punishment will come. And then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

²⁵⁻²⁶"Son of man,* I will take away that safe place (*Jerusalem*) from the people. That beautiful place makes them happy. They love to see that place. They really love that place. But at that time, I will take that city and their children away from these people. One of the survivors will come to you with the bad news about Jerusalem. ²⁷At that time, you will be able to speak to that person. You won't be silent any more. In this way, you will be an example for them. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Prophecy Against Ammon

25 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹"Son of man,* look toward the people of Ammon and speak against them for me. ²Say to the people of Ammon: 'Listen to the word of the Lord my Master! The Lord my

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

Master says this: You were happy when my holy place was destroyed. You were against the land of Israel when it was polluted. You were against the family of Judah when the people were carried away as prisoners. 'So I will give you to the people from the east. They will get your land. Their armies will set up their camps in your country. They will live among you. They will eat your fruit and drink your milk.

³⁴"I will make the city Rabbah a pasture for camels and the country of Ammon a sheep pen. Then you will know that I am the Lord. 'The Lord says these things: You were happy that Jerusalem was destroyed. You clapped your hands and stamped your feet. You had fun insulting the land of Israel. ⁷So I will punish you. You will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. You will lose your inheritance. You will die in faraway lands. I will destroy your country! Then you will know that I am the Lord.'"

Prophecy Against Moab and Seir

"The Lord my Master says these things, "Moab and Seir (*Edom*) say, 'The family of Judah is just like any other nation.' ¹I will cut into Moab's shoulder—I will take away its cities which are on its borders, the glory of the land, Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, and Kiriathaim. ¹⁰Then I will give these cities to the people of the east. They will get your land. And I will let those people from the east destroy the people of Ammon. Then everyone will forget that the people of Ammon were a nation. ¹¹So, I will punish Moab. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Prophecy Against Edom

¹²The Lord my Master says these things, "The people of Edom turned against the family of Judah and tried to get even. The people of Edom are guilty." ¹³So the Lord my Master says: "I will punish Edom. I will destroy the people and the animals in Edom. I will destroy the whole country of Edom, all the way from Teman to Dedan. The Edomites will be killed in battle. ¹⁴I will use my people Israel and get

even against Edom. In this way, the people of Israel will show my anger against Edom. Then those people of Edom will know that I punished them." The Lord my Master said these things.

Prophecy Against the Philistines

"The Lord my Master says these things, "The Philistines tried to get even. They were very cruel. They let their anger burn inside them too long!" "So the Lord my Master said, "I will punish the Philistines. Yes, I will destroy those people from Crete. I will completely destroy those people living on the sea coast. "I will punish those people—I will get even. I will let my anger teach them a lesson. Then they will know that I am the Lord!"

The Sad Message About Tyre

26 In the eleventh year of exile, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, "Son of man,* Tyre said bad things about Jerusalem: 'Hurray! The city gate protecting the people is destroyed! The city gate is open for me. The city (*Jerusalem*) is ruined, so I can get plenty of valuable things out of it!'"

"So the Lord my Master says: "I am against you, Tyre! I will bring many nations to fight against you. They will come again and again, like waves on the beach."

"God said, "Those enemy soldiers will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers. I will also scrape the topsoil from her land. I will make Tyre a bare rock. Tyre will become a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets. I have spoken!" The Lord my Master says, "Tyre will be like the valuable things soldiers take in war. Her daughters (*small towns*) on the mainland will be killed in battle. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

Nebuchadnezzar Will Attack Tyre

"The Lord my Master says these things, "I will bring an enemy from the north against Tyre. That enemy is Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon! He will bring a very large army. There will be horses, chariots,* horse soldiers and many, many other soldiers! Those soldiers will be from many different nations. "Nebuchadnezzar will kill your daughters (*small towns*) on the mainland. He will build towers to attack your city. He will build a dirt road around your city. He will build a dirt road leading up to the walls. "He will bring the logs to break down your walls. He will use picks and break down your towers. "There will be so many of his horses that the dust from them will cover you. Your walls will shake at the noise of horse soldiers, wagons, and chariots* when the king of Babylon enters the city through your city gates. Yes, they will come into your city because its walls will be pulled down. "The king of Babylon will come riding through your city. His horses' hoofs* will come pounding over your streets. He will kill your people with swords. The strong columns in your city will fall to the ground. "Nebuchadnezzar's men will take away your riches. They will take the things you wanted to sell. They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses. They will throw your stones and wood houses into the sea like garbage. "So I will stop the sound of your happy songs. People won't hear your harps any more. "I will make you a bare rock. You will be a place by the sea for spreading fishing nets! You won't be built again. Why? Because I, the Lord, have spoken!" The Lord my Master said those things.

Other Nations Will Cry for Tyre

"The Lord my Master says this to Tyre: "The countries along the Mediterranean coast will shake at the sound of your fall. That will happen when your people are hurt and killed. "Then all the leaders of the countries by the sea

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

hoof(s) The hard part of a horse's foot.

will step down from their thrones and show their sadness. They will take off their special robes. They will take off their beautiful clothes. Then they will put on their 'clothes of shaking' (fear). They will sit on the ground and shake with fear. They will be shocked at how quickly you were destroyed. ¹⁷They will sing this sad song about you:

"O Tyre, you were a famous city.*

People came from across the sea to live in you.*

You were famous,
but now you are gone!

You were strong on the sea,
and so were the people living in you.
You made all the people living on the
mainland afraid of you.

¹⁸ Now, on the day you fall,
the countries along the coast will shake
with fear.

You started many colonies along the
coast.

Now those people will be scared when
you are gone!"

¹⁹The Lord my Master says these things,
"Tyre, I will destroy you, and you will become
an old, empty city. No one will live there. I will
cause the sea to flow over you. The great sea
will cover you. ²⁰I will send you down into that
deep hole—to the place where dead people are.
You will join the people that died long ago. I
will send you to the world below, like all the
other old, empty cities. You will be with all the
others that go down to the grave. No one will
live in you then. You will never again be in the
land of the living! ²¹Other people will be afraid
about what happened to you. You will be
finished! People will look for you, but they will
never find you again!" That is what the Lord
my Master says.

Tyre the Great Center of Trade on the Seas

27 The word of the Lord came to me
again. He said, ¹"Son of man,* sing
this sad song about Tyre. ²Say these things
about Tyre:

"Tyre, you are the door to the seas.

You are the merchant* for many
nations.

You travel to many countries along
the coast."

The Lord my Master says these things:

"Tyre, you think that you are so
beautiful.

You think you are perfectly beautiful!

⁴ The Mediterranean Sea is the border
around your city.

Your builders made you perfectly
beautiful!

You are like the ships that sail from
you."

⁵ Your builders used cypress trees from
Senir (*Mount Hermon*)
to make all your planks.

They used cedar trees from Lebanon
to make your mast.

⁶ They used oak trees from Bashan
to make your oars.

They used pine trees from Cyprus
to make the cabin on your deck.*

And they decorated this shelter with
ivory.

⁷ For your sail,
they used colorful linen made in Egypt.
That sail was your flag.

Your curtains for the cabin, were blue
and purple.

They came from the coast of Cyprus.*

⁸ Men living in Sidon and Arvad rowed
your boats for you.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a
person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for
the man, Ezekiel.

merchant A person who earns his living buying and selling
things.

deck The floor of a ship.

Cyprus Literally, "Elishah." This might be the area near
Enkomi, Cyprus or it might be the Greek islands.

you ... city This can also mean, "People have cried for
you."

People ... you This can also mean, "People have lived in
you for a long time."

Tyre, your wise men were pilots on your ships.

- * The elders (*leaders*) and wise men from Byblos* were on board to help put caulking* between the boards on your ship. All the ships of the sea and their sailors came to trade and do business with you.

¹⁰“Men from Persia, Lud, and Put were in your army. They were your men of war. They hung their shields and helmets on your walls. They brought honor and glory to your city. ¹¹Men from Arvad and your own soldiers were guards standing on the wall around your city. Your own brave men made your beauty perfect.

¹²“Tarshish* was one of your best customers. They traded silver, iron, tin, and lead for all the wonderful things you sold. ¹³People in Greece, Turkey, and the area around the Black Sea traded with you. They traded slaves and bronze for the things you sold. ¹⁴People from the nation* of Togarmah traded horses, war horses, and mules for the things you sold. ¹⁵The people of Rhodes* traded with you. You sold your tusk in many places. People brought ivory tusks and ebony wood to pay you. ¹⁶Edom traded with you because you had so many good things. (The people of Edom, traded emeralds, purple cloth, fine needlework, fine linen, coral* and rubies for the things you sold.

¹⁷“The people in Judah and Israel traded with you. They paid for the things you sold with the wheat, olives, early figs, honey, oil, and balm.* ¹⁸Damascus was a good customer. They traded with you for the many wonderful things you had. They traded wine from Helbon

and white wool for those things. ¹⁹Damascus traded wine from Uzal for the things you sold. They paid wrought iron, cassia* and sugar cane for those things. ²⁰Dedan provided good business. They traded with you for saddlecloths and for riding horses. ²¹Arabia and all the leaders of Kedar traded lambs, rams, and goats for your goods. ²²The merchants* of Sheba and Raamah traded with you. They traded all the best spices and every kind of precious stone and gold for your goods. ²³Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants* of Sheba, Asshur and Kilmad traded with you. ²⁴They paid with the best clothes, clothes from blue and fine needlework, carpets of many colors, tightly wound ropes and things made from cedar wood. These were the things they traded with you. ²⁵The ships of Tarshish carried the things you sold.

“The sea made you rich and famous.

- * The men that rowed your boats carried you across the great and powerful seas. But the powerful east wind will destroy your ship at sea. ²⁷ And all your wealth will spill into the sea. Your wealth, your trade, and the things you sell, your sailors and your pilots, your men who put caulking* between the boards on your ship, your sellers, and all the soldiers in your city, and your crew will all sink into the sea. That will happen on the day you are destroyed!

- * “You send your businessmen to faraway places. Those places will shake with fear when they hear your pilot’s cry! ²⁹ Your whole crew will jump ship. The sailors and pilots will jump from their ship

Byblos Literally, “Gebel.”

caulking Something like tar to make a ship watertight so it won’t sink.

Tarshish This is probably a city in Spain.

nation Literally, “house.” This might mean the royal family of that country.

Rhodes Or, “Dedan.” See vs. 20.

coral Sea animals that leave skeletons after they die. The skeletons are hard like rocks and are used for jewelry.

balm An ointment from some kinds of trees and plants. It is used as medicine.

cassia A spice or perfume.

merchant(s) A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

and swim to the shore.

- ³⁰ They will be very sad about you.
They will cry.
They will throw dust on their heads,
They will roll in ashes.
- ³¹ They will shave their heads for you.
They will put on clothes of sadness.
They will cry for you.
They will be like someone crying
for a person that died.
- ³² "And in their heavy crying they will sing
this sad song about you, and cry about you.
- "No one is like Tyre!
Tyre is destroyed,
in the middle of the sea!
- ³³ Your businessmen sailed across the seas.
You satisfied many people
with your great wealth and the things
you sold.
You made the kings of the earth rich!
- ³⁴ But now you are broken by the seas,
and by the deep waters.
All the things you sell
and all your people have fallen!
- ³⁵ All the people living on the coast
are shocked about you.
Their kings are terribly afraid.
Their faces show their shock.
- ³⁶ The merchants* in other nations whistle
about you.
The things that happened to you will
scare people.
Why? Because you are finished.
You will be no more."

Tyre Thinks It Is like a God

28 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²⁴"Son of man,* say to the ruler of Tyre, 'The Lord my Master says these things:

"You are very proud!

merchant(s) A person who earns his living by buying and selling things.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

And you say,
"I am a god!
I sit on the seat of gods
in the middle of the seas."

- "But you are a man and not God!
You only think you are a god.
- ³ You think you are wiser than Danel!*
You think you can find out all secrets!
- ⁴ Through your wisdom and understanding
you have gotten riches for yourself.
And you put gold and silver in your
treasuries.
- ⁵ Through your great wisdom and trade,
you have made your riches grow.
And now you are proud because of those
riches.
- ⁶ "So the Lord my Master says these things:
"You thought you were like a god.
- ⁷ I will bring strangers to fight against you.
They are most terrible among the
nations!
They will pull out their swords
and use them against the beautiful
things your wisdom brought you.
They will ruin your glory.
- ⁸ They will bring you down to the grave.
You will be like a sailor that died at sea.
- ⁹ That person will kill you.
Will you still say,
"I am a god"?"
At that time, he will have you in his
power.
You will see that you are a man, not
God!
- ¹⁰ Strangers will treat you like a foreigner*
and kill you.
Those things will happen because,
I gave the command!"
- The Lord my Master said those things.

¹¹The word of the Lord came to me. He said,
¹²"Son of man,* sing this sad song about the
king of Tyre. Say to him, 'The Lord my Master
says these things:

Danel An ancient wise man.

foreigner Literally, "uncircumcised." To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

- "You were the ideal man.
 You were full of wisdom.
 You were perfectly handsome.
- ¹³ You were in Eden,
 the Garden of God.
 You had every precious stone—
 rubies, topaz, and diamonds;
 beryls, onyx, and jasper;
 sapphires, turquoise, and emeralds.
 And each of these stones was set in gold.
 You were given this beauty
 on the day you were created.
 God made you strong.

- ¹⁴ "You were one of the chosen Cherub
 angels.*
 Your wings, spread over my throne,
 And I put you on the holy mountain of
 God.
 You walked among the jewels that
 sparkled like fire.
- ¹⁵ You were good and honest
 when I created you.
 But then you became evil.
- ¹⁶ Your business brought you many riches,
 But they also put cruelty inside you.
 And you sinned.
 So I treated you like you were some
 unclean thing—
 I threw you off the mountain of God.
 You were one of the special Cherub
 angels—
 Your wings, spread over my throne,
 But I forced you to leave the jewels
 that sparkled like fire.

- ¹⁷ "You became proud because of your
 beauty.
 Your glory ruined your wisdom.
 So I threw you down to the ground.
 And now other kings stare at you.
- ¹⁸ You did many wrong things.
 You were a very crooked businessman.

In this way, you made the holy places
 unclean.
 So I brought fire from among you.
 It burned you!
 You became ashes on the ground.
 Now everyone can see your shame.

- ¹⁹ All the people in other nations
 were shocked about what happened to
 you.
 What happened to you will make people
 very afraid.
 You are finished!"

The Message Against Sidon

²⁰ The word of the Lord came to me. He said,
²¹ "Son of man,* look toward Sidon and speak
 for me against that place. ²² Say, 'The Lord my
 Master says these things:

- "I am against you, Sidon!
 Your people will learn to respect me!
 I will punish Sidon.
 Then people will know that I am the
 Lord.
 Then they will learn that I am holy
 and they will treat me that way.
²³ I will send disease and death to Sidon.
 The sword (*enemy soldiers*) outside the
 city
 will bring that death.
 Then they will know that I am the
 Lord!

The Nations Will Stop Making Fun of Israel

²⁴ "In the past, the countries around Israel
 hated her. But bad things will happen to those
 other countries. And there will be no more
 sharp sticks or thorn bushes to hurt the family
 of Israel. Then they will know that I am the
 Lord and Master."

²⁵ The Lord my Master says these things, "I
 scattered the people of Israel among other
 nations. But I will gather the family of Israel
 together again. Then those nations will know

Cherub angels These angels were often used like guards
 to be around the king (God) or to protect things (the Garden
 of Eden). Cherub angels were like guards by the king's throne
 on the Box of the Agreement.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a
 person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for
 the man, Ezekiel.

that I am holy and they will treat me that way. At that time, the people of Israel will live in their land—I gave that land to my servant Jacob. ²⁸They will live safely in the land. They will build houses and plant vineyards. I will punish the nations around them that hated them. Then the people of Israel will live in safety. And they will know that I am the Lord their God."

The Message Against Egypt

29 On the twelfth day of the tenth month (*December*) of the tenth year of exile, the word of the Lord my Master came to me. He said, ¹"Son of man,* look toward Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Speak for me against him and Egypt. ²Say, 'The Lord my Master says these things:

"I am against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

You are the great monster*
lying beside the Nile River.

You say,

"This is my river!
I made this river!"

⁴⁻⁵ "But I will put hooks in your jaws.

The fish in the Nile River will stick to
your scales.

I will pull you and your fish up out of
your rivers
and on the dry land.

You will fall on the ground,

And no one will pick you up or bury
you.

I will give you to the wild animals and
birds.

You will be their food.

⁶ Then all the people living in Egypt
will know that I am the Lord!

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

great monster There were ancient stories about a sea monster that fought against God. The prophets called Egypt that sea monster many times. But here this might mean the crocodiles that rest on the banks of the Nile River.

"Why will I do these things?"

Because the people of Israel leaned on
Egypt for support.

But Egypt was only a weak stick of reed.

⁷ The people of Israel leaned on Egypt for
support,
and Egypt only pierced their hands and
shoulder.

They leaned on you for support,
but you broke and twisted their back."

⁸ So the Lord my Master says these things:

"I will bring a sword against you.

I will destroy all your people and animals.

⁹ Egypt will be empty and destroyed.

Then they will know that I am the
Lord."

God said, "Why will I do those things? Because you said, 'This is my river. I made this river.' ¹⁰So, I (*God*) am against you. I am against the many branches of your Nile River. I will destroy Egypt completely. The cities will be empty from Migdol to Aswan, and as far as the border of Ethiopia. ¹¹No person or animal will pass through Egypt. ¹²No one will live in Egypt for 40 years. I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations. I will plant them in foreign lands."

¹³The Lord my Master says these things, "I will scatter the people of Egypt among many nations. But at the end of 40 years, I will gather those people together again. ¹⁴I will bring back the Egyptian captives. I will bring back the Egyptians to the land of Pathros, to the land where they were born. But their kingdom won't be important. ¹⁵It will be the least important kingdom. It will never again lift itself above the other nations. I will make them so small that they won't rule over the nations. ¹⁶And the family of Israel will never again depend on Egypt. The Israelites will remember their sin—they will remember that they turned to Egypt for help and not to God. And they will know that I am the Lord and Master."

Babylon Will Get Egypt

¹On the first day of the first month (*March*) in the twenty-seventh year of exile, the word

of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹⁸"Son of man,* Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, made his army fight hard against Tyre. They shaved every soldier's hair. Every shoulder was rubbed bare from carrying heavy loads. Nebuchadnezzar and his army worked hard to defeat Tyre. But they got nothing from all that hard work. ¹⁹So the Lord my Master says these things, "I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. And Nebuchadnezzar will carry away Egypt's people. Nebuchadnezzar will take the many valuable things in Egypt. This will be the pay for Nebuchadnezzar's army. ²⁰I have given Nebuchadnezzar the land of Egypt as a reward for the hard work he did. Why? Because they worked for me!" The Lord my Master said these things!

²¹"On that day I will make the family of Israel strong. And your people will make fun of the Egyptians. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The Army of Babylon Will Attack Egypt

30 The word of the Lord came to me again. He said, ¹"Son of man,* speak for me. Say, 'The Lord my Master says these things:

²"Cry and say,
"That terrible day is coming."

³ That day is near!
Yes, the Lord's day for judging is near.
It will be a cloudy day,
It will be the time for judging the nations!

⁴ A sword will come against Egypt!
People in Ethiopia will shake with fear,
at the time that Egypt falls.
The army of Babylon will take Egypt's people away as prisoners.
Egypt's foundations will be torn down!

⁵"Many people made peace agreements with Egypt. But all those people from Ethiopia,

Put, Lud, all Arabia, Libya and the people of Israel* will be destroyed!

⁶"The Lord my Master says these things:

⁷"Yes, those who support Egypt will fall!
The pride of her power will go down.
The people in Egypt will be killed in battle,
all the way from Migdol to Aswan."
The Lord my Master said those things!

⁸"Egypt will join the other countries that were destroyed.
Egypt will be one of those empty lands.
⁹ I will start a fire in Egypt,
and all her helpers are destroyed.
Then they will know that I am the Lord!

¹⁰"At that time, I will send out messengers. They will go in ships to carry the bad news to Ethiopia. Ethiopia now feels safe. But the people of Ethiopia will shake with fear at the time Egypt is punished. That time is coming!

¹¹"The Lord my Master says these things:

¹²"I will use Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon,
and I will destroy the people of Egypt.
¹³ Nebuchadnezzar and his people are the most terrible of the nations.
And I will bring them to destroy Egypt.
They will pull out their swords against Egypt.
They will fill the land with dead bodies.
¹⁴ I will make the Nile River become dry land.
Then I will sell the dry land to evil people.
I will use strangers to make that land empty.
I, the Lord, have spoken!"

The Idols of Egypt Will Be Destroyed

¹"The Lord my Master says these things:

people of Israel Literally, "sons of the Agreement." This might mean "all the people that made peace agreements with Egypt" or it might mean "Israel, the people that made the Agreement with God."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

"I will also destroy the idols* in Egypt.
I will take the statues away from
Memphis.

There won't be a leader any more in the
land of Egypt,
and I will put fear in the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ I will make Pathros empty.
I will start a fire in Zoan.

I will punish No,

¹⁵ And I will pour out my anger against Sin,
the fortress* of Egypt!

I will destroy the people of No.

¹⁶ I will start a fire in Egypt;
The place named Sin will be in great
pain.

The soldiers will break into the city No,
and Memphis will have new troubles
every day.

¹⁷ The young men of On and Pi-beseth
will die in battle.
And the women will be captured and
taken away.

¹⁸ It will be a dark day in Tahpanhes
when I break Egypt's control.* Egypt's
proud power will be finished!

A cloud will cover Egypt,
and her daughters will be captured and
taken away.

¹⁹ So I will punish Egypt.
Then they will know I am the Lord!"

Egypt Will Become Weak Forever

²⁰On the seventh day of the first month
(*March*) of the eleventh year of exile, the
word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²¹"Son
of man,* I have broken the arm (*power*) of
Pharaoh, king of Egypt. No one will wrap his
arm with a bandage. It won't heal. So his arm
won't be strong enough to hold a sword."

²²The Lord my Master says these things, "I
am against Pharaoh, king of Egypt. I will break

both his arms, the strong arm and the arm that
is already broken. I will make the sword fall
from his hand. ²³I will scatter the Egyptians
among the nations. ²⁴I will make the arms of the
king of Babylon strong. I will put my sword in
his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh.
Then Pharaoh will cry out in pain, the kind of
cry that a dying man makes. ²⁵So I will make
the arms of the king of Babylon strong, but the
arms of Pharaoh will fall. Then they will know
that I am the Lord.

"I will put my sword in the hand of the king
of Babylon. Then he will stretch the sword out
against the land of Egypt. ²⁶I will scatter the
Egyptians among the nations. Then they will
know that I am the Lord!"

Assyria Is Like A Cedar Tree

31 On the first day of the third month in
the eleventh year of exile, the word
of the Lord came to me. He said, ²"Son of
man,* say these things to Pharaoh, king of
Egypt, and to his people:

"Who are you like in your greatness?

³ Assyria was a cedar tree in Lebanon
With beautiful branches,
With forest shade,
And very tall.

Its top was among the clouds!

⁴ The water made the tree grow.

The deep river made the tree tall.

Rivers flowed around the place where the
tree was planted,

Only its streams flowed to all other
trees of the field.

⁵ So the tree was taller than all the trees of
the field.

And it grew many branches.

There was plenty of water,
so the tree branches spread out.

⁶ All the birds of the sky made their nests
in the tree's branches.

And all the animals of the field gave
birth under the tree's branches.

All the great nations lived in the tree's
shade!

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for
protection.

control Literally, "yoke."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a
person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for
the man, Ezekiel.

- ⁷ So the tree was beautiful in its greatness,
and in its long branches.
Why? Because its roots reached to plenty
of water!
- ⁸ Even the cedar trees in God's garden
were not as big as this tree.
Cypress trees did not have as many
branches.
Plane-trees did not have such branches.
No tree in God's garden
was as beautiful as this tree.
- ⁹ I made the tree beautiful with many
branches,
And all the trees in Eden, God's garden,
were jealous!"

"So the Lord my Master says these things:
"The tree has grown tall. It has put its top
among the clouds. The tree is proud because it
is tall. "So I will let a powerful king have that
tree. The ruler will punish the tree for the bad
things it did. I take that tree out of my garden.
"Strangers—the most terrible of the nations—cut
it down and left it. The tree's branches fell on
the mountains and in all the valleys. Those
broken limbs drifted on the rivers flowing
through that land. There was no more shadow
under that tree, so all the people of left. "Now
the birds live in that fallen tree. Wild animals
walk over its fallen branches.

"Now, none of the trees by that water will
be proud. They won't try to reach the clouds.
None of the strong trees that drink that water
will brag about being tall. Why? Because all of
them have been appointed to die. They will all
go down into the world below—to Sheol, the
place of death. They will be with the other
people who died and went down into that deep
hole."

"The Lord my Master says these things,
"On the day that the tree went down to Sheol,*
I caused people to mourn.* I covered the deep
water with sadness for him.* I held back the

tree's rivers. And the water for the tree stopped
flowing. I made Lebanon mourn* for it. All the
trees of the field became sick with sadness for
that big tree. "I made the tree fall—and the
nations shook with fear at the sound of the tree
falling. I made the tree go down to the place of
death. It went down to be with the other people
that went down into that deep hole. In the past,
all the trees of Eden, the best of Lebanon, drank
that water. Those trees were comforted in the
world below. "Yes, those trees also went down
with the big tree to the place of death. They
joined the people that were killed in battle. That
big tree made the other trees strong. Those trees
had lived under the big tree's shadow among
the nations.

"So Egypt, which tree in Eden should I
compare you to? You will go down with the
trees of Eden to the world below. You will lie
in the place of death with those foreigners,*
and with the people killed in battle. This will
happen to Pharaoh and all his people!" The
Lord my Master said those things.

Pharaoh: a Lion Or a Dragon?

32 On the first day of the twelfth month
(February) in the twelfth year of
exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He
said, "Son of man,* sing this sad song about
Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Say to him:

"You thought you were like a powerful
young lion
walking proud among the nations.
But really, you are like the dragon* in the
seas.
You snort with your nostrils.
And make the waters muddy with your

foreigners Literally, "uncircumcised." This means, "to have
the foreskin cut off." This was done to every Jewish male to
show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See
Gen. 17:9-14.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a
person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for
the man, Ezekiel.

dragon This might be a crocodile, a hippopotamus, or a giant
sea creature. The giant sea creature represented the power of
the sea, and Nile River made Egypt a powerful nation.

Sheol The place where people go when they die. Usually this
means the grave, but it can mean the place where spirits go.
mourn Crying and showing sadness for a person that died.
I covered ... him This is a word play. Instead of the
water covering the tree, the water is covered with the cloth of
sadness.

feet.

You stir up the rivers of Egypt.”

³The Lord my Master says these things:

“I have gathered many people together.

Now I will throw my net over you.

Then those people will pull you in.

⁴ Then I will drop you on the dry ground.

I will throw you down in the field.

I will cause all the birds to come to eat you.

I will let wild animals from every place come to eat you and be full.

⁵ I will scatter your body on the mountains.

I will fill the valleys with your dead body.

⁶ I will pour your blood on the mountains,

and it will soak down into the ground.

The rivers will be full of you.

⁷ I will make you disappear.

I will cover the sky
and make the stars dark.

I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will shine.

⁸ I will make all the shining lights in the sky

become dark over you.

I will cause your whole country to be dark.

“Many people will be sad and upset when they learn that I brought an enemy to destroy you. Nations you don’t even know will be upset. ⁹I will make many people shocked about you. Their kings will be terribly afraid about you, when I swing my sword before them. The kings will shake with fear every moment on the day you fall. Each king will be afraid for his own life.”

“Why? Because the Lord my Master says these things: “The sword of the king of Babylon will come to fight against you. ¹¹I will use those soldiers to kill your people in battle. Those soldiers come from the most terrible of the nations. They will destroy the things Egypt is proud of. The people of Egypt will be destroyed. ¹²There are many animals by the rivers in Egypt. I will also destroy all those animals! People won’t make the waters muddy

with their feet any more. The hoofs of cows won’t make the water muddy any more. ¹⁴So I will make the water in Egypt calm. I will cause their rivers to run slowly—they will be slick like oil.” The Lord my Master said those things. ¹⁵“I will make the land of Egypt empty. That land will lose everything. I will punish all the people living in Egypt. Then they will know that I am the Lord and Master!”

¹⁶“This is a sad song that people will sing for Egypt. The daughters (*cities*) in other nations will sing this sad song about Egypt. They will sing it as a sad song about Egypt and all its people.” The Lord my Master said those things!

Egypt to Be Destroyed

⁹On the fifteenth day of that month, in the twelfth year of exile, the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹⁰“Son of man,* cry for the people of Egypt. Lead Egypt and those daughters from powerful nations to the grave. Lead them to the world below where they will be with the other people that went down into that deep hole.

¹¹“Egypt, you are no better than anyone else! Go down to the place of death. Go lie down with those foreigners.*

¹²“Egypt will go to be with all the other men that were killed in battle. The enemy has pulled her and all her people away.

¹³“Strong and powerful men were killed in battle. Those foreigners went down to the place of death. And from that place, those men will speak to Egypt and his helpers. They too will be killed in battle.

¹⁴“Assyria and all its army are there in the place of death. Their graves are deep down in that deep hole. All those Assyrian soldiers were killed in battle. Assyria’s army is around its grave. When they were alive, they made people

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying “a person,” or “a human being.” But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

foreigners Literally, “uncircumcised.” This means, “to have the foreskin cut off.” This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

afraid. But now all of them are quiet—they were all killed in battle.

²⁴"Elam is there and all its army is around her grave. All of them were killed in battle. Those foreigners went deep down into the ground. When they were alive, they made people afraid. But they carried their shame with them down to that deep hole. ²⁵"They have made a bed for Elam and all its soldiers that were killed in battle. Elam's army is all around its grave. All those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they scared people. But they carried their shame with them down into that deep hole. They were put with all the other people that were killed.

²⁶"Meshech, Tubal, and all their armies are there. Their graves are around it. All of those foreigners were killed in battle. When they were alive, they made people afraid. ²⁷"But now they are lying down by the powerful men that died long, long ago! They were buried with their weapons of war. Their swords will be laid under their heads. But their sins are on their bones. Why? Because when they were alive, they scared people.

²⁸"Egypt, you too will be destroyed. And you will lie down by those foreigners. You will lie with those other soldiers that were killed in battle.

²⁹"Edom is there also. His kings and other leaders are there with him. They were powerful soldiers too. But now they lie with the other men that were killed in battle. They are lying there with those foreigners. They are there with the other people that went down into that deep hole.

³⁰"The rulers from the north are there, all of them! And there are all the soldiers from Sidon. Their strength scared people. But they are embarrassed. Those foreigners lie there with the other men that were killed in battle. They carried their shame with them down into that deep hole.

³¹"Pharaoh will see the people that went down to the place of death. He and all his people with him will be comforted. Yes, Pharaoh and all his army will be killed in battle." The Lord my Master said these things.

³²"When Pharaoh was alive, I made people afraid of him. But now, he will lie down with those foreigners. Pharaoh and his army will lie down with the other soldiers that were killed in battle." The Lord my Master said those things.

God Chooses Ezekiel To Be a Watchman for Israel

33 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹"Son of man,* speak to your people. Say to them, 'I might bring enemy soldiers to fight against this country. When that happens people choose a man to be the watchman. ²If this guard sees the enemy soldiers coming, then he blows the trumpet and warns the people. 'If people hear the warning but ignore it, then the enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. That person will be responsible for his own death. ³He heard the trumpet, but he ignored the warning. So he is to blame for his death. If he had paid attention to the warning, then he could have saved his own life.

⁴"But maybe that guard sees the enemy soldiers coming, but does not blow the trumpet. That guard did not warn the people. The enemy will capture them and take them away as prisoners. That person will be taken away because he sinned. But the guard will also be responsible for that man's death.

⁵"Now, Son of man,* I am choosing you to be a watchman for the family of Israel. If you hear a message from my mouth, you must warn the people for me. 'I might say to you, 'This evil person will die.' Then you must go warn that person for me. If you don't warn that evil person and tell him to change his life, then that evil person will die because he sinned. But I will make you responsible for his death. ⁶But if you do warn the evil person to change his life and stop sinning, and if he refuses to stop sinning, then he will die because he sinned. But you have saved your life.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

The Lord Does Not Want to See People Be Destroyed

¹⁰"So, Son of man,* speak to the family of Israel for me. Those people might say, 'We have sinned and broken the law. Our sins are too heavy to bear. We rot away because of those sins. What can we do to live?'

¹¹"You must say to them, 'The Lord my Master says: On my life, I promise, I don't enjoy seeing people die—not even evil people! I don't want them to die. I want those evil people to come back to me. I want them to change their lives so they can really live! So come back to me! Stop doing bad things! Why must you die, family of Israel?'

¹²"And Son of man,* say to your people: 'The good things a person did in the past won't save him if he becomes bad and begins to sin. And the bad things a person did in the past won't destroy him if he turns from his evil. So remember, the good things a person did in the past won't save him if he begins to sin.

¹³"Maybe I will tell a good person that he will live. But maybe that good person will begin to think that the good things he did in the past will save him. So he might begin to do bad things. But I won't remember the good things he did in the past! No, he will die because of the bad things he begins to do.

¹⁴"Or maybe I will tell a bad person that he will die. But he might change his life. He might stop sinning and begin to live right. He might become good and fair. ¹⁵He might give back the things he took when he loaned money. He might pay for the things he stole. He might begin to follow the laws that give life. He stops doing bad things. Then that person will surely live. He won't die. ¹⁶I won't remember the bad things he did in the past. Why? Because now he lives right and is fair. So he will live!

¹⁷"But your people say, 'That's not fair! The Lord, my Master can't be like that!'

"But they are the people that are not fair! They are the people who must change! ¹⁸If a

good person stops doing good things and begins to sin, then he will die because of his sins. ¹⁹And if an evil person stops doing bad things and begins to live right and be fair, then he will live! ²⁰But you people still say that I am not fair. But I am telling you the truth. Family of Israel, each person will be judged for the things he does!"

"Jerusalem Has Been Taken"

²¹On the fifth day of the tenth month (*December*) in the twelfth year of exile, a person came to me from Jerusalem. He had escaped from the battle there. He said, "The city (*Jerusalem*) has been taken!"

²²Now the power of the Lord my Master had come on me the evening before that person came to me. (God made me not able to speak.) At the time that person came to me, the Lord had opened my mouth and let me speak again. ²³Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ²⁴"Son of man,* there are Israelite people living in the ruined cities in Israel. Those people are saying, 'Abraham was only one man, and God gave him all this land. Now, we are many people, so surely this land belongs to us! It is our land!'

²⁵"You must tell them that the Lord and Master says these things, 'You eat meat with the blood still in it. You look to your idols* for help. You murder people. So why should I give you this land? ²⁶You depend on your own sword. Each of you does terrible things. Each of you does sexual sins with his neighbor's wife. So you cannot have the land!'

²⁷"You must tell them that the Lord and Master says these things: On my life I promise, those people living in those ruined cities will be killed with a sword! If anyone is out in the country, I will let animals kill him and eat him. If people are hiding in the fortresses* and the caves, they will die from disease. ²⁸I will make the land empty and a waste. That country will lose all the things it

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

fortress A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

was proud of. The mountains of Israel will become empty. No one will pass through that place. ²⁸Those people have done many terrible things. So I will make that land an empty wasteland. Then these people will know that I am the Lord.”

²⁹“And now, about you, Son of man.* Your people lean against the walls and stand in their doorways, and they talk about you. They tell each other, ‘Come on, let’s go hear what the Lord says.’ ³⁰So they come to you like they are my people. They sit in front of you like they are my people. They hear your words. But they won’t do the things you say. They only want to do what feels good. They only want to cheat people and make more money.”

³¹“You are nothing to these people but a singer singing love songs. You have a good voice. You play your instrument well. They hear your words, but they won’t do the things you say. ³²But the things you sing about really will happen. And then the people will know that there really was a prophet living among them!”

Israel Is Like a Flock of Sheep

34 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹“Son of man,* speak against the shepherds (*leaders*) of Israel for me. Speak to them for me. Tell them that the Lord and Master says these things: You shepherds of Israel have only been feeding yourselves. It will be very bad for you! Why don’t you shepherds feed the flock? ²You eat the fat sheep and use their wool to make clothes for yourselves. You kill the fat sheep, but you don’t feed the flock. ³You have not made the weak strong. You have not cared for the sick sheep. You have not put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. Some of the sheep wandered away, and you did not go get them and bring them back. You did not go to look for those lost sheep. No, you were cruel and severe—that’s the way you tried to lead the sheep!

⁴“And now the sheep are scattered because there was no shepherd. They became food for every wild animal. So they were scattered. ⁵My flock wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. My flock was scattered over all the face of the earth. There was no one to search or to look for them.”

⁶“So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the Lord. The Lord my Master says, ⁷“By my life, I promise this to you. Wild animals caught my sheep. Yes, my flock has become food for all the wild animals. Why? Because they did not have a real shepherd. My shepherds did not look out for my flock. No, those shepherds only killed the sheep and fed themselves. They did not feed my flock.”

⁸“So, you shepherds, listen to the word of the Lord! ⁹The Lord says, ¹⁰“I am against those shepherds! I will demand my sheep from them. I will fire them! They won’t be my shepherds any more! Then the shepherds won’t be able to feed themselves. And I will save my flock from their mouths. Then my sheep won’t be food for them.”

¹¹The Lord my Master says, ¹²“I, myself, will be their Shepherd. I will search for my sheep. I will look out for them. ¹³If a shepherd is with his sheep when they begin to wander away, then he will go searching for them. In the same way I will search for my sheep. I will save my sheep. I will bring them back from all the places where they were scattered on that dark and cloudy day. ¹⁴I will bring them back from those nations. I will gather them from those countries. I will bring them to their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams, in all the places where people live. ¹⁵I will lead them to grassy fields. They will go to the place high on the mountains of Israel. There they will lie down on good ground and eat the grass. They will eat in rich grassland on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁶Yes, I will feed my flock and I will lead them to a place of rest.” The Lord my Master said those things.

¹⁷“I will search for the lost sheep. I will bring back the sheep that were scattered. I will put bandages on the sheep that were hurt. I will

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make the weak sheep strong. But I will destroy those fat and powerful shepherds. I will feed them the punishment they deserve.

¹⁷The Lord my Master says these things, "And you, my flock, I will judge between one sheep and another. I will judge between the rams* and the male goats. ¹⁸You can eat the grass growing on the good land. So why do you also crush the grass that other sheep want to eat? You can drink plenty of clear water. So why do you also stir the water that other sheep want to drink? ¹⁹My flock must eat the grass you crushed with your feet, and they must drink the water you stir with your feet!"

²⁰So the Lord my Master says to them: "I, myself, will judge between the fat sheep and the thin sheep! ²¹You push with your side and with your shoulder, and knock down all the weak sheep with your horns, until you have forced them away. ²²So I will save my flock. They won't be caught by wild animals any more. I will judge between one sheep and another. ²³Then I will put one shepherd over them, my servant David. He will feed them. He will feed them himself and be their shepherd. ²⁴Then I, the Lord and Master, will be their God. And my servant David will be the ruler living among them. I, the Lord, have spoken."

²⁵"And I will make a peace agreement with my sheep. I will take harmful animals away from the land. Then the sheep can be safe in the desert and sleep in the woods. ²⁶I will bless the sheep and the places around my hill (*Jerusalem*). I will cause the rains to fall at the right time. They will shower them with blessings. ²⁷And the trees growing in the field will produce their fruit. The earth will give its harvest. So the sheep will be safe on their land. I will break the yokes* on them. I will save them from the power of the people that made them slaves. Then they will know that I am the Lord. ²⁸They won't be caught like an animal by the nations any more. Those animals won't eat them any more. But they will live safely. No

one will make them afraid. ²⁹I will give them some land that will make a good garden. Then they won't suffer from hunger in that land. They won't suffer the insults from the nations any more. ³⁰Then they will know that I am the Lord their God. And they will know that I am with them. And the family of Israel will know that they are my people!" The Lord my Master said those things!

³¹"And you, my sheep, the sheep of my grassland, you are only human beings and I am your God." The Lord my Master said those things.

The Message Against Edom

35 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹"Son of man,* look toward Mount Seir, and speak against it for me. ²Say to it, 'The Lord my Master says these things:

"¹I am against you, Mount Seir!

I will punish you.

I will make you an empty wasteland.

⁴I will destroy your cities.

And you will become empty.

Then you will know that I am the Lord.

⁵Why? Because you have always been against my people.

You used your sword against the people of Israel

at the time of their trouble,

at the time of their final punishment."

⁶So the Lord my Master says, "By my life I promise that I will let death have you. Death will chase you. You did not hate killing people. So death will chase you. ⁷And I will make Mount Seir an empty ruin. I will kill every person that comes from that city. And I will kill every person that tries to go into that city. ⁸I will cover its mountains with dead bodies. Those dead bodies will be all over your hills, in your valleys, and in all your ravines. ⁹I will make you empty forever. No one will live in your cities. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

ram(s) A male sheep.

yokes A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

¹⁰You said, "These two nations and countries (*Israel and Judah*) will be mine. We will take them for our own."

But the Lord is there! ¹¹And the Lord my Master says, "You were jealous of my people. You were angry at them and you were hateful to me. So by my life, I promise that I will punish you the same way you hurt them! I will punish you and let my people know that I am with them. ¹²And then you too will know that I have heard all your insults. You said many bad things against the mountain of Israel. You said, 'Israel has been destroyed! We will chew them up like food!' ¹³And you were proud and said things against me. You spoke too many times and I have heard every word you said! Yes, I heard you."

¹⁴The Lord my Master says these things, "All the earth will be happy when I destroy you. ¹⁵You were happy when the country of Israel was destroyed. I will treat you the same way. Mount Seir and the whole country of Edom will be destroyed. Then you will know that I am the Lord."

The Land of Israel Will Be Built again

36 "Son of man,* speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell the mountains of Israel to listen to the word of the Lord! ²Tell them that the Lord and Master says these things. The enemy said bad things against you. They said: 'Hurrah! Now the ancient mountains* will be ours!'

³So speak to the mountains of Israel for me. Tell them that the Lord and Master says these things. The enemy made you empty. They have crushed you from all around. They did this so you would belong to the other nations. Then people talked and whispered about you. 'So, mountains of Israel, listen to the word of the Lord and Master! ⁴The Lord and Master says this to the mountains, hills, streams, valleys, empty ruins, and abandoned

cities: You have been robbed and laughed at by the other nations around you. It is true, I will let my strong feelings speak for me! I will let Edom and the other nations feel my anger. The people of Edom took my land for themselves. They were very happy to take that land. They did not care at all about the people of Israel. They took the land for themselves!"

⁵So the Lord my Master says these things: "So speak to the land of Israel for me. Speak to the mountains and to the hills, to the streams, and to the valleys. Tell them that the Lord and Master says these things. I will let my strong feelings and anger speak for me. Why? Because you had to suffer the insults from those nations. ⁶"So the Lord my Master says these things: "I promise that the nations around you will have to suffer insults.

⁷"But mountains of Israel, you will grow new trees and produce fruit for my people Israel. My people will soon come back. ⁸I am with you. I will help you. People will till your soil. People will plant seeds in you. ⁹There will be many, many people living on you. The whole family of Israel—all of them—will live there. The cities will have people living in them. The destroyed places will be built like new. ¹⁰I will give you many people and animals. They will produce many more. I will cause you to have people living on you like you did before. I will make you better than at the beginning. Then you will know that I am the Lord. ¹¹Yes, I will cause people—my people, Israel—to walk on your land. They will take you and you will belong to them. You will never make them without children again."

¹²The Lord my Master says these things: "Land of Israel, people say bad things to you. They say you destroyed your people. They say you took away the children. ¹³You won't destroy people any more. You won't take away the children any more." The Lord my Master said those things. ¹⁴"I won't let those other nations insult you any more. You won't be hurt by those people any more. You will never make them without children again." The Lord my Master said those things.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

mountains Literally, "high places"—usually a reference to places of worship.

The Lord Will Protect His Own Good Name

¹⁴Then the word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹⁵"Son of man,* the family of Israel lived in their own country. But they made that land filthy by the bad things they did. To me, they were like a woman that becomes unclean* because of her monthly time of bleeding. ¹⁶They spilled blood onto the ground when they murdered people in that land. They made the land filthy with their idols.* So I showed them how angry I was. ¹⁷I scattered them among the nations and spread them through all the lands. I punished them the same because of the bad things they did. ¹⁸They went to those other nations. And even in those countries they ruined my good name. How? The nations there talked about them. They said, 'What kind of God is the Lord?' These are the Lord's people, but they left his land."

¹⁹"The people of Israel ruined my holy name. And I felt sorry for my name. ²⁰So tell the family of Israel that the Lord and Master says these things, "Family of Israel, you ruined my holy name in the places where you went. I am going to do something to stop this. I won't do it for your sake, Israel. I will do these things for my holy name. ²¹I will show those nations that my great name is truly holy. You ruined my good name in those nations! But I will show you that I am holy. And then those nations will know that I am the Lord." The Lord my Master said those things.

²²God said, "I will take you out from those nations, gather you together, and bring you to your own land. ²³Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and make you pure. I will wash away all your filth. And I will wash away the filth from those nasty idols."

²⁴God said, "I will also put a new spirit in you and change your way of thinking. I will take out the heart of stone from your body and give you a tender, human heart. ²⁵And I will put my Spirit inside you. I will change you so you

will obey my laws. You will carefully obey my commands. ²⁶Then you will live in the land that I gave to your ancestors.* You will be my people, and I will be your God."

²⁷God said, "Also, I will save you and keep you from becoming unclean.* I will command the grain to grow. I won't bring a time of hunger against you. ²⁸I will give you large crops of fruit from your trees and the harvest from your fields. Then you will never again feel the shame of being hungry in other countries. ²⁹You will remember the bad things you did. You will remember that those things were not good. Then you will hate yourselves because of your sins and the terrible things you did."

³⁰The Lord my Master says, "I want you to remember this: I am not doing these things for your good! I am doing them for my good name! So family of Israel, you should be ashamed and embarrassed about the way you lived!"

³¹The Lord my Master says these things, "On the day that I wash away your sins, I will bring people back to your cities. Those ruined cities will be built again. ³²The empty land will be tilled. It won't be a pile of ruins for everyone who passes by to see. ³³They will say, 'In the past, this land was ruined. But now it has become like the garden of Eden. The cities were destroyed. They were ruined and empty. But now they are protected, and there are people living in them.'"

³⁴God said, "Then those nations around you will know I am the Lord and that I built those ruined places again. I am the Lord. I said these things, and I will make them happen!"

³⁵The Lord my Master says these things, "Also, I will let the family of Israel ask me to do this thing for them: I will let them become many, many people. They will be like flocks of sheep. ³⁶The people will be like the many flocks of sheep and goats in Jerusalem during her special festivals. The cities and ruined places will be filled with flocks of people. Then

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.
idols Statues of false gods that people worshipped.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

The Vision of the Dry Bones

37 The Lord's power came on me. The Spirit* of the Lord carried me out of the city, and put me down in the middle of a valley. The valley was full of dead men's bones. There were many, many bones lying on the ground in the valley. The Lord made me walk all around among the bones. I saw the bones were very dry.

"Then the Lord my Master said to me, "Son of man,* can these bones come to life?"

I answered, "Lord my Master, only you know the answer to that question."

"The Lord my Master said to me. "Speak to those bones for me. Tell those bones, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the Lord! 'The Lord my Master says these things to you: I will cause breath* to come into you, and you will come to life! 'I will put sinews and muscles on you. And I will cover you with skin. Then I will put breath in you, and you will come back to life! Then you will know that I am the Lord and Master.'"

"So I spoke to the bones for the Lord, like he said. I was still speaking, when I heard the loud noise. The bones began to rattle, and bone joined together with bone! There before my eyes, I saw sinew and muscles begin to cover the bones. And skin began to cover them. But the bodies didn't move,—there was no breath in them.

"Then the Lord my Master said to me, "Speak to the wind* for me. Son of man,* speak to the wind for me. Tell the wind that the Lord and Master says these things: 'Wind, come from every direction and breathe air into these dead bodies! Breathe into them and they will come to life again!'"

"So I spoke to the wind for the Lord, like he said. And the breath came into the dead bodies. They came to life and stood up. There were many, many men—they were a very large army!

Spirit Or "wind."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

breath Or "wind," or "a spirit."

wind The Hebrew word could also be translated "breath" or "spirit."

"Then the Lord my Master said to me, "Son of man,* these bones are like the whole family of Israel. The people of Israel say, 'Our bones have dried up,* our hope is gone. We have been completely destroyed!' "So, speak to them for me. Tell them the Lord and Master says these things, "My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves! Then I will bring you to the land of Israel. "My people, I will open your graves and bring you up out of your graves. And then you will then know that I am the Lord. "I will put my Spirit* in you and you will come to life again. Then I will lead you back to your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. You will know that I said these things and that I made them happen!" The Lord said those things.

Judah and Israel to Become One Again

"The word of the Lord came to me again. He said, "Son of man,* get one stick and write this message on it: 'This stick belongs to Judah and his friends,* the people of Israel.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'This stick of Ephraim belongs to Joseph and his friends, the people of Israel.' "Then join those two sticks together. In your hand, they will be one stick.

"Your people will ask you to explain what that means. "Tell them that the Lord and Master says these things. I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and his friends, the people of Israel. Then I will put that stick with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick. In my hand, they will become one stick!

"Hold those sticks in your hands in front of you. You wrote those names on those sticks. "Tell the people that the Lord and Master says these things: 'I will take the people of Israel from among the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around, and I will bring them into their own land. "I will make

bones ... dried up This is a way of saying, "We have lost our strength."

friends This is a word play. The Hebrew word is like the word meaning "joined together."

them one nation in the land on the mountains of Israel. One king will be king for all of them. They won't continue to be two nations. They won't be divided into two kingdoms any more. ²³And they won't continue to make themselves filthy with their idols* and horrible statues or with any of their other crimes. But I will save them from all sins wherever they are. And I will wash them and make them pure. And they will be my people, and I will be their God.

²⁴"And my servant David will be the king over them. They will all have one shepherd. They will live by my rules and obey my laws. They will do the things I tell them. ²⁵They will live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob. Your ancestors* lived in that place. And my people will live there. They and their children, and their grandchildren will live there forever. And David my servant will be their leader forever. ²⁶And I will make a peace agreement with them. This agreement will continue forever. I agree to give them their land. I agree to make them become many, many people. And I agree to put my holy place there with them forever. ²⁷My Holy Tent will be there among them. Yes, I will be their God and they will be my people. ²⁸And the other nations will know that I am the Lord. And they will know that I make Israel my special people by putting my holy place there among them forever.'"

The Message Against Gog

38 The word of the Lord came to me. He said, ¹Son of man,* look toward Gog in the land of Magog. He is the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal. Speak for me against Gog. ²Tell him that the Lord and Master says these things, 'Gog, you are the most important leader of the nations of Meshech and Tubal! But I am against you. ³I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring back all the men in your army. I will

bring back all the horses and horse soldiers. I will put hooks in your mouths, and I will bring all of you back. All of the soldiers will be wearing their uniforms with all their shields and swords. ⁴Soldiers from Persia, Ethiopia, and Put will be with them. They will all be wearing their shields and helmets. ⁵There will also be Gomer with all his groups of soldiers. And there will be the nation of Togarmah from the far north with all its groups of soldiers. There will be many, many people in that parade of prisoners.

⁶"Be prepared. Yes, prepare yourself and the armies that have joined with you. You must watch and be ready. ⁷After a long time you will be called for duty. In the later years you will come into the land that has been healed from war. The people in the land will be gathered from many nations to come back to the mountains of Israel. In the past, the mountains of Israel had been destroyed again and again. But these people will have come back from those other nations. They will live in safety, all of them. ⁸But you will come to attack them. You will come like a storm. You will come like a thundercloud covering the land. You and all your groups of soldiers from many nations will come to attack these people."

⁹The Lord my Master says these things: "At that time, an idea will come into your mind. You will begin to make an evil plan. ¹⁰You will say, 'I will go attack that country that has towns without walls (*Israel*). Those people live in peace. They think they are safe. There are not any walls around the cities to protect them. They don't have any locks on their gates—they don't even have gates! ¹¹I will defeat those people and take all their valuable things away from them. I will fight against the places that were destroyed but now have people living in them. I will fight against those people (*Israel*) that were gathered from the nations. Now those people have cattle and property. They live at the crossroads of the world. The powerful countries must travel through that place to get to all the other powerful countries."

¹²"Sheba, Dedan, and the businessmen of Tarshish, and all the cities they trade with will

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

ask you, 'Did you come to capture valuable things? Did you bring your groups of soldiers together to grab those good things and to carry away silver, gold, cattle, and property. Did you come to take all those valuable things?'"

"God said, "Son of man,* speak to Gog for me. Tell him that the Lord and Master says these things: 'You will come to attack my people while they are living in peace and safety. "You will come from your place out of the far north. And you will bring many people with you. All of them will ride on horses. You will be a large and a powerful army. "You will come to fight against my people Israel. You will be like a thundercloud covering the land. When that time comes, I will bring you to fight against my land. Then, Gog, the nations will learn how powerful I am! They will learn to respect me and know that I am holy. They will see what I will do to you!"

"The Lord my Master says these things, "At that time, people will remember, that I spoke about you in the past. They will remember that I used my servants the prophets of Israel. They will remember that the prophets of Israel spoke for me in the past and said that I would bring you to fight against them."

"The Lord my Master said, "At that time, Gog will come to fight against the land of Israel. I will show my anger. "In my anger and strong emotions I make this promise: I promise that there will be a strong earthquake in the land of Israel. "At that time, all living things will quake (*shake*) with fear. The fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the wild animals in the fields, and all the little creatures crawling on the ground will shake with fear. The mountains will fall down and the cliffs will collapse. Every wall will fall to the ground!"

"The Lord my Master says, "And on the mountains of Israel, I will call for every kind of terror against* Gog. His soldiers will be so scared that they will attack each other and kill

each other with their swords. "I will punish Gog with diseases and death. I will cause hailstones, fire, and sulfur to rain down on Gog and his groups of soldiers from many nations. "Then I will show how great I am. I will prove that I am holy. Many nations will see me do these things and they will learn who I am. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

The Death of Gog and His Army

39 "Son of man,* speak against Gog for me. Tell him that the Lord and Master says these things, 'Gog, you are the most important leader of the countries Meshech and Tubal! But I am against you. "I will capture you and bring you back. I will bring you from the far north. I will bring you to fight against the mountains of Israel. "But I will knock your bow from your left hand. I will knock your arrows from your right hand. "You will be killed on the mountains of Israel. You, your groups of soldiers and all the other nations with you will be killed in the battle. I will give you as food to every kind of bird that eats meat and to all the wild animals. "You will not enter the city. You will be killed out in the open fields. I have spoken!" The Lord my Master said those things.

"God said, "I will send fire against Magog and those people who live in safety on the coast. Then they will know that I am the Lord. "And I will make my holy name known among my people Israel. I will not let people ruin my holy name any more. The nations will know that I am the Lord. They will know that I am the Holy One in Israel. "That time is coming! It will happen!" The Lord said these things. "That is the day I am talking about.

"At that time, the people living in the cities of Israel will go out to those fields. They will collect the enemy's weapons and burn them. They will burn all the shields, bows and arrows, clubs and spears. They will use those weapons as firewood for seven years. "They won't have to gather wood from the fields or chop firewood from the forests, because they use the weapons as firewood. They will take the valuable things from the soldiers that

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

every ... against This is from the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrews has, "a sword against."

wanted to steal from them. They will take the good things from the soldiers that took good things from them." The Lord my Master said these things.

¹¹God said, "At that time, I will choose a place in Israel to bury Gog. He will be buried in the Valley of the Travelers, east of the Dead Sea. It will block the road for travelers. Why? Because Gog and all his army will be buried in that place. People will call it "The Valley of Gog's Army."¹²The family of Israel will bury them for seven months to make the land pure.¹³All the people of the land will bury those enemy soldiers. The people of Israel will be famous on the day that I bring honor to myself." The Lord my Master said those things.

¹⁴God said, "The people will have to give workers a fulltime job burying those dead soldiers. In this way, they will make the land pure. Those workers will work for seven months. They will go around looking for dead bodies. ¹⁵Those workers will go around looking. If one of them sees a bone, then he will put up a marker by it. The sign will stay there until the grave diggers come and bury the bone in the Valley of Gog's Army. ¹⁶That city of dead people will be named Hamonah.* In this way, they will make the country pure."

¹⁷The Lord my Master said these things, "Son of man,* speak to all the birds and wild animals for me. Tell them, "Come here! Come here! Gather around. Come eat this sacrifice I am preparing for you. There will be a very big sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. Come, eat the meat and drink the blood. ¹⁸You will eat the meat from the bodies of powerful soldiers. You will drink the blood from world leaders. They will be like rams, lambs, goats and fat bulls from Bashan. ¹⁹You can eat all the fat you want. You can drink blood until you are full. You will eat and drink from my sacrifice which I kill for you. ²⁰At my table, you will have plenty of meat to eat. There will be horses and chariots, drivers,, powerful soldiers, and all the

other fighting men." The Lord my Master said those things.

²¹God said, "I will let the other nations see what I have done. And those nations will begin to respect me! They will see my power that I used against that enemy. ²²Then from that day on, the family of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God. ²³And the nations will know why the family of Israel was carried away as prisoners to other countries. They will learn that my people turned against me. So I turned away from them. I let their enemies defeat them. So my people were killed in battle. ²⁴They sinned and made themselves filthy. So I punished them for the things they did. I turned away from them, and refused to help them."

²⁵So the Lord my Master says these things: "Now I will bring the family of Jacob back from captivity. I will have mercy on the whole family of Israel. I will show my strong feelings for my holy name. ²⁶The people will forget their shame and all the times they turned against me. They will live in safety on their own land. No one will make them afraid. ²⁷I will bring my people back from other countries. I will gather them from the lands of their enemies. Then many nations will see how holy I am. ²⁸They will know that I am the Lord their God. Why? Because I made them to leave their homes and go as prisoners to other countries. And then I gathered them together and brought them back to their own land. ²⁹I will pour my Spirit onto the family of Israel. And after that time, I will never turn away from my people again." The Lord my Master said those things.

The New Temple

40 In the twenty-fifth year after we were taken away into captivity, at the beginning of the year (*September*), on the tenth day of the month the Lord's power came on me. This was fourteen years, to the very day, after the Babylonians took Jerusalem. [In a vision, the Lord took me there.

¹In a vision,* God carried me to the land of

Hamonah This Hebrew word means "crowd."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Israel. He put me down near a very high mountain. On the mountain, there was a building that looked like a city. The city was toward the south. ⁷The Lord brought me there. There was a man there, and he looked shiny, like polished bronze. That man had a cloth tape measure and a measuring rod in his hand. He was standing by the gate. ⁸The man said to me, "Son of man,* use your eyes and ears. Look at these things and listen to me. Pay attention to everything that I show you. Why? Because you have been brought here so I can show you these things. You must tell the family of Israel all that you see."

⁹I saw a wall that went all the way around the outside of the temple.* In the man's hand there was a ruler for measuring things. It was one cubit and one handbreadth (10' 6") long. So the man measured the thickness of the wall. It was one ruler (10' 6") thick. The man measured the height of the wall. It was one ruler (10' 6") tall. ¹⁰Then the man went to the east gate. The man walked up its steps and measured the threshold of the gate. It was one ruler (10' 6") wide. The other threshold was also one ruler (10' 6") wide. ¹¹There was a room one ruler (10' 6") long and one ruler (10' 6") wide. There were 5 cubits (8' 9") of space between the rooms. The gate's threshold on the side of the gate's porch looking inside was one ruler (10' 6") wide.

¹²Then the man measured the porch of the gateway next to the temple. It was one ruler (10' 6") wide. ¹³Then the man measured the porch of the gateway. It was 8 cubits (14'). The man measured the doorposts of the gate. Each doorpost was 2 cubits (3' 6") wide. The gate of the porch was inside. ¹⁴There were three little rooms on each side of the gate. These three little rooms measured the same on each side. The doorposts on both sides measured the same. ¹⁵The man measured the width of the doors of the gate. They were 10 cubits (17' 6") wide. The whole gate was 13 cubits (22' 9")

wide. ¹⁶There was a low wall in front of each room. That wall was 1 cubit (1' 6") tall and 1 cubit (1' 6") thick. The rooms were 6 cubits (10' 6") long on each side.

¹⁷The man measured the gate from the roof of one room to the roof of another room. It was 25 cubits (43' 9") from one door to the next door. ¹⁸The man also measured the porch. It was 20 cubits (30') wide. The courtyard was around the porch. ¹⁹The gate of the porch on the outside all the way to the gate inside measured 50 cubits (87' 6"). ²⁰The rooms had latticed* windows all around. The windows became more narrow inside toward their doorposts in the little rooms. Also the porch had windows all around inside. Carvings of palm trees were on each doorpost.

The Outside Courtyard

²¹Then the man brought me into the outer courtyard. I saw rooms and a pavement. They were all around the courtyard. Thirty rooms were in front on the pavement. ²²The pavement went by the side of the gates. The pavement was as long as the gates. This was the lower pavement. ²³Then the man measured the distance from the inside front of the lower gate to the outside front of the wall of the courtyard. It was 100 cubits (175') on the east and on the north.

²⁴The man measured the length and width of the gate of the outer courtyard which looks toward the north. ²⁵It had three rooms on each side. Its doorposts and its porch measured the same as the first gate. It was 50 cubits (87' 6") long and 25 cubits (43' 9") wide. ²⁶Its windows, its porch, and its carvings of palm trees measured the same as the gate that looked toward the east. Seven steps went up to the gate. The gate's porch was inside. ²⁷The inner courtyard had a gate across from the gate on the north. It was like the gate on the east. The man measured from gate to gate. It was 100 cubits (175') from gate to gate.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

latticed Literally, "closed." We don't know exactly what this Hebrew word means.

³Then the man led me south. I saw a gate at the south. The man measured its doorposts and its porch. They measured the same as the other gates. ⁴The gate and its porch had windows all around like the other gates. They were 50 cubits (8' 6") long and 25 cubits (43' 9") wide. ⁵There were seven steps that led up to this gate. Its porch was inside. It had carvings of palm trees on its doorposts, one on each side. ⁶A gate was on the south side of the inner courtyard. The man measured from gate to gate toward the south. It was 100 cubits (175') wide.

The Inner Courtyard

⁷Then the man brought me through the south gate to the inner courtyard. The south gate measured the same as the other gates. ⁸The south gate's rooms, its doorposts, and its porch also measured the same as the other gates. There were windows all around the gate and its porch. The gate was 50 cubits (8' 6") long and 25 cubits (43' 9") wide. There were porches all around. ⁹The porch was 25 cubits (43' 9") long and 5 cubits (8' 9") wide. ¹⁰The south gate's porch looked toward the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on its doorposts. Its stairway had eight steps.

¹¹The man brought me into the inner courtyard on the east side. He measured the gate. It measured the same as the other gates. ¹²The east gate's rooms, doorposts and porch measured the same as the other gates. Windows were all around the gate and its porch. The east gate was 50 cubits (8' 6") long and 25 cubits (43' 9") wide. ¹³Its porch looked toward the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on its doorposts on each side. Its stairway had eight steps.

¹⁴Then the man brought me to the north gate. He measured it. It measured the same as the other gates—its rooms, its doorposts, and its porch. Windows were all around the gate. It was 50 cubits (8' 6") long and 25 cubits (43' 9") wide. ¹⁵Its doorposts looked toward the outer courtyard. Carvings of palm trees were on its doorposts on each side. And its stairway had eight steps. ¹⁶There was a room with its door at the gate's porch. This is where the priests wash

the animals for the burnt offerings. ¹⁷There were two tables on each side in the gate's porch. The animals for the burnt offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings were killed on these tables. ¹⁸Outside the porch, at the place where the north gate opens, there were two tables. And on the other side of the porch of the gate there were two tables. ¹⁹Four tables were inside the gate. Four tables were outside the gate. In all there were eight tables. The priests killed the animals for sacrifices on these tables. ²⁰There were four tables from cut stone for the burnt offerings. These tables were 1½ cubits (2' 7½") long, 1½ cubits (2' 7½") wide, and 1 cubit (1' 9") high. On these tables the priests lay the tools they used to kill the animals for the burnt offerings and the sacrifices. ²¹The hooks, 1 handbreadth (3") long, were put up all through the temple. The meat for the offering was on the tables.

²²There were two rooms outside the gate to the inner courtyard. One was by the north gate. It looked south. The other room was by the south gate. It looked north. ²³The man said to me, "This room, which looks toward the south, is for the priests who are on duty and serving in the temple. ²⁴But the room which looks toward the north is for the priests who are on duty and serving at the altar.* These priests are all descendants* of Zadok. The descendants of Zadok are the only men from the family group of Levite that can serve the Lord by bringing the sacrifices to him."

²⁵The man measured the courtyard. The courtyard was a perfect square. It was 100 cubits (175') long and 100 cubits (175') wide. The altar* was in front of the temple.

The Porch of the Temple

²⁶The man brought me to the porch of the temple and measured each doorpost of the porch. It was 5 cubits (8' 9") on each side. The gate was 14 cubits (24' 6") wide. The side

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

walls of the gate were 3 cubits (5' 9") on each side. "The porch was 20 cubits (35') long and 12 cubits (19' 3") wide. Ten steps went up to the porch. Columns were by the doorposts—one on each side.

The Outer Part of the Temple

41 The man brought me to the center room (*Holy Place*). He measured its doorposts. They were 6 cubits (10' 6") thick on each side. "The door was 10 cubits (17' 6") wide. The sides of the doorway were 5 cubits (8' 9") on each side. The man measured the outer holy place. It was 40 cubits (70') long, and 20 cubits (35') wide. "Then the man went inside and measured each doorpost of the doorway. Each doorpost was 2 cubits (3' 6") thick. It was 6 cubits (10' 6") high. The door was 7 cubits (12' 3") wide. "Then the man measured the length of the room. It was 20 cubits (35') long and 20 cubits (35') wide before entering the center room. The man said to me, "This is the Most Holy Place."

"Then the man measured the wall of the temple. It was 6 cubits (10' 6") wide. The side rooms were 4 cubits (7') wide all around the temple. "The side rooms were on three different floors. One was above the other. There were 30 rooms on each floor. The side rooms had supports on the wall all around. So the temple wall itself did not support the rooms. "Each floor of the side rooms around the temple was wider than the floor below. The high platform around the temple spread out on each floor on all sides of the temple. So rooms were wider on the top floors. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the highest floor through the second story. "I also saw that the temple had a paved base all the way around it. The foundations for the side rooms were a full ruler (10' 6") high. "The outer wall of the side rooms was 5 cubits (8' 9") thick. The open area between the side rooms of the temple "and the priests', rooms were 20 cubits (35') all around the temple. "The doors of the side rooms opened on the paved base that was not a part of the wall. One door looked toward the north and one door looked toward the south. The paved

base was 5 cubits (8' 9") wide all around.

"The building that was in front of the temple courtyard at the west side was 70 cubits (122' 6") wide. The wall of the building was 5 cubits (8' 9") thick all around. It was 90 cubits (157' 6") long. "Then the man measured the temple. The temple was 100 cubits (175') long. The courtyard with the building and its walls were also 100 cubits (175') long. "The east front of the temple and the courtyard was 100 cubits (175') wide.

"The man measured the length of the building that looked toward the courtyard at the rear of the temple and its walls on both sides. It was 100 cubits (175') long. The inner room of the center room (*Holy Place*), and the porches of the courtyard were paneled. All three had latticed windows all around. By the threshold, the temple had panels of wood all around from the floor up to the windows. The windows were covered.

"Wood panels covered the wall above the door all the way to the inner room and on the outside. On all the walls in the inner room and the outer room of the temple were carvings "of Cherub angels and palm trees. A palm tree was between Cherub angels. Every Cherub angel had two faces. "One face was a man's face looking toward the palm tree on one side. The other face was a lion's face looking toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around on the temple. "From the floor to above the door, Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on all walls of the center room (*Holy Place*).

"The doorposts of the center room (*Holy Place*) were square. In front of the Most Holy Place, there was something that looked like "an altar* made from wood. It was 3 cubits (5' 3") high and 2 cubits (3' 6") long. Its corners, its base, and its sides were wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that is before the Lord." "Both the center room (*Holy Place*) and the Most Holy Place had a double door. "Each of the doors was made from two smaller doors.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Each door was really two swinging doors. ²Also Cherub angels and palm trees were carved on the doors of the center room (*Holy Place*). They were like those carved on the walls. And there was a wood covering over the front of the porch outside. ³And there were windows set back and palm trees on both sides of the porch.

The Priests' Room

42 Then the man led me out into the outer courtyard, looking north. He led me to the rooms that were across from the temple courtyard and across from the building on the north. ²The building on the north side was 100 cubits (175') long and 50 cubits (87' 6") wide. ³There were three floors of balconies on walls of these buildings. They faced each other. Between them was the 20-cubit (35') open area between the inner courtyard and the pavement of the outer courtyard. ⁴There was a hall in front of the rooms. It led inside. It was 10 cubits (17' 6") wide and 100 cubits (175') long. Their doors were on the north. ⁵The top rooms were more narrow because the balconies took more space than from the middle and bottom rooms in the building. ⁶The rooms were on three stories. They did not have columns like the columns of the outer courtyards. So the top rooms were farther back than the rooms on the middle and bottom floors. ⁷There was a wall outside. It was parallel to the rooms. It led toward the outer courtyard. It was across from the rooms. It was 50 cubits (87' 6") long. ⁸The rooms in the outer courtyard was 50 cubits (87' 6") long. The rooms that looked toward the center room were 100 cubits (175') long. ⁹Under these rooms there was a door that entered the east side from the outer courtyard ¹⁰at the beginning of the outside wall.

On the south side, in front of the temple courtyard and the outside wall of the temple's building, there were rooms. These rooms had a ¹¹hall in front of them. They were like the rooms on the north. The south doors measured the same as the north doors in length and width. The south doors had the same measurements, the same design, and the same kind of

entrances as the north doors. ¹²Under the south rooms, there was a door that entered the east side. It led to the hall. Across from the south doors was a dividing wall.*

¹³The man said to me, "The north rooms and south rooms across from the courtyard are holy rooms. These rooms are for the priests that offer the sacrifices to the Lord. Those priests will eat the most holy offerings in these rooms. They will put the most holy offering there. Why? Because this place is holy. The most holy offerings are: the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. ¹⁴The priests will enter the holy area. But before they go out into the outer courtyard, they will first leave their serving clothes in the holy place. Why? Because these clothes are holy. If a priest wants to go to the part of the temple where the other people are, then he must go to those rooms and put on other clothes.

The Outside Temple

¹⁵After the man had finished measuring inside the temple, he brought me out through the gate that looked toward the east. He measured the outside temple all around. ¹⁶The man measured the east side with the ruler. It was 500 cubits (875') long. ¹⁷He measured the north side. It was 500 cubits (875') long. ¹⁸He measured the south side. It was 500 cubits (875') long. ¹⁹He went around to the west side and measured it. It was 500 cubits (875') long. ²⁰He measured the temple on all four sides. The wall went all around the temple. The wall was 500 cubits (875') long and 500 cubits (875') wide. It separated the holy area from the area that is not holy.

The Lord to Live Among His People

43 The man led me to the gate, the gate that looks toward the east. ²There the Glory of the God of Israel came from the east. God's voice was loud like the sound of the sea. The ground was bright with the light for the

Under the south rooms ... wall The Hebrew of this verse is hard to understand.

Glory of God.³The vision* that I saw was like the vision I saw by the Kebar Canal. I bowed with my face to the ground. ⁴The Glory of the Lord came into the temple through the gate that looks toward the east.

⁵Then the Spirit* picked me up and brought me into the inner courtyard. The Glory of the Lord filled the temple. ⁶I heard someone speaking to me from inside the temple. There was a man standing beside me. ⁷The voice from the temple said to me, "Son of man,* this is the place with my throne and footstool. I will live in this place among the people of Israel forever. The family of Israel won't ruin my holy name again. The kings and their people won't bring shame to my name by doing sexual sins* or by burying the dead bodies of their kings in this place. ⁸They won't bring shame to my name by putting their threshold next to my threshold, and their door post next to my door post. In the past, only a wall separated them from me. So they brought shame to my name everytime they sinned and did those terrible things. That is why I became angry and destroyed them. ⁹Now let them put away their sex sins and the dead bodies of their kings far from me. Then I will live among them forever.

¹⁰"Now, Son of man,* tell the family of Israel about the temple. Then they will be ashamed of their sins. They will learn about the plans for the temple. ¹¹And they will be ashamed of all the bad things they have done. Let them know the design of the temple. Let them know how it is built, where the entrances and exits are, and all the designs on it. Teach them about all its rules and all its laws. And write down these things so they can all see it. Then they will obey all the laws and rules for the temple. Then they can do these things. ¹²This is the law of the temple: All the area on the top of the mountain is most holy. This is the

law of the temple.

The Altar

¹³"And these are the measurements of the altar* in cubits using the longer measurement.* There was a gutter all the way around the base of the altar. It was 1 cubit (1' 9") deep, and; each side, was 1 cubit (1' 9") wide. There was a rim around the edge 1 span (9") high. And; this was how tall the altar was: ¹⁴From the ground to the lower ledge, the base measures 2 cubits (3' 6"). It was 1 cubit (1' 9") wide. It will measure 4 cubits (7') from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge. It was 2 cubits (3' 6") wide. ¹⁵The place for the fire on the altar was 4 cubits (7') high. Four horns will reach out from the altar at each corner. ¹⁶The place for the fire on the altar was 12 cubits (21') long by 12 cubits (21') wide. It was perfectly square. ¹⁷The ledge was also square, 14 cubits (24' 6") long by 14 cubits (24' 6") wide. The border around it was 1/2 cubit (10 1/2") wide. (The gutter around the base was 2 cubits (3' 6") wide.) The steps going up to the altar were on the east side."

¹⁸"Then the man said to me, "Son of man,* the Lord my Master says these things: "These are the rules for the altar:* On the day it is put up to offer burnt offerings and to sprinkle blood on it, "you will give a young bull for a sin offering to the men from Zadok's family. These men are from the family group of Levi. They are the priests." ¹⁹The Lord my Master said these things. "They will bring the offerings to men and serve me. ²⁰You will take some of the bull's blood, and put it on the altar's four horns, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the border all around. So you will make the altar pure. ²¹You will take the bull for the sin offering. The bull will be burned in a special place of the temple, outside the holy area.

²²On the second day you will offer a male goat that has nothing wrong with it. It will be

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Spirit Or "spirit," or "wind."

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

sexual sins This might also mean "turning away from God and being unfaithful to him."

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

longer measurement Literally, "a cubit and a handbreadth."

for a sin offering. The priests will make the altar* pure the same way they made it pure with the bull. ²³When you have finished making the altar pure you will offer a young bull without anything wrong in it and a ram* from the flock without anything wrong in it. ²⁴Then you will offer them before the Lord. The priests will throw salt on them. Then the priests will offer the bull and ram up as a burnt offering to the Lord. ²⁵You will prepare a goat every day for seven days for a sin offering. Also, you will prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock. The bull and ram must have nothing wrong in them. ²⁶For seven days the priests will make the altar pure. Then the priests will dedicate the altar.* ²⁷This will finish those seven days for preparing the altar and giving it to God. From the eighth day on, the priests can offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you." The Lord my Master said.

The Outer Gate

44 Then the man brought me back to the outer gate of the temple that looks east. The outer gate was shut. ²The Lord said to me, "This gate will stay shut. It won't be opened. No one will enter through it. Why? Because the Lord of Israel has entered through it. So it must stay shut. ³The ruler of the people will sit at this gate when he eats a fellowship offering, with the Lord. He will come and go through the door of the porch by the gate."

The Holiness of the Temple

⁴Then the man brought me through the north gate to the front of the temple. I looked, and saw the Glory of the Lord filling the Lord's temple. I bowed with my face touching the ground. ⁵The Lord said to me, "Son of man,* look very carefully! Use your eyes and ears.

Look at these things. And listen very carefully to everything that I tell you about all the rules and laws about the Lord's temple. Look carefully at the entrances to the temple and at all the exits from the holy place. ⁶Then give this message to all the people of Israel that refused to obey me. Tell them, "The Lord my Master says these things: 'Family of Israel, I have had enough of the terrible things you have done! ⁷You brought foreigners into my temple—and those people were not truly circumcised*—they did not give themselves completely to me. In this way you made my temple unclean. You broke our agreement and did terrible things, and then you gave me the offerings of bread, the fat, and the blood. But this only made my temple unclean. ⁸You did not take care of my holy things. No, you let foreigners have responsibility of my holy place!'"

⁹The Lord my Master says these things, "A foreigner that is not truly circumcised* must not come into my temple—not even a foreigner living permanently among the people of Israel. He must be circumcised and he must give himself completely to me before he can come into my temple." ¹⁰In the past, the Levites left me when Israel turned away from me. Israel left me to follow their idols.* The Levites will be punished for their sin. ¹¹The Levites were chosen to serve in my holy place. They guarded the gates of the temple. They served in the temple. They killed the animals for the sacrifices and burnt offerings for the people. They were chosen to help the people and to serve them. ¹²But those Levites helped the people sin against me! They helped the people worship their idols!* So I am making this promise against them: 'They will be punished for their sin.'" The Lord my Master said this.

¹³"So the Levites will not bring offerings to me like the priests. They won't come near any of my holy things or the things that are most holy. They must carry their shame because of

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

ram(s) A male sheep.

Son of man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish male to show he shared in the Agreement God made with Israel. See Gen. 17:9-14.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

the terrible things that they did. "But I will let them take care of the temple. They will work in the temple and do the things that must be done in it.

"The priests are all from the family group of Levi. But only priests of Zadok's family took care of my holy place when the people of Israel turned away from me. So only Zadok's descendants will bring offerings to me. They will stand before me to offer me the fat and the blood from the animals they sacrifice." The Lord my Master said those things! "They will enter my holy place. They will come near my table to serve me. They will take care of the things I gave them. "When they enter the gates of the inner courtyard, they will wear linen clothes. They won't wear wool while they serve at the gates of the inner courtyard and in the temple. "They will wear linen turbans* on their heads. And they will wear linen underwear. They won't wear anything that makes them sweat. "Before they go out into the outer courtyard to the people, they will take off the clothes they wear while serving me. They will put these clothes away in the holy rooms. Then they will put on other clothes. In this way, they will not let people touch those holy clothes.

"These priests won't shave their heads or let their hair grow long. This would show they are sad, and the priests must be happy about serving the Lord. The priests may only trim the hair of their heads. "None of the priests may drink wine when they go into the inner courtyard. "The priests must not marry a widow* or a divorced woman. No, they will marry virgins* from the family of Israel. Or they may marry a woman whose dead husband was a priest.

"Also, the priests will teach my people the difference between the holy things and the things that are not holy. They will help my people know what is clean and what is unclean.

"The priests will be the judges in court. They will follow my laws when they judge people. They will obey my laws and my rules at all my special feasts. They will respect my special days of rest and keep them holy. "They won't go near a dead person to make themselves unclean. But they may make themselves unclean if the dead person is a father, mother, son, daughter, brother, or a sister that has not married a husband. "After the priest has been made clean, he must wait seven days. "Then he can go back into the holy place. But on the day he goes into the inner courtyard to serve in the holy place, he must offer a sin offering for himself." The Lord my Master said these things.

"About the land that will belong to the Levites: I am their property. You won't give the Levites any property (*land*) in Israel. I am their share in Israel. "They will get to eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings, and the guilt offerings. Everything the people in Israel give to the Lord will be theirs. "And the first part of the harvest from every kind of crop will be for the priests. You will also give to the priests the first of your dough. This will bring blessings to your house. "The priests must not eat any bird or animal that died a natural death or has been torn to pieces by a wild animal.

The Division of the Land for Holy Use

45 "You will divide the land for the Israelite family groups by throwing lots.* At that time, you will separate a part of the land. It will be a holy part for the Lord. The land will be 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 20,000 cubits (6.6 miles) wide. All of this land will be holy. "A square area of 500 cubits (875') will be for the temple. There will be an open space around the temple that is 50 cubits (87' 6") wide. "In the holy area you will measure 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) wide. The temple will be in this area. The temple area will be the Most Holy Place.

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

widow A woman whose husband has died.

virgin A pure young woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

"This holy part of the land will be for the priests, the servants of the temple, where they come near to serve the Lord. It will be a place for the priests' houses and a place for the temple. 'Another area, 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) wide, will be for the Levites who serve in the temple. This land will also belong to the Levites for their cities to live in.

"And you will give the city an area that is 5,000 cubits (1.6 miles) wide and 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long. It will be along the side of the holy area. It will be for all the family of Israel. 'The ruler will have land on both sides of the holy area and of the land belonging to the city. It will be in the area between the holy area and the area belonging to the city. It will be the same width as the land that belongs to a family group. It will go all the way from the west border to the east border. 'This land will be the ruler's property in Israel. So the ruler won't need to make life hard for my people any more. But they will give the land to the Israelites for their family groups."

"The Lord my Master said these things, "Enough, you rulers of Israel! Stop being cruel and stealing things from people! Be fair and do good things! Stop forcing my people out from their homes!" The Lord my Master said these things.

"Stop cheating people. Use accurate scales and measures! 'The ephah (*a dry measure*) and the bath (*liquid measure*) must be the same size: A bath and an ephah must both equal 1/10 homer.* Those measures will be based on the homer. 'A shekel* must equal 20 gerahs. A mina must equal 60 shekels. It must be equal to 20 shekels plus 25 shekels plus 15 shekels.

"This is a special offering that you must give:

1/6 ephah (14 cups) of wheat for every homer (6 bushels) of wheat;

1/6 ephah (14 cups) of barley for every homer (6 bushels) of barley;

" 1/10 bath (1 1/2 gallon) of olive oil for every cor (55 gallons) of olive oil;

(Remember:

Ten baths make a homer.

Ten baths make a cor.)

"And one sheep for every 200 sheep from every watering hole in Israel.

"Those special offerings are for the grain offerings, for the burnt offerings, and for the fellowship offerings. These offerings are to make the people pure." The Lord my Master said these things.

"Every person in the country will give to this offering for the ruler of Israel. 'But the ruler must give the things needed for the special holy days. The ruler must provide the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the drink offerings for the feast days, for the New Moons, for the sabbaths, and for all the special feasts of the family of Israel. The ruler must give all the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings that are used to make the family of Israel pure."

"The Lord my Master says these things, "In the first month, on the first day of the month, you will take a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. You must use that bull to make the temple pure. 'The priest will take some of the blood from the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple and on the four corners of the ledge of the altar,* and on the posts of the gate to the inner courtyard. 'You will do the same thing on the seventh day of the month for any person who has sinned by mistake or by not knowing it. So you will make the temple pure.

Offerings During the Passover Feast

"On the 14th day of the first month you must celebrate the Passover. The festival of unleavened bread* begins at this time. That festival continues for seven days. 'At that time, the ruler will offer a bull for himself and for all the people of Israel. The bull will be for a sin

homer A measure that equals about 6 bushels or 48.4 gallons.
shekel A weight equal to 1/3 of an ounce. This also this became an amount of money too.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

unleavened bread Bread made without yeast.

offering. ²³During the seven days of the feast the ruler will offer seven bulls and seven rams* that have nothing wrong with them. They will be burnt offerings to the Lord. The ruler will offer one bull on every day of the seven days of the festival. And he will offer a male goat every day for a sin offering. ²⁴The ruler will give an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of barley, as a grain offering with each bull, and an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of barley, with each ram. And the ruler must give a hin (*1 gallon*) of oil for each ephah of grain. ²⁵The ruler must do the same thing for the seven days of the Festival of Shelters. This festival begins on the 15th day of the seventh month. These offerings will be the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering and the oil offering."

The Ruler and the Festivals

46 The Lord my Master says these things, "The east gate of the inner courtyard will be closed on the six working days. But it will be opened on the sabbath* day and on the day of the New Moon. ²The ruler will go in through the porch of the gate and stand by the post of that gate. Then the priests will offer the ruler's burnt offering and fellowship offerings. The ruler will worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he will go out. But the gate will not be shut until evening. ³The people of the land will also worship where that gate opens before the Lord on the sabbaths and on the New Moons.

"The ruler will offer burnt offerings to the Lord on the sabbath.* He must provide six lambs that have nothing wrong with them, and a ram* that has nothing wrong with it. ⁴He must give an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of the grain offering with the ram. The ruler will give as much of the grain offering with the lambs as he can. He must give 1 hin (*1 gallon*) of olive oil for each ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of grain. ⁵On the first day of the New Moon he must offer a young bull that has nothing wrong with it. He will

also offer six lambs and a ram that have nothing wrong with them. ⁶The ruler must give an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of a grain offering with the bull, and an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of a grain offering with the ram. With the lambs, the ruler should give as much as he can, with 1 hin (*1 gallon*) of oil for each ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of grain.

"The ruler must come and go into the temple area through the porch of the east gate. ⁷When the people of the land come to meet with the Lord at the special feasts, the person who enters through the north gate to worship will go out through the south gate. The person who enters through the south gate will go out through the north gate. No one will return the same way he entered. Each person must go out straight ahead. ⁸When the people go in, the ruler will go in with them. When they go out, the ruler will go out.

"At the feasts and other special meetings, an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of grain offering must be offered with each young bull. And an ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of grain offering must be offered with each ram. And as he must give as much as he can with each lamb. He must give a hin (*1 gallon*) of oil with each ephah (*1/2 bushel*) of grain.

"When the ruler gives a freewill offering (it might be a burnt offering, a fellowship offering, or a freewill offering) to the Lord, the east gate will be open for him. Then he will offer his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings like he does on the sabbath* day. After he leaves, the gate will be shut.

The Daily Offering

"And you will give a year-old lamb that has nothing wrong with it. It will be for a burnt offering to the Lord every day. Every morning you will give it. ²Also, you will offer a grain offering with the lamb every morning. You will give $\frac{1}{6}$ ephah (*14 cups*) of flour, and $\frac{1}{3}$ hin (*1/3 gallon*) of oil to make the fine flour moist. It will be the daily grain offering to the Lord. ³So they will give the lamb, the grain offering and the oil every morning, for a burnt offering forever."

ram(s) A male sheep.

sabbath Saturday, a special day of rest and worship for the Jews.

Laws for the Ruler Giving His Land to His Children

¹⁶"The Lord my Master says these things, "If the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to any of his sons, it will belong to his sons. It is their property. ¹⁷But if the ruler gives a gift from part of his land to one of his slaves, the gift will belong to the slave only until the year of freedom.* Then the gift will go back to the ruler. Only the ruler's sons will keep a gift of land from the ruler. ¹⁸And the ruler will not take any of the people's land or force them to leave their land. He must give some of his own land to his sons. In that way, my people will not be forced to lose their land."

The Special Kitchens

¹⁹The man led me through the entrance at the side of the gate. He led me to the holy rooms of the priests on the north side. There I saw a place on the far west. ²⁰The man said to me, "This is the place where the priests will boil the guilt offering and the sin offering. It is where the priests will bake the grain offering. Why? So they will not need to bring these offerings out into the outer courtyard. So they will not bring those holy things out where the common people are."

²¹Then the man brought me out to the outer courtyard. He led me to the four corners of the courtyard. In each corner of the courtyard there was a smaller courtyard. ²²Small courtyards were in the four corners of the courtyard. Each small courtyard was 40 cubits (70') long and 30 cubits (52' 6") wide. The four corners measured the same. ²³Inside, a brick wall was around each of the four small courtyards. There were places built in each of the four small courtyards. There were places built in each of the brick walls for cooking. ²⁴The man said to me, "These are the kitchens where the people that serve at the temple will boil the sacrifices for the people."

The Water Flowing From the Temple

47 The man led me back to the door of the temple. I saw water coming out from under the east threshold of the temple. (The front of the temple is on the east side.) The water flowed down from under the south end of the temple, south of the altar.* ²The man brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate on the east side. The water was coming out on the south side of the temple.

³The man walked east with a tape measure in his hand. He measured 1,000 cubits ($\frac{1}{3}$ mile). Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. The water was only ankle deep. ⁴The man measured another 1,000 cubits ($\frac{1}{3}$ mile). Then he told me to walk through the water at that place. There, the water came up to my knees. Then he measured another 1,000 cubits ($\frac{1}{3}$ mile) and told me to walk through the water at that place. There, the water was waist deep. ⁵The man measured another 1,000 cubits ($\frac{1}{3}$ mile). But there the water was too deep to cross. It had become a river. The water was deep enough to swim in. It was a river that was too deep to cross. ⁶Then the man said to me, "Son of Man,* did you pay close attention to the things you saw?"

Then the man led me back along the side of the river. ⁷As I walked back along the side of the river, I saw very many trees on both sides of the water. ⁸The man said to me, "This water flows east. It flows down to the Arabah Valley. The water enters the Dead Sea, the water in that sea becomes fresh. ⁹This water flows into the Dead Sea, so the water in that sea becomes fresh and clean. There are many fish in this water. And all kinds of animals live where this river goes. ¹⁰You can see fishermen standing by the river all the way from Engedi to Enegla'im. You can see them throwing their fishing nets and catching many kinds of fish. There are as many kinds of fish in the Dead Sea as there are

year of freedom Also called "Jubilee." Every 50 years the Israelites were to set their slaves free if they were Israelites. Also the people gave all the land back to the Israelite family that originally owned the land.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

Son of Man This was usually just a way of saying "a person," or "a human being." But here this becomes a title for the man, Ezekiel.

in the Mediterranean Sea. ¹¹But the swamps and small areas of wet land will not become fresh. They will be left for salt. ¹²All kinds of fruit trees grow on both sides of the river. Their leaves never become dry and die. The fruit never stops growing on those trees. The trees produce fruit every month. Why? Because the water for the trees comes from the temple. The fruit from the trees will be for food, and their leaves will be for healing."

Division of the Land for the Family Groups

¹³"The Lord my Master says these things, "These are the borders for dividing the land among the twelve family groups of Israel. Joseph will have two parts. ¹⁴You will divide the land equally. I promised to give this land to your ancestors.* So I am giving this land to you.

¹⁵"Here are the borders of the land: On the north side, it goes from the Mediterranean Sea by the way of Hethlon where the road turns toward Hamath, and on to Zedad, ¹⁶Berothah, Sibraim (which is on the border between Damascus and Hamath) and Hazer-hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. ¹⁷So the border will go from the sea to Hazar-enan on the northern border of Damascus, and Hamath. This will be on the north side.

¹⁸"On the east side, the border will go from Hazar-enan between Hauran and Damascus and continue along the Jordan River between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the eastern sea and all the way to Tamar. This will be the eastern border.

¹⁹"On the south side, the border will go from Tamar all the way to the oasis at Meribah-kadesh. Then it will go along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern border.

²⁰"On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the border all the way to the area in front of Lebo-Hamath. This will be your western border.

²¹"So you will divide this land among you for the family groups of Israel. ²²You will divide it as a property for yourselves and for the foreigners who live among you and who have had children among you. These foreigners will be residents—they will be like natural born Israelites. You will divide some land for them among the family groups of Israel. ²³The family group where that resident lives must give him some land." The Lord my Master said these things!

The Land for the Family Groups of Israel

48 ¹⁷"The northern border goes east from the Mediterranean Sea to Hethlon to Hamath Pass, and then all the way to Hazar-Enan. This is on the border between Damascus and Hamath. The land for the family groups in this group will go from the east of these borders to the west. From north to south, the family groups in this area are: Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah.

The Special Section of Land

¹⁸"The next area of land will be for a special use. This land is south of Judah's land. This area is 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long from north to south. And from east to west, it will be as wide as the land that belongs to the other family groups. The temple will be in the middle of this section of land. ¹⁹You will dedicate this land to the Lord. It will be 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 20,000 cubits (6.6 miles) wide. ²⁰This special area of land will be divided among the priest and Levites.

"The priests will get one part of this area. The land will be 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long on the north side, 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) wide on the west side, 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) wide on the east side, and 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long on the south side. The Lord's temple will be in the middle of this area of land.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

¹¹"This land is for Zadok's descendants.* These men were chosen to be my holy priests. Why? Because they continued to serve me when the other people of Israel left me. Zadok's family did not leave me like the other people from the family group of Levi. ¹²"This special share from this holy part of the land will be especially for these priests. It will be next to the land of the Levites.

¹³"Next to the land for the priests, the Levites will have a share of the land. It will be 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) wide. They will get the full length and width of this land—25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long and 20,000 cubits (6.6 miles) wide. ¹⁴"The Levites will not sell or trade any of this land. They will not be able to sell any of this land. They must not cut up this part of the country! Why? Because this land belongs to the Lord—it is very special. It is the best part of the land.

The Shares for the City Property

¹⁵"There will be an area of land 5,000 cubits (1.6 miles) wide by 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long that is left over from the land given to the priests and Levites. This land can be for the city, for grasslands for animals and for building houses. The common people may use this land. The city will be in the middle of it. ¹⁶"These are the city's measurements: The north side will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles). The south side will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles). The east side will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles). The west side will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles). ¹⁷"The city will have grasslands. These grasslands will be 250 cubits (437' 6") on the north and 250 cubits (437' 6") on the south. They will be 250 cubits (437' 6") on the east and 250 cubits (437' 6") on the west. ¹⁸"What is left of the length along the side of the holy area will be 10,000 cubits (3.3 miles) on the east and 10,000 (3.3 miles) on the west. This land will be along the side of the holy area. This land will grow food for the city workers. ¹⁹"The city workers will till this land.

The workers will be from all the family groups of Israel.

²⁰"This special area of land will be square. It will be 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long by 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) wide. You must set apart this area for its special purposes. One part is for the priests. One part is for the Levites. And one part is for the city.

²¹⁻²²"Part of that special land will be for the ruler of the country. That special area of land is square. It is 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) long by 25,000 cubits (8.3 miles) wide. Part of this special land is for the priests and part of it is for the Levites, and part of it is for the temple. The temple is in the middle of this area of land. The rest of the land belongs to the ruler of the country. The ruler will get the area between the land belonging to Benjamin and the land belonging to Judah.

²³⁻²⁴"South of this special area will be the land for the family groups that lived east of the Jordan River. Each family group will get a section of land that goes from the eastern border to the Mediterranean Sea. From north to south, these family groups are: Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad.

²⁵"The south border of Gad's land will go from Tamar to the Oasis of Meribah-kadesh, then along the Brook of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. ²⁶"And that is the land that you will divide among the family groups of Israel. That is what each group will get." The Lord my Master said these things!

The Gates of the City

²⁷"These are the gates of the city. The gates will be named for the family groups of Israel.

"The north side of the city will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles) long. ²⁸"There will be three gates: Reuben's Gate, Judah's Gate, and Levi's Gate.

²⁹"The east side of the city will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles) long. There will be three gates: Joseph's Gate, Benjamin's Gate, and Dan's Gate.

³⁰"The south side of the city will be 4,500 cubits (1.5 miles) long. There will be three gates: Simeon's Gate, Issachar's Gate, and

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Zebulun's Gate.

*"The west side of the city will be 4,500 cubits (*1.5 miles*) long. There will be three gates: Gad's Gate, Asher's Gate, and

Naphtali's Gate.

*"The distance around the city will be 18,000 cubits (*6 miles*). From now on, the name of the city will be: THE LORD IS HERE.*"

Daniel

Daniel Taken to Babylon

1 Nebuchadnezzar was the king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar surrounded Jerusalem with his army. This happened during the third year that Jehoiakim was king of Judah.* ²The Lord allowed Nebuchadnezzar to defeat Jehoiakim king of Judah. He also took the furniture from God's temple.* Nebuchadnezzar carried those things to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar put those things in the temple of his idol gods.

³Then King Nebuchadnezzar gave Ashpenaz an order. (Ashpenaz was the most important leader of all the eunuchs* that served the king.) The king told Ashpenaz to bring some of the Jewish men into his house. Nebuchadnezzar wanted Jewish men from important families and from the family of the king of Israel. ⁴King Nebuchadnezzar wanted only healthy young Jewish men. The king wanted young men that did not have any bruises or scars, or anything wrong with their bodies. The king wanted handsome, smart young men. The king wanted young men that were able to learn things quickly and easily. The king wanted young men that were able to serve in his house. The king told Ashpenaz to teach those young men from Israel the language and writings of the

Chaldean people.*

⁵King Nebuchadnezzar gave those young men a certain amount of food and wine every day. That was the same kind of food that the king ate. The king wanted those young men from Israel to be trained for three years. Then after three years, the young men would become servants of the king of Babylon. ⁶Among those young men were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. These young men were from the family group of Judah.

⁷Then Ashpenaz gave those young men from Judah Babylonian names. Daniel's new name was Belteshazzar. Hananiah's new name was Shadrach. Mishael's new name was Meshach. And Azariah's new name was Abednego.

⁸Daniel did not want to eat the king's rich food and wine. Daniel did not want to make himself unclean* with that food and wine. So he asked Ashpenaz for permission not to make himself unclean in this way.

⁹God made Ashpenaz want to be good and kind to Daniel. ¹⁰But Ashpenaz said to Daniel, "I am afraid of my master, the king. The king ordered me to give you this food and drink. If you don't eat this food, then you will begin to look weak and sick. You will look worse than

the third year ... Judah That is 605 B.C.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

eunuchs Men whose testicles have been removed. Rulers often gave such men important positions.

Chaldean people This was an important family group in Babylon. The king of Babylon was from this family group. The Chaldeans were educated people—they studied science, history, languages, and astronomy. But they also believed they could do magic and look at the stars or the clouds and learn what would happen in the future.

unclean See Lev. 11, 12, 14, 15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

other young men your age. The king will see this, and he will become angry at me. He might cut off my head! And it would be your fault."

"Then Daniel talked to their guard. Ashpenaz had ordered the guard to watch Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. "Daniel said to the guard, "Please give us this test for ten days: Don't give us anything but vegetables to eat and water to drink. "Then after ten days, compare us with the other young men who eat the king's food. See for yourself who looks healthier. Then you judge for yourself how you want to treat us. We are your servants."

"So the guard agreed to test Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah for ten days. "After ten days, Daniel and his friends looked healthier than all of the young men that ate the king's food. "So the guard continued to take away the king's special food and wine. He continued giving Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah vegetables instead.

"God gave Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah the wisdom and ability to learn many different kinds of writing and science. Daniel could also understand all kinds of visions* and dreams.

"The king wanted all the young men to be trained for three years. At the end of that time, Ashpenaz brought all of the young men to King Nebuchadnezzar. "The king talked to them. The king found that none of the young men were as good as Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. So those four young men became the king's servants. "Every time the king asked them about something important, they showed much wisdom and understanding. The king found they were ten times better than all the magic men and wise men in his kingdom. "So Daniel continued to be the king's servant until the first year that Cyrus was king.*

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 During Nebuchadnezzar's second year as king, he had some dreams. Those dreams bothered him and he could not sleep. "So the king called his wise men to come to him. Those men used magic tricks and they watched the stars. They did this to try to interpret dreams and to learn what will happen in the future. The king wanted those men to tell him what he had dreamed. So they came in and stood in front of the king.

"Then the king said to those men, "I had a dream that bothers me. I want to know what the dream means."

"Then the Chaldeans* answered the king. They spoke in the Aramaic language.* They said, "King, live forever! We are your servants. Please tell us your dream, then we will tell you what it means."

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar said to those men, "No! You must tell me the dream. And then you must tell me what it means. If you don't do these things, then I will give an order for you to be cut into pieces. And I will order your houses to be destroyed until they become piles of dust and ashes. "But if you tell me my dream and explain the meaning, then I will give you gifts, rewards, and great honor. So tell me about my dream and tell me what it means."

"Again the wise men said to the king, "Please, sir, tell us about the dream, and we will tell you what the dream means."

"Then King Nebuchadnezzar answered, "I know that you are trying to get more time. You know that I meant what I said. "You know that you will be punished if you don't tell me about my dream. So you have all agreed to lie to me. You are hoping for more time. You are hoping that I will forget what I want you to do. Now, tell me the dream. If you can tell me the dream, then I will know that you can tell me what it really means!"

Chaldeans An important family group in Babylonia.

Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."

Aramaic language This was the official language of the Babylonian Empire. People from many countries also used this language when they wrote official letters to people in other countries. The text of Daniel from here to Daniel 7:28 is written in Aramaic.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

first year that Cyrus was king That is, 539 B.C.

¹⁰The Chaldeans* answered the king. They said, "There is not a man on earth that can do what the king is asking! No king has ever asked the wise men or the men that do magic or the Chaldeans to do something like this. Not even the greatest and most powerful king ever asked his wise men to do something like this. "The king is asking something that is too hard to do. Only the gods could tell the king his dream and what it means. But the gods don't live with people."

¹¹When the king heard that, he became very angry. So he gave an order for all the wise men of Babylon to be killed. ¹²King Nebuchadnezzar's order was announced. All the wise men were to be killed. The king's men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to kill them.

¹³Arioch was the commander of the king's guards. He was going to kill the wise men of Babylon. But Daniel talked to him. Daniel spoke to Arioch in a wise and polite way. ¹⁴Daniel said to Arioch, "Why did the king order such a severe punishment?"

Then Arioch explained the whole story about the king's dreams, and Daniel understood. ¹⁵When Daniel heard the story, he went to King Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel asked the king to give him some more time. Then he would tell the king about the dream and what it meant.

¹⁶So Daniel went to his house. He explained the whole story to his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. ¹⁷Daniel asked his friends to pray to the God of heaven. Daniel asked them to pray that God would be kind to them and help them understand this secret. Then Daniel and his friends would not be killed with the other wise men of Babylon.

¹⁸During the night, God explained the secret to Daniel in a vision.* Then Daniel praised the God of heaven. ¹⁹Daniel said:

"Praise God's name for ever and ever!
Power and wisdom belong to him!

²⁰ He changes the times and seasons of the year.

And he changes the kings.

He gives power to kings,
and he takes their power away!

He gives wisdom to people so they
become wise,
and he lets people learn things and
become wise.

²¹ He knows about secrets that are deep and hidden.

Light lives with him,
so he knows what is in the dark and
secret places!

²² God of my ancestors,* I thank you and
praise you!

You gave me wisdom and power.
You told us the things we asked for!
You told us about the king's dream."

Daniel Tells What the Dream Means

²³Then Daniel went to Arioch. King Nebuchadnezzar had chosen Arioch to kill the wise men of Babylon. Daniel said to Arioch, "Don't kill the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king. I will tell him about his dream and what it means."

²⁴So very quickly, Arioch took Daniel to the king. Arioch said to the king, "I have found a man among the captives* from Judah. He can tell the king what his dream means."

²⁵The king asked Daniel (Belteshazzar) a question. He said to Daniel, "Are you able to tell me about my dream, and what it means?"

²⁶Daniel answered, "King Nebuchadnezzar, no wise man, no man that does magic tricks, and no Chaldean could tell the king the secret things he has asked about. ²⁷But there is a God in heaven who tells secret things. God gave King Nebuchadnezzar dreams to show him what will happen at a later time. This was your

Chaldean(s) An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."
vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.
captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

dream, and these are the things you saw while lying on your bed: ²⁹King, you were lying there on your bed. And you began thinking about things that will happen in the future. God can tell people about secret things—and he showed you what will happen in the future. ³⁰God also told this secret to me! Why? It is not because I have greater wisdom than other men. No, God told me about this secret so that you, king, may know what it means. In that way, you will understand what went through your mind.

³¹“King, in your dream you saw a large statue* in front of you. The statue was very large and it was shiny and very impressive. It would make a person’s eyes wide from amazement. ³²The head of the statue was made from pure gold. The chest and the arms of the statue were made from silver. The belly and upper part of the legs of the statue were made from bronze. ³³The lower part of the legs of the statue were made from iron. The feet of the statue were made partly of iron and partly of clay. ³⁴While you were looking at the statue, you saw a rock. The rock was cut loose—but a person did not cut the rock. Then the rock went through the air and, hit the statue on its feet of iron and clay. The rock smashed the feet of the statue. ³⁵Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and gold broke to pieces all at the same time. And all those pieces became like chaff* on a threshing floor* in the summertime. The wind blew those pieces away, and there was nothing left. No one could tell that a statue had ever been there. Then the rock that hit the statue became a very large mountain and filled up the whole earth.

³⁶“That was your dream. Now we will tell the king what it means. ³⁷King, you are the most important king. The God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory. ³⁸God has given you control and you rule

over people and over the wild animals and over the birds. Wherever they live, God has made you ruler over them all. King Nebuchadnezzar, you are that head of gold on the statue.*

³⁹“Another kingdom will come after you—that is the silver part. But that kingdom will not be as great as your kingdom. Next, a third kingdom will rule over the earth—that is the bronze part. ⁴⁰Then there will be a fourth kingdom. That kingdom will be strong like iron. Iron breaks and smashes things to pieces. In the same way, that fourth kingdom will smash and break all the other kingdoms.

⁴¹“You saw that the feet and toes of the statue* were partly clay and partly iron. That means the fourth kingdom will be a divided kingdom. It will have some of the strength of iron in it because you saw the iron mixed with clay. ⁴²The toes of the statue were partly iron and partly clay. So the fourth kingdom will be partly strong like iron, and partly weak like clay. ⁴³You saw the iron mixed with clay. But iron and clay don’t mix completely together. In the same way, the people of the fourth kingdom will be a mixture. Those people will not be united as one people.

⁴⁴“During the time of the kings of the fourth kingdom,, the God of heaven will set up another kingdom. This kingdom will continue forever! It will never be destroyed! And it will be the kind of kingdom that can’t be passed on to another group of people. This kingdom will crush all those other kingdoms. It will bring those kingdoms to an end. But that kingdom itself will continue forever.

⁴⁵“King Nebuchadnezzar, you saw a rock cut from a mountain—but no person cut that rock! The rock broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold to pieces. In this way, God showed you what will happen in the future. The dream is true and you can trust this interpretation.”

⁴⁶Then King Nebuchadnezzar bowed down in front of Daniel. The king praised Daniel. The king gave an order that an offering and incense be given to honor Daniel. ⁴⁷Then the king said to Daniel, “I know for sure your God is the most important and powerful God. And he is:

statue An image, made to look like a person or an animal. Statues are made from stone, metal, or wood.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

the Lord of all the kings. He tells people about things they can't know. I know this is true because you were able to tell these secret things to me."

"Then the king gave Daniel a very important job in his kingdom. And the king gave many expensive gifts to Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar made Daniel ruler over the whole province of Babylon. And he put Daniel in charge of all the wise men of Babylon. "Daniel asked the king to make Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego important officials over the province of Babylon. And the king did as Daniel asked. And Daniel himself became one of the important people that stayed near the king.

The Idol of Gold and the Hot Furnace

3 King Nebuchadnezzar had a gold idol made. That idol was 90 feet* high and 9 feet* wide. Then he set the idol up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. "Then the king called the satraps,* the prefects,* governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, rulers, and all the other officials in his kingdom to come together. The king wanted all those men to come to the dedication ceremony for the idol.

"So all those men came and stood in front of the idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then the man that makes the announcements for the king spoke in a loud voice. He said, "All you people from many nations and language groups, listen to me. This is what you are commanded to do: "You must bow down as soon as you hear the sound of all the musical instruments. When you hear the horns, flutes,

lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all of the other musical instruments, you must worship the gold idol. King Nebuchadnezzar has set this idol up. "If any person does not bow down and worship this gold idol, then that person will be quickly thrown into a very hot furnace.

"So, as soon as they heard the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* bagpipes,* and all of the other musical instruments, they bowed down and worshiped the gold idol. All the peoples, nations, and men of every kind of language there worshiped the gold idol that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

"Then, some of the Chaldean* men came up to the king. Those men began speaking against the Jews. "They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! "King, you gave a command. You said that everyone that hears the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all the other musical instruments must bow down and worship the gold idol. "And you also said that if any person does not bow down and worship the gold idol, then that person will be thrown into a very hot furnace. "There are some Jews that did not pay attention to your order, king. You made those Jews important officials in the province of Babylon. Their names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They don't worship your gods. And they didn't bow down and worship the gold idol you set up."

"Nebuchadnezzar became very angry. He called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So those men were brought to the king. "And Nebuchadnezzar said to those men, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don't worship my gods? And is it true that you didn't bow down and worship the gold idol I

¹⁰ Feet Literally, "60 cubits."

¹ feet Literally, "6 cubits."

¹satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

¹prefects Important officials.

¹lyres A musical instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word "kitharis."

¹sambucas A musical instrument. It might be a seven stringed instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly Greek.

¹bagpipes A musical instrument with a bag and several horns or pipes. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word "symphony."

¹Chaldean An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."

have set up? ¹⁵Now, when you hear the sound of the horns, flutes, lyres,* sambucas,* harps, bagpipes,* and all the other musical instruments, you must bow down and worship the gold idol. If you are ready to worship the idol I have made, that will be good. But if you don't worship it, you will be thrown very quickly into the hot furnace. Then no god will be able to save you from my power!"

¹⁶Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "Nebuchadnezzar, we don't need to explain these things to you! ¹⁷If you throw us into the hot furnace, then the God we serve can save us. And if he wants to, he can save us from your power. ¹⁸But even if God does not save us, we want you to know, king, that we refuse to serve your gods. We won't worship the gold idol you have set up."

¹⁹Then Nebuchadnezzar was very angry! He looked very mean at Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave an order for the oven to be heated seven times hotter than it usually was. ²⁰Then Nebuchadnezzar commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. The king told the soldiers to throw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego into the hot furnace.

²¹So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were tied up and thrown into the hot furnace. They were wearing their robes, pants, hats, and other clothes. ²²The king was very angry when he gave the command, so they quickly made the furnace very hot! The fire was so hot that the flames killed the strong soldiers! They were killed when they went close to the fire and threw in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. ²³Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell into the fire. They were tied up very tightly.

²⁴Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped to his feet. He was very surprised and he asked his

advisers, "We tied only three men and we threw only three men into the fire! Is that right?"

His advisers said, "Yes, king."

²⁵The king said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire. They are not tied up and they are not burned. The fourth man looks like an angel!"

²⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar went to the opening of the hot furnace. He shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, come out! Servants of the Most High God, come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. ²⁷When they came out, the satraps*, prefects*, governors, and royal advisers crowded around them. They could see that the fire had not burned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their bodies were not burned at all. Their hair was not burned, their robes were not burned, and they didn't even smell like they had been near fire.

²⁸Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their God has sent his angel and saved his servants from the fire! These three men trusted their God. They refused to obey my command and were willing to die instead of serving or worshiping any other God. ²⁹So, I now make this law: The people of any nation or of any language that says anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego will be cut to pieces. And that person's house will be destroyed until it is a pile of dirt and ashes. No other god can save his people like this." ³⁰Then the king gave Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego more important jobs in the provinces of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream About a Tree

4 King Nebuchadnezzar sent this letter to the many nations and people that speak other languages and live all around the world.

lyre(s) A musical instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word "kitharis."

sambuca(s) A musical instrument. It might be a seven stringed instrument like a harp. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly Greek.

bagpipe(s) A musical instrument with a bag and several horns or pipes. The name in Hebrew comes from some other language, possibly the Greek word "symphony."

angel Literally, "son of the god."

satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

prefects Important officials.

Greetings:

¹I am very happy to tell you about the miracles and wonderful things that the Most High God did for me.

- ³ God has done amazing miracles!
- God has done powerful miracles!
- God's kingdom continues forever;
- God's rule will continue for all generations.

⁴I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at my palace.* I was happy and successful. ⁵I had a dream that made me afraid. I was lying on my bed, and I saw pictures and visions* in my mind. Those things made me very afraid. ⁶So I gave an order that all the wise men of Babylon be brought to me. Why? So they could tell me what my dream meant. ⁷When the men of magic, and the Chaldeans* came, I told them about the dream. But those men could not tell me what it meant. ⁸Finally, Daniel came to me. (I gave Daniel the name, Belteshazzar, to honor my god. The spirit of the holy gods is in him.) I told Daniel about my dream. ⁹I said,

"Belteshazzar, you are the most important of all the men of magic. I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you. I know there is no secret that is too hard for you to understand. This was what I dreamed. Tell me what it means. ¹⁰"These are the visions* I saw while I was lying in my bed: I looked, and there in front of me was a tree standing in the middle of the earth. The tree was very tall. ¹¹"The tree grew large and strong. The top of the tree touched the sky.* ¹²It could be seen from anywhere on earth. ¹³"The leaves of the tree were beautiful. It

had much good fruit on it. And on the tree was plenty of food for everyone. The wild animals found shelter under the tree. And the birds lived in its branches. Every animal ate from the tree.

¹⁴"I was looking at those things in the vision* while lying on my bed. And then I saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. ¹⁵He spoke very loud. He said, 'Cut down the tree, and cut off its branches. Strip off its leaves. Scatter its fruit around. The animals that are under the tree will run away. The birds that were in its branches will fly away. ¹⁶But let the stump and roots stay in the ground. Put a band of iron and bronze around it. The stump and roots will stay in the field with the grass all around it. It will live among the wild animals and plants in the fields. It will become wet with dew.* ¹⁷He will not think like a man any longer. He will have the mind of an animal. Seven seasons (years) will pass while he is like this.'

¹⁸"A holy angel announced this punishment. Why? So all the people on earth may know that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. God gives those kingdoms to anyone he wants to. And God chooses humble people to rule those kingdoms!

¹⁹"That is what I, King Nebuchadnezzar, dreamed. Now, Belteshazzar (Daniel), tell me what it means. None of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret that dream for me. But Belteshazzar, you can interpret the dream because the spirit of the holy gods is in you.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Chaldeans An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."

middle ... sky The Babylonian people thought the earth was flat and round like a plate or a wheel. And they thought the sky was like a glass bowl turned upside down on the earth.

dew Small drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

¹⁹Then Daniel (also named Belteshazzar) became very quiet for about an hour. The things he was thinking bothered him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar (*Daniel*), don't let the dream or its meaning make you afraid."

Then Belteshazzar (*Daniel*) answered the king, "My lord, I wish the dream were about your enemies. And I wish the meaning of the dream were about those against you. ²⁰You saw a tree in your dream. The tree grew large and strong. Its top touched the sky. It could be seen from all over the earth. Its leaves were beautiful, and it had plenty of fruit. The fruit gave plenty of food for everyone. It was a home for the wild animals, and its branches were nesting places for the birds. That is the tree you saw. ²¹King, you are that tree! You have become great and powerful. You are like the tall tree that touched the sky—and your power reaches to the far parts of the earth.

²²"King, you saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. He said, 'Cut the tree down and destroy it. Put a band of iron and bronze around the stump and leave the stump and its roots in the ground. Leave it in the grass in the field. It will become wet with dew.* He will live like a wild animal. Seven seasons (*years*) will pass while he is like this.'

²³"This is the meaning of the dream, O king. God Most High has commanded these things to happen to my lord the king: ²⁴King Nebuchadnezzar, you will be forced to go away from people. You will live among the wild animals. You will eat grass like cattle. And you will become wet with dew.* Seven seasons (*years*) will pass, and then you will learn this lesson. You will learn God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And God Most High gives kingdoms to anyone he wants.

²⁵"The command to leave the stump of the tree and its roots in the ground means this: Your kingdom will be given back to you. This will happen when you learn that Most High (*God*) rules your kingdom. ²⁶So, king, please accept my advice. I advise you to stop sinning and do what is right. Stop doing bad things. And be kind to poor people. Then you might continue to be successful."

²⁷All those things happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. ²⁸²⁹Twelve months after the dream, King Nebuchadnezzar was walking on the roof* of his palace* in Babylon. While on the roof, the king said, "Look at Babylon! I built this great city. It is my palace! I built this great place by my power. I built this place to show how great I am!"

³⁰The words were still in his mouth when a voice came from heaven. The voice said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, these things will happen to you: Your power as king has been taken away from you. ³¹You will be forced to go away from people. You will live with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow. Seven seasons (*years*) will pass before you learn your lesson. Then you will learn that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And that God Most High gives kingdoms to anyone he wants."

³²Those things happened immediately. Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. He began eating grass like a cow. He became wet from dew.* His hair grew long like the feathers of an eagle. And his nails grew long like the claws of a bird.

dew Small drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

roof In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

palace A large house for the king and his family.

³⁴Then at the end of that time, I Nebuchadnezzar, looked up toward heaven. And I was in my right mind again. Then I gave praise to God Most High. I gave honor and glory to him who lives forever.

God rules forever!

His kingdom continues for all generations.

- ³⁵ People on earth are not truly important. God does what he wants with the powers of heaven and the people on earth. No one can stop his powerful hand! No one can question the things he does!

³⁶So, at that time, God gave me my right mind again. And he gave back my great honor and power as king. My advisers and the royal people began to ask my advice again. I became the king again. And I became even greater and more powerful than before. ³⁷Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, give praise, honor, and glory to the King of Heaven. Everything he does is right. He is always fair. And he is able to make proud people humble!

he Writing on the Wall

5 King Belshazzar gave a big party for 1,000 of his officials. The king was drinking wine with them. ²As Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he ordered his servants to bring the gold and silver cups. These were the cups that his grandfather* Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple* in Jerusalem. King Belshazzar wanted his royal people, his wives and his women slaves* to drink from those cups. ³So they brought the gold cups that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem. And the king and his officials, his wives, and his women slaves drank from them.

grandfather Or, "father." We are not sure if Belshazzar was really Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. Here the word "father" might only mean, "the man who was king before."
temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
women slaves Or, "concubine," a slave woman like a wife to her master.

⁴As they were drinking they were giving praise to their idol gods. They gave praise to those gods—and those gods were only statues made from gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone.

⁵Then all of a sudden, a man's hand appeared and began writing on the wall. The fingers scratched words into the plaster on the wall. The hand wrote on the wall there in the king's house near the lampstand. The king was watching the hand as it wrote.

⁶King Belshazzar was very afraid. His face became white from fear and his knees were shaking and knocking together. He could not stand up because his legs were too weak. ⁷The king called for the men of magic and Chaldeans* to be brought to him. He said to these wise men, "I will give a reward to any man that can read this writing and explain to me what it means. I will give purple clothes* to that man. I will put a gold chain around his neck, and I will make him the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

⁸So all the king's wise men came in. But they could not read the writing. They could not understand what it meant. ⁹King Belshazzar's officials were confused. And the king became even more afraid and worried. His face was white from fear.

¹⁰Then the king's mother came into the place where the party was. She had heard the voices of the king and his royal officials. She said, "O king, live forever! Don't be afraid! Don't let your face be so white with fear! ¹¹There is a man in your kingdom that has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the days of your father this man showed that he could understand secrets. He showed that he was very smart and very wise. He showed that he was like the gods in these things. Your grandfather,* King Nebuchadnezzar, put this man in charge of all the wise men. He ruled over all the men of magic, and the Chaldeans.* ¹²The man I am talking about is named Daniel.

Chaldeans An important family group in Babylonia. Sometimes this name means simply "People from Babylonia."
purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

The king gave him the name Belteshazzar. Belteshazzar (Daniel) is very smart and he knows many things. He could interpret dreams, explain secrets, and answer very hard problems. Call for Daniel. He will tell you what the writing on the wall means."

"So they brought Daniel to the king. The king said to Daniel, "Is your name Daniel, one of the captives my father the king brought here from Judah? "I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you. And I have heard that you understand secrets, and are very smart and very wise. "The wise men and the men of magic were brought to me to read this writing on the wall. I wanted those men to explain to me what this writing means. But they could not explain this writing on the wall to me. "I have heard about you. I have heard that you are able to explain what things mean, and that you can find the answer to very hard problems. If you can read this writing on the wall and explain to me what it means, this is what I will do for you: I will give you purple clothes* and I will put a gold chain around your neck. Then you will become the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

"Then Daniel answered the king. Daniel said, "King Belshazzar, you can keep your gifts for yourself. Or you can give those rewards to someone else. But I will still read the writing on the wall for you. And I will explain to you what it means.

"King, God Most High made your grandfather* Nebuchadnezzar a very great and powerful king. God made him very important. "People from many nations and people that spoke many languages were very afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. Why? Because the God Most High made him a very important king. If Nebuchadnezzar wanted a person to die, then he killed that person. And if he wanted a person to live, then that person was allowed to live. If he wanted to make people important, then he made those people important. And if he wanted

to make people not important, then he made them not important.

"But Nebuchadnezzar became proud and stubborn. So his power was taken away from him. He was taken off his royal throne and stripped of his glory. "Then Nebuchadnezzar was forced to go away from people. His mind became like the mind of an animal. He lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like a cow. He became wet with dew.* These things happened to him until he learned his lesson. Then he learned that God Most High rules over the kingdoms of men. And God Most High sets anyone he wants over kingdoms.

"But Belshazzar, you already knew these things! You are Nebuchadnezzar's grandson.* But still you have not made yourself humble. "No, you did not become humble. Instead, you have turned against the Lord of heaven. You ordered the drinking cups from the Lord's temple to be brought to you. Then you and your royal officials, your wives, and your women servants* drank wine from those cups. You gave praise to the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone. Those are not really gods, they can't see, or hear, or understand anything. But you did not give honor to the God who has the power over your life and everything you do. "So, because of that, God sent the hand that wrote on the wall. "These are the words that were written on the wall:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPARSIN.

"This is what these words mean:

Mene*

God has counted the days until your kingdom will end.

dew Small drops of water that collect on the ground during the night.

grandson Or, "son." This does not necessarily mean they were from the same family. It might only mean that Belshazzar was one of the kings of Babylon after Nebuchadnezzar was king.

woman servant Or, "concubine," a slave woman who was like a wife to a man.

Mene A weight, like the Hebrew word "mina." This is like the word "to count."

purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

grandfather Or, "father." We are not sure if Belshazzar was really Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. Here the word "father" might only mean, "the man who was king before."

²⁷ Tekel*

You have been weighed on the scales,
and found not good enough.

²⁸ Uparsin*:

Your kingdom is being taken from you
and divided.

It will be given to Mede and Persian
people."

²⁹Then Belshazzar gave an order for Daniel to be dressed in purple clothes.* A gold chain was put around his neck, and he was announced to be the third highest ruler in the kingdom. ³⁰That very same night, Belshazzar king of the Babylonian people, was killed. ³¹A man named Darius the Mede became the new king. Darius was about 62 years old.

Daniel and the Lions

6 Darius thought it would be a good idea to chose 120 satraps* to rule throughout all of his kingdom. ²And he chose three men to rule over those 120 satraps. Daniel was one of these three supervisors. The king set up these men so that no one would cheat him and he would not lose anything in his kingdom. ³Daniel showed himself to be better than the other supervisors. Daniel did this by his good character and great abilities. The king was so impressed with Daniel that he planned to make Daniel ruler over the whole kingdom. ⁴But when the other supervisors and the satraps heard about this, they were very jealous. They tried to find reasons to accuse Daniel. So they watched the things Daniel did as he went about doing the business of the government. But they could not find anything wrong with Daniel. So they could not accuse him of doing anything wrong. Daniel was very honest and trustworthy. He did not cheat the king and he worked very hard.

Tekel A weight, like the Hebrew word *shekel*. This word is like the word meaning "to weigh."

Uparsin Literally, "peres." A weight. This word is like the word meaning "to divide," "to split." It is also like the name of the country Persia.

purple clothes These clothes showed that a person was rich and powerful, like a king.

satraps Persian officials that were governors of a province.

⁵Finally those men said, "We will never find any reason to accuse Daniel of doing something wrong. So we must find something to complain about that is connected to the law of his God."

⁶So those two supervisors and the satraps* went as a group to the king. They said: "King Darius, live forever! ⁷The supervisors, prefects,* satraps*, advisers, and governors have all agreed on something. We think that the king should make this law. Everyone must obey this law. This is the law: If anyone prays to any god or man, except to you, king, for the next 30 days, then that person will be thrown into the lions' den (*cage*). ⁸Now, king, make the law and sign the paper it is written on. In this way, the law can't be changed. Why? Because the laws of the Medes and Persians can't be canceled or changed." ⁹So King Darius made the law and signed it.

¹⁰Daniel always prayed to God three times every day. Three times every day, Daniel got down on his knees and prayed and praised God. When Daniel heard about the new law he went to his house. Daniel went up to his room on the roof of his house. Daniel went to the windows that opened toward Jerusalem. Then Daniel got down on his knees and prayed, like he always did.

¹¹Then those men went as a group and found Daniel. They saw Daniel praying and asking God for help. ¹²So those men went to the king. They talked to him about the law he had made. They said, "King Darius, you signed a law that says, for the next 30 days anyone that prays to any god or man except you, O king, would be thrown into the lions' den (*cage*). Did you not sign that law?"

The king answered, "Yes, I signed that law. And the laws of the Medes and Persians can't be canceled or changed."

¹³Then those men said to the king, "That man named Daniel is not paying any attention to you. Daniel is one of the captives* from Judah. And Daniel is not paying attention to the law you signed. Daniel still prays to his God

prefects Important officials.

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

three times every day.”

“The king became very sad and upset when he heard this. The king decided to save Daniel. He worked until sunset trying to think of a way to save Daniel. “Then those men went as a group to the king. They said to him, “Remember, king, that the law of the Medes and Persians says that no law or command signed by the king can ever be canceled or changed.”

“So King Darius gave the order. They brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den (*cage*). The king said to Daniel, “I hope the God you worship saves you!” “A big rock was brought and put over the opening of the lions’ den (*cage*). Then the king used his ring and put his seal* on the rock. And he used the rings of his officials and put their seals on the rock also. This showed that no one could move that rock and bring Daniel out of the lion’s den (*cage*). “Then King Darius went back to his house. The king did not eat that night. He did not want anyone to come and entertain him. The king could not sleep all night.

“The next morning, King Darius got up just as it was getting light. He ran to the lions’ den (*cage*). “The king was very worried. When the king went to the lions’ den, he called to Daniel. The king said, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to save you from the lions? You always serve your God.”

“Daniel answered, “King, live forever! “My God sent his angel to save me. The angel closed the lions’ mouths. The lions have not hurt me because my God knows I am innocent. I never did anything wrong to you, king.”

“King Darius was very happy. He told his servants to lift Daniel out of the lions’ den (*cage*). And when Daniel was lifted out of the den (*cage*) they did not find any injury on his body. Daniel was not hurt by the lions because he trusted in his God.

“Then the king gave a command to bring the men that had accused Daniel to the lions’ den (*cage*). Those men and their wives and

children were thrown into the lion’s den (*cage*). The lions grabbed them before they hit the floor of the lions’ den (*cage*). The lions ate their bodies and then chewed on their bones.

“Then King Darius wrote this letter to all the people from other nations that spoke many different languages all around the world:

Greetings.

“I am making a new law. This law is for people in every part of my kingdom. All of you people must fear and respect the God of Daniel.

Daniel’s God is the living God.

God lives forever!

His kingdom will never be destroyed.

His rule will never end.

“ God helps and saves people.

God does amazing miracles in heaven and on earth.

God saved Daniel from the lions.

“So Daniel was successful during the time that Darius was king and during the time that Cyrus the Persian was king.

Daniel’s Dream About Four Animals

7 During the first year that Belshazzar was king of Babylon,* Daniel had a dream. Daniel saw these visions* while he was lying on his bed. Daniel wrote what he had dreamed about. “Daniel said: “I saw my vision at night. In the vision, the wind was blowing from all four directions. Those winds made the sea rough. “I saw four big animals and each one was different from the others. Those four animals came up out of the sea.

“The first animal looked like a lion, and it had wings like an eagle. I watched this animal. Then its wings were torn off. It was lifted from the ground so that it stood up on two feet like a man. And it was given the heart (*mind*) of a man.

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

first ... Babylon That is, 553 B.C.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

⁹"And then I saw a second animal there in front of me. This animal looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat all the meat you want!'"

¹⁰"After that, I looked, and there in front of me was another animal. This animal looked like a leopard.* And the leopard had four wings on its back. The wings looked like a bird's wings. This animal had four heads. It was given authority to rule.

¹¹"After that, in my vision* at night I looked, and there in front of me was a fourth animal. This animal looked very mean and terrible. It looked very strong. It had large iron teeth. This animal crushed and ate up its victims.* And this animal walked on whatever was left of its victims. This fourth animal was different from all the animals I saw before it. This animal had ten horns.

¹²"I was thinking about those horns, and then another horn grew up among those horns. This horn was a little horn. There were eyes on this little horn—the eyes looked like a person's eyes. And there was a mouth on this little horn. And the mouth was bragging. The little horn pulled out three of the other horns.

Judgment of the Fourth Animal

- ¹ "As I was looking,
thrones were put in their places.
And the Ancient King*
sat on his throne.
His clothes were very white;
They were white like snow.
The hair on his head was white;
it was white like wool.
His throne was made from fire.

leopard An animal like a tiger, but with black spots.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

victims People that have suffered some kind of hurt or trouble. Often this means people that were hurt or lost something during a crime.

Ancient King Literally, "Ancient of Days." This name for God shows that God has been the great king for a long, long time.

And the wheels of his throne were made from flames.

- ³⁰ A river of fire was flowing in front of the Ancient King.*

Millions of people were serving him.

Hundreds of millions of people stood in front of him.

(This was like, court was ready to begin, and the books were opened.

¹³"I kept on looking because the little horn was bragging. I kept watching until finally the fourth animal was killed. Its body was destroyed and it was thrown into the burning fire. ¹⁴The authority and rule of the other animals had been taken from them. But they were permitted to live for a certain period of time.

¹⁵"In my vision at night I looked, and there in front of me was a person that looked like a human being.* He was coming on the clouds in the sky. He came to the Ancient King,* and they brought him before him.

¹⁶"The person that looked like a human being was given authority, glory, and complete ruling power. All peoples, nations, and men of every language will worship him. His rule will last forever. His kingdom will continue forever. It will never be destroyed.

The Interpretation of the Dream About the Fourth Animal

¹⁷"I, Daniel, was confused and worried. The visions* that went through my mind bothered me. ¹⁸I came near one of those that was standing there. I asked him what all this meant. So he told me. He explained to me what these things meant. ¹⁹He said, 'The four great animals are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the earth. ²⁰But God's special people will receive the kingdom. And they will have the kingdom forever and ever.'

²¹"Then I wanted to know what the fourth animal was and what it meant. The fourth animal was different from all the other animals.

human being Literally, "son of man." This means he looked like a normal person, and not an angel or an animal.

It was very terrible. It had iron teeth and bronze claws. It was the animal that crushed and completely ate up its victims. And it walked on whatever was left of its victims. ²⁰And I wanted to know about the ten horns that were on the fourth animal's head. And I wanted to know about the little horn that grew there. That little horn pulled out three of the other ten horns. That little horn looked meaner than the other horns. And that little horn continued bragging. ²¹As I was watching, this little horn began attacking and making war against God's special people. And the horn was killing them. ²²The little horn kept killing God's special people until the Ancient King* came and judged him. The Ancient King announced a judgment on the little horn. This judgment helped God's special people. And they received the kingdom.

²³And he explained this to me: "The fourth animal is a fourth kingdom that will come on the earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms. That fourth kingdom will destroy people all around the world. It will walk on and crush nations all around the world. ²⁴The ten horns are ten kings that will come from this fourth kingdom. After those ten kings are gone, another king will come. He will be different from the kings that ruled before him. He will defeat three of the other kings. ²⁵This special king will say things against God Most High. And that king will hurt and kill God's special people. That king will try to change the times and laws that have already been set. God's special people will be in that king's power for a time, times, and a half time.*

²⁶"But the court will decide what should happen. And that king's power will be taken away. His kingdom will end completely. ²⁷Then God's special people will rule the kingdom. And they will rule over all the people from all the kingdoms of earth.* This kingdom will last

forever. And people from all the other kingdoms will respect and serve them."

²⁸And that was the end of the dream. I, Daniel, was very afraid. My face became very white from fear. And I did not tell the other people about the things I saw and heard."

Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 During* the third year that Belshazzar was king,* I saw this vision.* This was after the other vision. ¹In the vision, I saw that I was in the city of Susa.* Susa was the capital city in the province of Elam. I was standing by the Ulai River. ²I looked up, and I saw a ram* standing at the side of the Ulai River. The ram had two long horns. The horns were both long, but one horn was longer than the other horn. The long horn was farther back than the other horn. ³I watched the ram run into things with its horns. I watched the ram run to the west and to the north and to the south. No animal could stop the ram. And no one could save the other animals. That ram could do whatever it wanted to do. So the ram became very powerful.

⁴I thought about the ram.* While I was thinking, I saw a male goat come from the west. This goat ran over the whole earth. This goat's feet did not even touch the ground. This goat had one large horn that was easy to see. That horn was right between the goat's eyes.

⁵That goat came to the ram* with the two horns. This was the ram I had seen standing by the Ulai River. The goat was very angry. And it ran toward the ram. ⁶I watched the goat run toward the ram. The goat was very angry. It broke the ram's two horns. The ram could not stop the goat. The goat knocked the ram to the ground. Then the goat stepped all over the ram. There was no one to save the ram from the goat.

During At this point, the book of Daniel is written in the Hebrew language again. Daniel 2:1-7:28 was written in Aramaic, the official language of the Babylonian Empire.

third ... king That is, 551 B.C.

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Susa The capital city of Persia.

ram(s) A male sheep.

Ancient King Literally, "Ancient of Days." This name for God shows that God has been the great king for a long, long time.

a time ... time This probably means, "3½ years."

God's ... earth Literally, "The rule and kingdom and greatness of the kingdoms under heaven will be given to the saints."

"So the goat became very powerful. But when he was strong, his big horn broke. Then four horns grew in place of the one big horn. Those four horns were easy to see. Those four horns pointed in four different directions.

"Then a little horn grew from one of those four horns. That little horn grew and became very big. It grew toward the southeast. It grew toward the Beautiful Land.* "That little horn became very big. It grew until it reached the sky. The little horn even threw some of the stars to the ground. And it stepped all over those stars. "That little horn became very strong. And then it turned against the Ruler of the Stars (God). The little horn stopped the daily sacrifices that were offered to the Ruler (God). The place where people worshiped the Ruler was pulled down. "The little horn sinned and stopped the daily sacrifices. It threw goodness down to the ground. The little horn did these things and was very successful.

"Then I heard one of the holy ones* speaking. Then I heard another holy one answer the first one. The first holy one said, "This vision shows what will happen to the daily sacrifice. It is about that terrible sin that destroys. It shows what will happen when people destroy the place where the Ruler is worshiped. It shows what will happen when those people step all over that place. It shows what will happen when the people step all over those stars. But how long will these things happen?"

"The other holy one* said, "This will happen for 2,300 days. Then the holy place will be fixed."

The Vision Is Explained to Daniel

"I, Daniel, saw this vision. And I tried to understand what it meant. While I was thinking about the vision, someone that looked like a man suddenly stood in front of me. "Then I heard a man's voice. This voice came from

above the Ulai River. The voice called out, "Gabriel, explain the vision to this man."

"So Gabriel, the one that looked like a man, came to where I was standing. When he came close to me, I was very afraid. I fell down to the ground. But Gabriel said to me, "Man,* understand that this vision is for the time of the end."

"While Gabriel was speaking, I went to sleep. It was a very deep sleep. My face was on the ground. Then Gabriel touched me and lifted me to my feet. "Gabriel said, "Now, I will explain the vision to you. I will tell you what will happen in the future. Your vision was about the end times.

"You saw a ram with two horns. Those horns are the countries of Media and Persia. "The goat is the king of Greece. The big horn between its eyes is the first king. "That horn broke. And four horns grew in its place. Those four horns are four kingdoms. Those four kingdoms will come from the nation of the first king. But those four nations will not be as strong as the first king.

"When the end is near for those kingdoms, there will be a very bold and cruel king. This king will be very tricky. This will happen when there have become many, many sinful people. "This king will be very powerful—but his power does not come from himself.* This king will cause terrible destruction. He will be successful in everything he does. He will destroy powerful people—even God's special people.

"This king will be very smart and tricky. He will use his wisdom and lies to be successful. He will think that he is very important. He will destroy many people, when they least expect it. He will try to fight even the Prince of Princes (God). But that cruel king's power will be destroyed. And it will not be a human hand that destroys him.

Beautiful Land This might mean "Jerusalem," or it might be "Judah."

holy one(s) This might mean "one of God's special people" or "an angel."

Man Literally, "son of man." This was a Hebrew way of saying, "human being."

but his power ... himself Some ancient translations don't have this verse, so this may have been accidentally copied from verse 22.

²⁶"The vision about those times, and the things I said, are true. But seal* the vision. Those things won't happen for a long, long time."

²⁷I, Daniel, became very weak. I was sick for several days after that vision. Then I got up and went back to work for the king. But I was very upset about the vision. I did not understand what the vision meant.

Daniel's Prayer

9 These things happened during the first year that Darius was king. Darius was the son of a man named Ahasuerus.* Darius belonged to the Median people. He became king over Babylon. ²During the first year that Darius was king, I, Daniel, was reading some books. In the books, I saw that the Lord told Jeremiah how many years would pass before Jerusalem would be built again. The Lord said 70 years would pass.

³Then I turned to God, my Master. I prayed to him and asked him for help. I did not eat any food, and I put on the clothes that showed I was sad. And I put dirt on my head. ⁴I prayed to the Lord my God. I told him about all of my sins. I said: "Lord, you are a great and awesome God. You keep your agreement of love and kindness with people that love you. You keep your agreement with the people who obey your commands.

⁵"But Lord, we have sinned! We have done wrong. We have done bad things. We turned against you. We turned away from your commands and fair decisions. ⁶We did not listen to the prophets. They were your servants. The prophets spoke for you. They spoke to our kings, our leaders, and our fathers. They spoke to all of the people from Israel. But we did not listen to those prophets!,"

⁷"Lord, you are good, and goodness belongs to you! But shame belongs to us today. Shame belongs to the people from Judah and

Jerusalem. Shame belongs to all the people of Israel—to the people that are near, and to the people that are far away. Lord, you scattered those people among many nations. And the people of Israel in all those nations should be ashamed. They should be ashamed of all the bad things they did against you, Lord.

⁸"Lord, we should all be ashamed. All of our kings and leaders should be ashamed. Our ancestors* should be ashamed. Why? Because we sinned against you, Lord.

⁹"But Lord, you are kind. You forgive people for the bad things they do. And we really turned against you. ¹⁰We have not obeyed the Lord our God. The Lord used his servants; the prophets, and gave us laws—but we have not obeyed his laws. ¹¹None of the people of Israel obeyed your teachings. They all have turned away. They did not obey you. There are curses* and promises written in the Law of Moses. (Moses was God's servant.) Those curses and promises tell about the punishment for not obeying the law—and all those things have happened to us. Those things happened to us because we sinned against the Lord.

¹²"God said those things would happen to us and our leaders—and he made them happen. He made terrible things happen to us. No other city suffered the way Jerusalem suffered. ¹³All of those terrible things happened to us. This happened just like it is written in the Law of Moses. But we still have not asked the Lord for help! We still have not stopped sinning. We still do not pay attention to your truth, Lord! ¹⁴The Lord kept the terrible things ready for us—and he made those things happen to us. The Lord did this because he is fair in everything he does. But we still have not listened to him.

¹⁵"Lord, our God, you used your power and brought us out of Egypt. We are your people. You are famous because of that even today. Lord, we have sinned. We have done terrible things. ¹⁶Lord, stop being angry at Jerusalem. Jerusalem is on your holy mountain. You de-

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

Ahasuerus Or, "Xerxes."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

curses Warnings about bad things that will happen to person that does not obey God.

the right things, so stop being angry at Jerusalem. People all around us insult us and make fun of your people. This happens because we and our ancestors* sinned against you.

¹⁷"Now, Lord, listen to my prayer. I am your servant. Listen to my prayer for help. Do good things for your holy place.* That building was destroyed. But Master, do these good things for your own good. ¹⁸"My God, listen to me! Open your eyes and see all the terrible things that have happened to us! See what has happened to the city that is called by your name! I am not saying we are good people. That is not why I am asking these things. I am asking these things because I know you are kind. ¹⁹"Lord, listen to me! Lord, forgive us! Lord, pay attention, and then do something! Don't wait! Do something now! Do it for your own good! My God, do something now, for your city and your people that are called by your name."

The Vision About the 70 Weeks

²⁰I was saying those things in my prayer to God. I was telling about my sins and the sins of the people of Israel. I was praying for God's holy mountain. ²¹While I was praying, the man Gabriel came to me. Gabriel was the person I saw in the vision. Gabriel came flying quickly to me. He came at the time of the evening sacrifice. ²²Gabriel helped me understand the things I wanted to know. Gabriel said, "Daniel, I have come to give you wisdom and to help you understand. ²³When you first started praying, the command was given. And I came to tell you. God loves you very much! You will understand this command, and you will understand the vision.

²⁴"God has allowed 70 weeks* for your people and your holy city, Daniel. The 70 weeks* are ordered for these reasons: to stop doing bad things, to stop sinning, to make people pure, to bring the goodness that

continues forever, to put a seal* on visions and prophets, and to dedicate a very holy place.

²⁵"Learn these things, Daniel. Understand these things! From the time that the message went out to go back and build Jerusalem again until the time for the chosen king* to come will be seven weeks.* Then Jerusalem will be built again. There will again be places for people to meet together in Jerusalem. And there will be a ditch around the city to protect it. Jerusalem will be built for 62 weeks.* But there will be many troubles during that time. ²⁶After the 62 weeks,* the chosen person will be killed.* He will be gone.* Then the people of the future leader will destroy the city and the holy place. That end will come like a flood. War will continue until the end. God has ordered that place to be completely destroyed.

²⁷"Then the future ruler will make an agreement with many people. That agreement will continue for one week.* The offerings and sacrifices will stop for a half of a week.* And a destroyer will come. He will do terrible, destructive things!* But God has ordered that destroyer to be completely destroyed."

Daniel's Vision by the Tigris River

10 Cyrus was the king of Persia. During Cyrus' third year as king, Daniel learned about these things. (Daniel's other name is Belteshazzar.) These things are true, but very hard to understand. But Daniel understood these things. They were explained to him in a vision.

¹Daniel says, "At that time, I, Daniel, was very sad for three weeks. ²During those three weeks, I didn't eat any fancy food. I didn't eat any meat. I didn't drink any wine. I didn't put any oil on my head. I didn't do any of these things for three weeks.

seal(s) Small stones or rings with special shapes that could be used like a rubber stamp. When pressed into wet clay or hot wax, they left a special mark that was like a signature.

chosen king Literally, "anointed person."

killed Literally, "cut off."

He will be gone Or, "he will have nothing."

He will do ... things Or, "he will come on the wings of terrible destruction."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Do good ... place Literally, "Let your face shine on your holy place."

week(s) Or, "units of seven." The Hebrew word could mean "week," or it could mean "period of seven years."

"On the 28th day of the first month of the year, I was standing beside the great Tigris River. While I was standing there, I looked up. And I saw a man standing in front of me. He was wearing linen* clothes. A belt made of gold from Uphaz was wrapped around his waist. His body was like a shiny stone. His face was bright like lighting! His arms and feet were shiny like polished brass! His voice was loud like a crowd of people!

"I, Daniel, was the only person that saw the vision.* The men with me didn't see the vision, but they were still afraid. They were so afraid that they ran away and hid. So I was left alone. I was watching this vision—and it made me afraid. I lost my strength. My face turned white like a dead person's face, and I was helpless. Then I heard the man in the vision talking. As I listened to his voice, I fell into a deep sleep. My face was flat on the ground.

"Then a hand touched me. When that happened I got on my hands and knees. I was so afraid that I was shaking. The man in the vision* said to me, 'Daniel, God loves you very much. Think very carefully about the words I will speak to you. Stand up, I have been sent to you.' And when he said this, I stood up. I was still shaking because I was afraid. Then the man in the vision started talking again. He said, 'Daniel, don't be afraid. From the very first day you decided to have wisdom and to be humble in front of God. He has been listening to your prayers. I came to you because you have been praying. But the prince (angel) of Persia has been fighting against me and bothering me for 21 days. Then Michael, one of the most important princes (angels), came to help me because I was stuck there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to you Daniel, to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future. The vision is about a time in the future.'

"While the man was talking to me, I bowed low with my face toward the ground. I could not speak. Then the one that looked like

a man touched my lips. I opened my mouth and started to speak. I said to the one standing in front of me, 'Sir, I am upset and afraid because of what I saw in the vision.* I feel helpless. Sir, I am Daniel your servant. How can I talk with you? My strength is gone and it is hard for me to breathe.'

"The one that looked like a man touched me again. When he touched me I felt better. Then he said, 'Daniel, don't be afraid. God loves you very much. Peace be with you. Be strong now, be strong.'

"When he spoke to me, I became stronger. Then I said, 'Sir, you have given me strength. Now you can speak.'

"So then he said, 'Daniel, do you know why I have come to you? Soon I must go back to fight against the prince (angel) of Persia. When I go, the prince (angel) of Greece will come. But Daniel, before I go, I must first tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. No one stands with me against those evil angels except Michael. Michael is the prince (angel) ruling over your people.'

11 During the first year that Darius the Mede was king,* I stood up to support Michael* in his fight against the prince (angel) of Persia.

"Now then, Daniel, I tell you the truth: three more kings will rule in Persia. Then a fourth king will come. That fourth king will be much richer than all the other kings of Persia before him. That fourth king will use his riches to get power. And he will cause everyone to be against the kingdom of Greece. Then a very strong and powerful king will come. He will rule with much power. He will do anything he wants. After that king has come, his kingdom will be broken up. His kingdom will be divided out toward the four parts of the world. His kingdom will not be divided among his children or grandchildren. And his kingdom will not have the power that he had. Why? Because his kingdom will be pulled up and given to other people.

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

first year that Darius ... king That is, probably about 521 B.C.

Michael See Dan. 10:13.

⁵⁴"The southern king will become strong. But then one of his commanders will defeat the southern king. The commander will begin to rule. And he will be very powerful.

⁵⁵"Then after a few years, the southern king and that commander will make an agreement. The daughter of the southern king will marry the northern king. She will do this to bring peace. But she and the southern king will not be strong enough. People will turn against her and against the person that brought her to that country. And those people will turn against her child and against the person that helped her.

⁵⁶"But a person from her family will come to take the southern king's place. He will attack the armies of the northern king. He will go into that king's strong fort. He will fight and win. He will take their idol gods. He will take their metal idols and their expensive things made from silver and gold. He will take those things away to Egypt. Then he will not bother the northern king for a few years. The northern king will attack the southern kingdom. But he will lose, and then he will go back to his own country.

⁵⁷"The northern king's sons will prepare for war. They will get a large army together. That army will move through the land very quickly, like a powerful flood. That army will fight all the way to the strong fort of the southern king. Then the southern king will become very angry. He will march out to fight against the northern king. The northern king will have a large army, but he will lose the war. The northern army will be defeated, and those soldiers will be carried away. The southern king will be very proud, and he will kill thousands of soldiers from the northern army. But he will not continue to be successful. The northern king will get another army. That army will be larger than the first army. After several years he will attack. That army will be very large and it will have many weapons. That army will be ready for war.

⁵⁸"In those times, many people will be against the southern king. Some of your own people that love to fight will rebel against the southern king. They will not win, but they will

make the vision* come true when they do this. Then the northern king will come and build ramps against the walls and capture a strong city. The southern army will not have the power to fight back. Even the best soldiers from the southern army will not be strong enough to stop the northern army.

⁵⁹"The northern king will do whatever he wants. No one will be able to stop him. He will gain power and control in the Beautiful land.* And he will have the power to destroy it. The northern king will decide to use all of his power to fight against the southern king. He will make an agreement with the southern king. The king of the north will let one of his daughters marry the southern king. The northern king will do that so he can defeat the southern king, but those plans will not succeed. His plans will not help him.

⁶⁰"Then the northern king will turn his attention to the countries along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He will defeat many of those cities, but then a commander will put an end to the pride and rebellion of that northern king. That commander will make that northern king ashamed.

⁶¹"After that happens, that northern king will go back to the strong forts of his own country. But he will be weak, and he will fall. He will be finished.

⁶²"A new ruler will come after that northern king. That ruler will send out a tax collector. That ruler will do this so he will have enough money to live in a very rich way. But, in a few years, that ruler will be destroyed. But he will not die in a battle.

⁶³"That ruler will be followed by a very cruel and hated man. That man will not have the honor of being from a king's family.* He will become a ruler by being tricky. He will attack the kingdom when the people feel safe. He will defeat large and powerful armies. He

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Beautiful land This might mean "Jerusalem," or it may be "Judah."

That ... family Or, "That person will not have the good qualities a king should have."

will even defeat the Leader with the Agreement. ²³Many nations will make agreements with that cruel and hated ruler. But he will lie and trick them. He will gain much power. But only a few people will support him.

²⁴"When the richest countries feel safe, that cruel and hated ruler will attack them. He will attack at just the right time and will be successful where his fathers were not successful. He will take things from the countries he defeated, and he will give those things to his followers. He will plan to defeat and destroy strong cities. He will be successful, but only for a short time.

²⁵"That very cruel and hated ruler will have a very large army. He will use that army to show his strength and courage and attack the southern king. The southern king will get a very large and powerful army and go to war. But the people that are against him will make secret plans. And the southern king will be defeated. ²⁶People that were supposed to be good friends of the southern king will try to destroy him. His army will be defeated. Many of his soldiers will be killed in battle. ²⁷Those two kings will have their hearts set on hurting each other. They will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but it will not do either one any good. Why? Because God has set a time for their end to come.

²⁸"The northern king will go back to his own country with much wealth. Then he will decide to do bad things against the holy agreement.* He will do the things he planned, and then he will go back to his own country.

²⁹"At the right time, the northern king will attack the southern king again. But this time he will not be successful like he was before. ³⁰Ships from Cyprus will come and fight against the northern king. He will see those ships coming and be afraid. Then he will turn back and take his anger out on the holy agreement. He will turn back and help the people that quit following the holy agreement. ³¹The northern king will send his army to do terrible things to the temple in Jerusalem. They

will stop the people from offering the daily sacrifice.* Then they will do something really terrible. They will set up that terrible thing that causes destruction.

³²"The northern king will use lies and smooth talking to trick the Jews that quit following the holy agreement. Those Jews will sin even worse. But the Jews that know God and obey him will be strong. They will fight back!

³³"Those Jews that are wise will help the other people understand what is happening. But even those that are wise will have to suffer persecution. Some of those wise Jews will be killed with swords. Some of them will be burned, or taken prisoner. Some of those Jews will have their homes and things taken away. ³⁴When those wise Jews are punished they will get a little help. But many Jews that join those wise Jews will be hypocrites.* ³⁵Some of the wise Jews will make mistakes and fall. But the persecution must come. Why? So that they can be made stronger, purer, and without faults until the time of the end comes. Then, at the right time, that time of the end will come."

The King Who Praises Himself

³⁶"The northern king will do whatever he wants. He will brag about himself. He will praise himself and think that he is even better than a god. He will say things that no one has ever heard of. He will say those things against the God of gods. He will be successful until all the bad things have happened. What God has planned to happen will happen.

³⁷"That northern king will not care about the gods his fathers worshiped. He will not care about the idol gods women worship. He will not care about any god. Instead, he will praise himself, and make himself more important than any god. ³⁸The northern king will not worship any god, but he will worship power. Power and strength will be his god. His fathers didn't love power like he does. He honors the god of

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

holy agreement This probably means the Jewish people.

ower with gold and silver, expensive jewels, and gifts.

³⁴"That northern king will attack strong fortresses* with the help of this foreign god. He will give much honor to those foreign rulers that join him. He will put many people under those rulers. He will make those rulers pay him for the land they rule over.

⁴⁵"At the time of the end, the southern king will fight a battle against the northern king. The northern king will attack him. He will attack with chariots and soldiers on horses and many large ships. The northern king will rush through the land like a flood. ⁴⁶"The northern king will attack the Beautiful Land.* Many countries will be defeated by the northern king. But Edom, Moab, and the leaders of Ammon will be saved from him. ⁴⁷"The northern king will show his power in many countries. Egypt will also learn how powerful he is. ⁴⁸He will get treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt. The Arabian and Nubian people will obey him. ⁴⁹But that northern king will hear news from the east and the north that will make him afraid and angry. He will go to completely destroy many nations. ⁵⁰He will set up his king's tents between the seas at the beautiful holy mountain.* But finally, that bad king will die. There will not be anyone to help him when his end comes."

12 "The man in the vision said, 'Daniel, at that time, the great prince (angel) Michael will stand up. Michael is in charge of your people, the Jews. There will be a time of much trouble. A time like that has not happened since there was a nation on the earth. But Daniel, at that time, every one of your people whose name is found written in the book of life, will be saved. ²Many, many people that are dead and buried* of the earth will wake up. Some of them will wake up to

have life forever. But some will wake up to have shame and hate that continues forever. ³The wise people will shine like the brightness of the sky. The wise people that taught others to live right will shine like stars forever and ever.

⁴"But you, Daniel, keep this message a secret. You must close the book. You must keep this secret until the time of the end. Many people will go here and there looking for true knowledge. And the true knowledge will increase."

⁵"Then I, Daniel, looked and I saw two other people. One person was standing on my side of the river. And the other person was standing on the other side of the river. ⁶The man who was dressed in linen* was standing over the water in the river. One of the two people said to him, 'How long will it be before these amazing things come true?'

⁷"The man dressed in linen* and standing over the water lifted his right and left hands toward heaven. And I heard him make a promise using the name of God who lives forever. He said, 'It will be for three and one-half years.* The power of the holy people will be broken, and then all these things will finally come true.'

⁸"I heard the answer, but I really didn't understand. So I asked, 'Sir, what will happen after all these things come true?'

⁹"He answered, 'Go on about your life Daniel. The message is hidden. It will be a secret until the time of the end. ¹⁰Many people will be made pure—they will make themselves clean.* But evil people will continue to be evil. And those wicked people will not understand these things. But the wise people will understand these things.

¹¹"The daily sacrifice will be stopped. There will be 1,290 days from that time until the time that the terrible thing that destroys is

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Beautiful Land This might mean "Jerusalem," or it may be "Judah."

beautiful holy mountain The mountain Jerusalem is built on.

are ... buried Literally, "sleep in the dust."

linen Thread or cloth made from the fibers of the flax plant.

three ... years Literally, "a time, times, and half a time."

clean Or, "acceptable." Pure or able to be used in worshiping God. See Leviticus 11-15 for the Old Testament rules about clean and unclean things.

set up. "The person that waits for, and comes to, the end of the 1,335 days will be very happy.

¹³ "As for you Daniel, go and live your life till the end. You will get your rest. At the end, you will rise (*from death*) to get your share."

Hosea

The Lord God's Message Through Hosea

1 This is the Lord's message that came to Hosea son of Beeri. This message came during the time that Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Jerezekiah were kings of Judah. This was during the time of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel.

²This was the Lord's first message to Hosea. The Lord said, "Go, and marry a prostitute.* Have children from that prostitute. Why? Because the people in this country have acted like prostitutes—they have been unfaithful to the Lord."

The Birth of Jezreel

³So Hosea married Gomer daughter of Diblaim. Gomer became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Hosea. The Lord said to Hosea, "Name him Jezreel.* Why? Because in a little while I will punish the family of Jehu for the blood at Jezreel.* Then I will put an end to the kingdom of the nation* of Israel. And at that time, I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."

The Birth of Lo-Ruhamah

⁶Then Gomer became pregnant again and gave birth to a daughter. The Lord, said to

Hosea, "Name her Lo-Ruhamah.* Why? Because I will not show mercy to the nation* of Israel any more. I will not forgive them. But I will show mercy to the nation of Judah. I will save the nation of Judah. I will not use the bow or the sword to save them. I will not use war horses and soldiers to save them. I will save them by my own power."*

The Birth of Lo-Ammi

⁹After Gomer had finished nursing Lo-Ruhamah, she became pregnant again. She gave birth to a son. Then the Lord, said, "Name him Lo-Ammi.* Why? Because you are not my people. I am not your God."

The Lord God Promises There Will Be Many Israelites

¹⁴"In the future, the number of the people of Israel will be like the sand of the sea. You can't measure the sand or count it. Then it will happen that in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the children of the living God.'

¹⁵"Then the people of Judah and the people of Israel will be gathered together. They will choose one ruler for themselves. And their nation will be too large for the land!* Jezreel's

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

Jezreel This name in Hebrew means "God will plant seeds."

nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

Lo-Ruhamah This name in Hebrew means "She receives no mercy."

by my own power Literally, "by the Lord their God."

Lo-Ammi This name in Hebrew means "not my people."

their nation ... land Literally, "they will go up from the land."

day will be truly great."

2 "Then you will tell your brothers, 'You are my people.' And you will tell your sisters, 'He has shown mercy to you.'"^{*}

The Lord Speaks to the Nation of Israel

¹"Argue with your mother.^{*} Argue! Because she is not my wife! I am not her husband! Tell her to stop being like a prostitute.^{*} Tell her to take away her lovers⁺ from between her breasts. ¹If she refuses to stop her adultery, I will strip her naked. I will leave her like the day she was born. I will take away her people, and she will be like an empty, dry desert. I will kill her with thirst. ¹I will have no pity on her children because they are the children of prostitution. ²Their mother has acted like a prostitute. Their mother should be ashamed of the things she did. She said, 'I will go to my lovers.^{*} My lovers give me food and water. They give me wool and linen. They give me wine and olive oil.'

³"So, I (*the Lord*) will block your (*Israel's*) road with thorns. I will build a wall. Then she will not be able to find her paths. ⁴She will run after her lovers, but she will not be able to catch up with them. She will look for her lovers, but she will not be able to find them. Then she will say, "I will go back to my first husband (*God*). Life was better for me when I was with him. Life was better then than it is now."

⁵"She (*Israel*) didn't know that I (*the Lord*) was the One who gave her grain, wine, and oil. I kept giving her more and more silver and gold. But the Israelites used this silver and gold

to make statues of Baal.^{*} ⁶So I (*the Lord*) will come back. I will take back my grain at the time it is ready to be harvested. I will take back my wine at the time the grapes are ready. I will take back my wool and linen. I gave those things to her so she could cover her naked body. ⁷Now I will strip her. She will be naked, so all her lovers can see her. No person will be able to save her from my power. ⁸¹¹I (*God*) will take away all her fun. I will stop her holidays, her new moon feasts, her days of rest. I will stop all of her special feasts. ⁹I will destroy her vines and fig trees. She said, 'My lovers gave these things to me.' But I will change her gardens—they will become like a wild forest. Wild animals will come and eat from those plants.

¹⁰"She served the Baals.^{*} So I will punish her. She burned incense^{*} to the Baals. She dressed up—she put on her jewelry and nose ring. Then she went to her lovers and forgot me." The Lord has said this.

¹¹"So, I (*the Lord*) will teach her. I will lead her into the desert. I will speak kindly to her. ¹²There I will give her fields of grapes. I will give her the Valley of Achor as a doorway of hope. Then she will answer like the time she came out of the land of Egypt." The Lord says this.

"At that time you will call me 'My husband.' You will not call me 'My Baal.'^{*} ¹³I will take away the names of the Baals out of her mouth. Then people will not use the Baals' names again.

¹⁴"At that time, I will make an agreement for the Israelites with the animals of the field, with the birds of the sky, and with the crawling things on the ground. I will break the bow, the sword, and weapons of war. No weapons will

you will tell your brothers ... mercy to you

Or, "Say to your brothers, 'My people,' and to your sisters, 'You have been shown mercy.'"

mother This means the nation of Israel.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

her lovers Or "adulterers." Adultery means not being faithful in marriage. God was like a husband to Israel. But Israel was worshiping false gods—this was like a spiritual adultery against God.

lovers This means Israel's false gods.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

power Literally, "hand."

Baals False gods worshiped by the Canaanites in the land where the Israelites lived.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

My Baal This is a word play. The name Baal also means, "lord, or husband."

to the left, in that land. I will make the land safe, so the people of Israel can lie down in peace. ⁹And I (*the Lord*) will make you my bride* forever. I will make you my bride with goodness and fairness and with love and mercy. ¹⁰I will make you my faithful bride. Then you will truly know the Lord. ¹¹And at that time, I will respond." The Lord says this.

"I will speak to the skies,
and they will give rain to the earth.

¹² The earth will produce grain, wine, and oil.

And they will meet Jezreel's needs.

¹³ I will sow her many seeds* on her land.

To Lo-Ruhamah,*

I will show mercy.

To Lo-Ammi,*

I will say, 'You are my people.'

And they will say to me,

'You are my God.'

Hosea Buys Gomer Back from Slavery

3 Then the Lord said to me again, "Gomer has many lovers. But you must continue loving her. Why? Because that is like the Lord. The Lord continues loving the people of Israel. But they continue to worship other gods. And they love to eat raisin cakes."^a

¹So I bought Gomer for 6 ounces* of silver and 9 bushels* of barley. ²Then I told her, 'You must stay at home with me for many

days. You must not be like a prostitute.* You will not be with another man. And I will be your husband."

³In the same way, the people of Israel will continue many days without a king or a leader. They will be without a sacrifice or a memorial stone.* They will be without an ephod* or a household god. ⁴After this the people of Israel will come back. Then they will look for the Lord their God, and for David their king. In the last days, they will come to honor the Lord and his goodness.

The Lord Is Angry Against Israel

4 People of Israel, listen to the Lord's message! The Lord will tell his argument against the people that live in this country. People in this country don't really know God. The people are not true and loyal to God. ²The people swear, lie, kill, and steal. They do the sin of adultery,* and they have their babies. The people murder again and again.* ³So the country is like a person crying for the dead, and all of its people are weak. Even the animals of the field, the birds of the sky, and the fish in the sea are dying.* ⁴No person should argue or blame another person. Priest, my argument is with you!* ⁵You (*priests*) will fall in the daytime. And at night, the prophet will also fall with you. And I will destroy your mother.

⁶"My people are destroyed because they have no knowledge. You have refused to learn. So I will refuse to let you be a priest for me. You have forgotten the law of your God, so I

make ... bride Literally, "I will betroth you to me."

I will ... seeds Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and Lo-Ammi are Hosea's children. But the names also have special meanings.

The name Jezreel means, "God will plant seeds." But Jezreel is also the name of a large valley in Israel. This probably shows that God will bring his people back to Israel. Lo-Ruhamah means "She was not shown mercy," and Lo-Ammi means "Not my people."

Lo-Ruhamah This name in Hebrew means "She receives no mercy."

Lo-Ammi This name in Hebrew means "not my people."

raisin cakes This kind of food was apparently used in the feasts that honored false gods.

6 ounces Literally, "15 pieces,."

9 bushels Literally, "1 homer and 1 letek."

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

memorial stone(s) Stones that were set up to help people remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

ephod A special coat worn by the priests.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

and ... again Literally, "they break out, and blood touches blood."

dying Literally, "being taken away."

No person ... you Or, "The people can't complain or blame someone else. The people are helpless, like arguing with a priest." Many times the priests and Levites served as judges, and their decisions were final.

Your faithfulness is like the dew which goes away early in the morning.

- ³ I used the prophets, and made laws for the people. The people were killed at my command. But good things will come from those decisions.*

- ⁴ Why? Because I want faithful love, not sacrifice,

I want people, to know God, not to bring burnt offerings.

- ⁷ But the people broke the Agreement like Adam did.*

They were unfaithful to me in their country.

- ⁸ Gilead* is a city of people that do evil. People have tricked and killed other people.

- ⁹ Robbers hide and wait to attack someone. In the same way, priests wait on the road to Shechem, and they kill people that pass by. They have done evil things.

- ¹⁰ I have seen a terrible thing in the nation* of Israel.

Ephraim* was unfaithful to God. Israel is dirty with sin.

- ¹¹ Judah, there is also a time of harvest for you. It will happen at the time I bring my people back from captivity."

7 "I will heal Israel!
People will know about Ephraim's* sin.
People will know about Samaria's* lies.

People will know about the thieves that come and go in that town.

- ² Those people don't believe that I will remember their crimes.

The bad things they did are all around. I can see their sins clearly.

- ³ The people of Israel tell lies to the king, and make him happy.

The people tell lies to their leaders, and trick them.

- ⁴ A baker presses dough to make bread. He puts the bread in the oven.

The baker does not make the fire hotter while the bread is rising.

But the people of Israel are not like that baker.

The people of Israel are always making their fire hotter.

- ⁵ On our king's day, they make the fire hotter—

they give their drinking parties.

The leaders become sick from the heat of wine.

So the kings join hands with people that laugh at God.

- ⁶ The people make their secret plans.

Their hearts burn like an oven with excitement.

Their excitement burns all night.

And in the morning it is like a hot, hot fire.

- ⁷ They are all like hot ovens.

They destroyed their rulers.

All of their kings fell.

Not one of them called to me for help."

Israel Does Not Know It Will Be Destroyed

- ⁸ Ephraim* mixes with the nations.

Ephraim is like a cake that was not cooked on both sides.

- ⁹ Strangers destroy Ephraim's strength.

But Ephraim does not know it.

Gray hairs* are also sprinkled on

But good things ... decisions Or, "I cut them with the prophets. I killed them with the words from my mouth. Light will come from your decisions."

like Adam did See Gen. 3.

Gilead An area where some of the people from the family group of Manasseh lived. See Numbers 26:29.

nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

Samaria The capital of the northern ten-family group kingdom of Israel. Here it is often used to mean the northern kingdom itself.

Gray hairs This word might describe something that was put on the food when people cooked, something that looked like gray hairs.

They don't know the Lord. "Israel's pride is a witness against them.* So Israel and Ephraim will stumble in their sin. But Judah will also tumble with them.

"The leaders of the people will go to look or the Lord. They will take their 'sheep' and cows' with them. But they will not find the Lord. Why? Because he left them. They have not been faithful to the Lord. Their children are from some stranger. And now, he will destroy them and their land again."*

Prophecy of Israel's Destruction

- ⁸ Blow the horn in Gibeah.
Blow the trumpet in Ramah.*
Give the warning at Beth-Aven.*
The enemy is behind you, Benjamin.
- ⁹ Ephraim* will become empty at the time of punishment.
I (God) warn the families of Israel that those things surely will happen.
- ¹⁰ The leaders of Judah have become like thieves
trying to steal another man's property.
So I (God) will pour my anger out on them like water.
- ¹¹ Ephraim* will be punished.
He will be crushed and pressed like grapes.
Why? Because he decided to follow filth.
- ¹² I will destroy Ephraim,
like a moth destroys a piece of cloth.
I will destroy Judah,
like rot destroys a piece of wood.
- ¹³ Ephraim saw his sickness,

and Judah saw his wound.
So they went to Assyria for help.
They told the great king about their problems.

But that king can't heal you.
He can't cure your wound.

- ¹⁴ Because I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the nation* of Judah.

I—yes, I (*the Lord*)—will rip them into pieces.

I will carry them away,
And no person can save them from me.

- ¹⁵ I will go back to my place,
until the people admit they are guilty,
until they come looking for me.
Yes, in their trouble they will try hard to find me."

The Rewards of Coming Back to the Lord

- 6** "Come, let's go back to the Lord.
He hurt us,
but he will heal us.
He wounded us,
but he will put bandages on us.
- ² After two days he will bring us back to life.
He will raise us up on the third day.
Then we can live before him.
- ³ Let's learn about the Lord.
Let's try very hard to know the Lord.
We know he is coming,
like we know the dawn is coming.
The Lord will come to us like the rain,
like the spring rain that waters the ground."

The People Are Not Faithful

- ⁴ "Ephraim,* what should I (*the Lord*) do with you?
Judah, what should I do with you?
Your faithfulness is like a morning mist,

them Literally, "his face."

And now ... again This line is hard to understand in Hebrew.

Gibeah ... Ramah These were hills on Judah's border with Israel.

Beth-Aven In Hebrew the meaning is "House of Evil." It is a word play on the name "Bethel," a town in Israel. There was a temple in this town.

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

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I want people, to know God, not, to bring, burnt offerings.

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they give their drinking parties, .

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Ephraim.

But Ephraim does not know it.

⁹ Ephraim's pride speaks against him.

The people have had many, many troubles,
but they still didn't go back to the Lord their God.

The people didn't look to him for help.

¹ So Ephraim has become like a silly dove without understanding.

The people called to Egypt for help.
The people went to Assyria for help.

² They go to those countries for help, but I will trap them.

I will throw my net over them,
and I will bring them down like the birds of the sky.

I will punish them for their agreements.*
"It will be bad for them.

They left me.

They refused to obey me.

So they will be destroyed.

I saved those people.

But they speak lies against me.

¹⁴ They never call to me from their hearts.
Yes, they cry on their beds.

They cut themselves as part of their worship when they ask, for grain and new wine.

But in their hearts, they have turned away from me.

¹⁵ I trained them and made their arms strong.

But they have made evil plans against me.

¹⁶ They turned to the "no-god."*

They are like a bow in the hands of, a traitor.*

Their leaders bragged about their strength.

But they will be killed with swords.

Then the people in Egypt will laugh at them.

Idol Worship Leads to the Destruction of Israel

8 Put the trumpet on your lips and give the warning.

Be like an eagle over the Lord's house.*

The Israelites have broken my Agreement.

They have not obeyed my law.

² They yell to me,

"My God, we in Israel know you!"

³ But Israel has refused the things that are good.

So the enemy chases him.

⁴ The Israelites chose their kings,
but they didn't come to me for advice.

The Israelites chose leaders.

But they didn't choose men that I knew.

The Israelites used their silver and gold to make idols* for themselves.

So they will be destroyed.

¹⁶ The Lord has refused your calf, Samaria.*
God says, "I am very angry against the Israelites.

The people of Israel will be punished for their sin.

Some worker made those statues.

They are not God.

Samaria's calf will be broken into pieces.

⁷ The Israelites did a foolish thing,—it was like trying to plant the wind.

But they will get only troubles,—they will harvest a whirlwind.

The grain in the fields will grow.

It will give no food.

Even if it grew something,

Be like ... house Or, "Like a guard over the Lord's house."

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

calf Samaria Samaria was the capital of Israel. The people of Israel made statues of calves and put them in the temples at Dan and Bethel. It is not clear if these statues represented the Lord or some false god. But God didn't want them to use these statues. See 1 Kings 12:26-30.

or their agreements Or, "for the report of their treaties."

no-god This means the false gods that the people began worshiping.

traitor(s) People that turn against their country, friends, or family and do bad things to them.

strangers would eat it.

- ⁸ Israel is swallowed up (*destroyed*).
Israel has become like some tool that no person wants.
Israel was thrown away—they are scattered among the other nations.
- ⁹ Ephraim* went to his 'lovers.'
Like a wild donkey, he wandered off to Assyria.
- ¹⁰ Israel went to his 'lovers' among the nations.
But now, I will gather the Israelites together.
That mighty king made them suffer a little."

Israel Forgets God and Worships Idols

- ¹¹ Ephraim* built more and more altars,*
and that was a sin.
Those altars have become altars of sin for Ephraim."
- ¹² Even if I wrote 10,000 of my laws for Ephraim,
he would treat them like they were for some stranger.
- ¹³ The Israelites love sacrifices.*
They offer the meat and eat it.
The Lord does not accept their sacrifices.
He remembers their sins.
And he will punish them.
They will be carried as prisoners to 'Egypt.'*
- ¹⁴ Israel built kings' houses.
But it forgot its Maker!
Now Judah builds fortresses.*
But I will send a fire on Judah's cities.

And the fire will destroy its fortresses!"

The Sadness of Exile

9 Israel, don't celebrate like the nations do! Don't be happy! You acted like a prostitute* and left your God. You did your sexual sin* on every threshing floor.* ¹But the grain from those, threshing floors will not give enough food for Israel. There will not be enough wine for Israel.

²The Israelites will not stay in the Lord's land. Ephraim will return to Egypt. In Assyria they will eat food that they should not eat. ³The Israelites will not give offerings of wine to the Lord. They will not offer sacrifices to him. Their bread will not go into the Lord's temple—it will be just enough to keep them alive. ⁴They (*the Israelites*) will not be able to celebrate the Lord's holidays or festivals.*

⁵The Israelites were completely destroyed. But Egypt will take them. Memphis* will bury them. Weeds will grow over their silver treasures. Thorns will grow where the Israelites lived.

Israel Rejected the True Prophets

¹The prophet says, "Israel, learn these things: The time of punishment has come. The time has come for you to pay for the evil things you did." But the people of Israel say, "The prophet is a fool. This man with God's Spirit is crazy." The prophet says, "You will be punished for your bad sins. You will be punished for your hate." ²God and the prophet are like guards watching over Ephraim.* But

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

The Israelites love sacrifices This line is uncertain.

Egypt Here Egypt is being used as a picture of captivity. It was Assyria that captured Israel and took the people away (2 Kings 18:11-12).

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

You did your sexual sin This means that the people were not faithful to God. But it also means the people had sexual relations with temple prostitutes. They believed their false gods would give them many children and good crops.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

They ... festivals Literally, "What will you do for a day of solemn assembly, for the Lord's festival day?"

Memphis An important city in Egypt.

there are many traps along the way. And people hate the prophet, even in the house of his God.

⁹The Israelites have gone deep into ruin like in the time of Gibeah.* The Lord will remember the Israelites' sins. He will punish their sins.

Israel Is Ruined by Its Worship of Idols

¹⁰To me, Israel was like finding grapes in the desert. Your ancestors* were like finding the first figs on the tree at the beginning of the season. But then they came to Baal-Peor.* And they were changed—they were like something rotten. They became like the terrible things (*the false gods*) that they loved.

The Israelites Will Have No Children

¹¹Like a bird, Ephraim's* glory will fly away. There will be no more pregnancies, no more births, no more babies. ¹²But even if the Israelites do raise their children, it will not help. I will take the children away from them. I will leave them, and they will have nothing but troubles.

¹³I can see that Ephraim is leading his children into a trap.* Ephraim brings out his children to the killer. ¹⁴Lord, give them what you will. Give them a womb that loses babies, give them breasts that can't give milk.

- ¹⁵ All their evil is in Gilgal;*
I began hating them there.
I will force them to leave my house,
because of the evil things they do.
I will not love them any more.
Their leaders are rebels—they have
turned against me.

Gibeah At this place, men of the Benjamin family group did a very terrible sin. See Judges 19-20.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Baal-Peor This happened when Moses was still leading the Israelites in the desert. Read Num. 25:1-5.

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

I can see ... trap The Hebrew is not clear here.

Gilgal A city in Israel. The people worship false gods there.

- ¹⁶ Ephraim* will be punished.
Their root is dying.
They will not have any more babies.

They might give birth to babies,
but I will kill the precious babies that
come from their bodies.

- ¹⁷ Those people will not listen to my God.
So he will refuse to listen to them.
And they will wander among the
nations without a home.

Israel's Riches Led to Its Worship of Idols

10 Israel is like a vine that grows
plenty of fruit.
Israel got more and more things from
God.

But he built more and more altars*
for false gods.

His land became better and better,
so he put up better and better stones
to honor false gods.

- ¹ The people of Israel tried to trick God.
But now they must accept their guilt.
The Lord will break down their altars.*
He will destroy their memorial stones.*

The Evil Decisions of the Israelites

²Now the Israelites say, "We have no king.
We don't honor the Lord! And his king can't
do anything to us!"

³They make promises—but they are only
telling lies. They don't keep their promises!
They make agreements with other countries.
God does not like those agreements. The
judges are like poisonous weeds growing in a
plowed field.

⁴The people from Samaria* worship the
calves at Beth-Aven.* Those people will really

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as
gifts to God.

memorial stones Stones that were set up to help people
remember something special. In ancient Israel, people often
set up stones as special places to worship false gods.

Samaria The capital city of north Israel.

Beth-Aven In Hebrew the meaning is "House of Evil." It is
a word play on the name "Bethel," a town in Israel. There was
a temple in this town.

cry. Those priests will really cry. Why? Because their beautiful idol, is gone. It was carried away. "It was carried away as a gift to the great king of Assyria. He will keep Ephraim's shameful idol. Israel will be ashamed of its idol." *Samaria's false god* will be destroyed. It will be like a piece of wood floating away on the water's surface.

"Israel sinned and built many high places.* The high places of Aven* will be destroyed. Thorns and weeds will grow on their altars.* Then they will say to the mountains, "Cover us!" and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

Israel Will Pay for Sin

"Israel, you have sinned since the time of Gibeah.* (And those people have continued sinning there. War truly will catch those evil people at Gibeah. "I will come to punish them. Armies will come together against them. They will punish the Israelites for both of their sins.

"Ephraim* is like a trained young cow that loves to walk on grain on the threshing floor.* I will put a good yoke* on her neck. I will put the ropes on Ephraim. Then Judah will begin plowing. Jacob* will break the ground himself.

"If you plant goodness, you will harvest true love. Plow your ground, and you will harvest with the Lord. He will come, and he will make goodness fall on you like rain!

idol Or, "advice."

false god Or, "king."

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

high ... Aven Aven means "evil," "wickedness." This probably means the temple and other places of worship at Bethel.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Gibeah At this place, men of the Benjamin family group did a very terrible sin. See Judges 19 and 20.

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

"But you planted evil, and you harvested trouble. You ate the fruit of your lies. Why? Because you have trusted in your power and your soldiers. "So your armies will hear the noise of battle. And all your fortresses* will be destroyed. It will be like the time Shalman* destroyed Beth Arbel. At that time of war, mothers were killed with their children. "And that will happen to you at Bethel. Why? Because you did so many evil things. (When that day, begins, the king of Israel will be fully destroyed.

Israel Has Forgotten the Lord

11 "When Israel was a child, I (the Lord) loved him.

And I called my son out of Egypt.

2 But the more I* called the Israelites, the more the Israelites left me.

The Israelites gave sacrifices to the Baals.*

They burned incense* to the idols.*

3 "But it was I who taught Ephraim* to walk!

I took the Israelites in my arms!

I healed them!

But they don't know that.

4 I led them with ropes.*

But they were ropes of love.

I was like a person who set them free.*

I bent down and fed them.

"The Israelites refuse to turn back to God. So they will go to Egypt! (The king of Assyria will become their king. "The sword will swing against their cities. It will kill their strong men. It will destroy their leaders.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Shalman This is probably Shalmaneser, king of Assyria.

I This is what the ancient Greek says. The Hebrew says, "they."

Baals False gods worshiped by the Canaanites in the land where the Israelites lived.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

ropes The Hebrew says, "ropes of a man."

set them free Literally, "lifted the yoke from their jaws."

"My people expect me to come back. They will call to God above. But God will not help them."

The Lord Does Not Want to Destroy Israel

- * "Ephraim,* I don't want to give you up.
Israel, I want to protect you.
I don't want to make you like Admah!
I don't want to make you like
Zebaiim!*
I am changing my mind.
My love for you is too strong.
* I will not let my terrible anger win.
I will not destroy Ephraim again.
I am God, and not man.
I am the Holy One, I am with you.
I will not show my anger.
10 I will roar like a lion.
I will roar, and my children will come
and follow me.
My children will come from the west,
shaking with fear.
11 They will come shaking like birds from
Egypt.
They will come shaking like doves from
the land of Assyria.
And I will take them back home."
The Lord said that.
12 Ephraim surrounded me with lies.
The people of Israel made their secret
plans.
But Judah still walks with El.*
Judah is true to the holy ones.*

The Lord Is Against Israel

12 Ephraim* is wasting its time—Israel
"chases the wind" all day long. The

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

Admah, Zebaiim Two cities that were destroyed when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. See Gen. 19; Deut. 29:23.

El This might be one of the names of God, or it might be El, the most important god of the Canaanite people. It is not clear if this means that Judah was being faithful to God, or if Judah was worshipping the false gods.

holy ones These might be angels or Canaanite false gods.

people tell more and more lies. They steal more and more. They have made agreements with Assyria, and they are carrying their olive oil to Egypt.

¹The Lord says, "I have an argument against Israel.* Jacob* must be punished for the things he did. He must be punished for the bad things he did. ³Jacob was still in his mother's body, and he had already started tricking his brother.* Jacob was a strong young man. And at that time, he fought with God. ⁴Jacob wrestled with God's angel, and won.* He cried and asked for a favor. That happened at Bethel. At that place, he spoke with us. ⁵Yes, Yahweh is the God of the armies.* His name is Yahweh (*the Lord*). ⁶So come back to your God. Be loyal to him. Do the right thing! Always trust your God!

⁷Jacob* is a real businessman. He even cheats his friend! Even his scales* lie. ⁸Ephraim* said, 'I am rich! I have found true riches! No person will learn about my crimes. No person will learn about my sins.'

⁹"But I have been the Lord your God since the time you were in, the land of Egypt. I will make you live in tents—like during the time of the Tent of Meeting.* ¹⁰I spoke to the prophets. I gave them many visions.* I gave the prophets many ways to teach my lessons to you. ¹¹But there is sin in Gilead!* There are many worthless things there.* The people offer

Israel Hebrew has, "Judah."

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

he had ... brother Or "he grabbed his brother's heel." This is a word play. The Hebrew word is like the name "Jacob." Read Genesis 25:26.

Jacob ... won Read Genesis 32:22-28.

Yahweh ... armies This is like one of the names for God. It is usually translated "Lord All-Powerful."

scales Or, "balances." A tool for weighing things.

during ... Meeting The special tent where the people worshiped God. This might also mean, "like during the holiday of Succoth." The Jewish people live in tents or temporary buildings during this holiday.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Gilead This was east of the Jordan River, in the area occupied by the family groups of Reuben and Gad and by half the family group of Manasseh.

There are many worthless things there Or, "There are rain idols in that place."

sacrifices to bulls at Gilgal.* Their many altars* are like the rows of dirt in a plowed field.

¹²"Jacob ran away to the land of Aram. In that place, Israel* worked for a wife. He kept sheep to get another wife. ¹³But the Lord used a prophet and brought Israel* from Egypt. The Lord used a prophet and kept Israel safe. ¹⁴But Ephraim caused the Lord to be very angry. Ephraim killed many people. So he will be punished for his crimes. His master (*the Lord*) will make him bear his shame."

Israel Has Ruined Itself

13 "Ephraim* made himself very important in Israel. Ephraim spoke and people shook with fear. But Ephraim sinned—he began worshipping Baal.* ²Now the Israelites sin more and more. They make idols* for themselves. Workers make those fancy statues from silver. And then those people talk to their statues! They offer sacrifices to those statues. They kiss those golden calves. ³That is why those people will soon disappear. They will be like the fog that comes early in the morning—that fog comes and then soon disappears. The Israelites will be like chaff* that is blown from the threshing floor.* The Israelites will be like smoke that rises from a chimney and disappears.

⁴"I have been the Lord your God since the time you were in the land of Egypt. You did not know any other god except me. I am the One who saved you. ⁵I knew you in the desert—I

knew you in that dry land. ⁶I gave food to the Israelites. They ate that food. They became full and satisfied. They became proud. And they forgot me!

⁷"That is why I will be like a lion to them. I will be like a leopard waiting by the road. ⁸I will attack them like a bear whose cubs were robbed from her. I will attack them. I will rip open their chests. I will be like a lion or other wild animal tearing and eating its prey."

No Person Can Save Israel from God's Anger

⁹"Israel, I helped you. But you turned against me. So now I will destroy you! ¹⁰Where is your king? He can't save you in all your cities! Where are your judges? You asked for them, saying, "Give me a king and leaders."* ¹¹I was angry, and I gave you a king. I was very angry, and I took him away.

¹² "Ephraim tried to hide his guilt.
He thought his sins were a secret.
But he will be punished for those things.

¹³ His punishment will be like the pain a woman feels giving birth.
He will not be a wise son.
The time will come for his birth,
and he will not survive.

¹⁴ "Should I save them from the power of the grave?
Should I rescue them from death?
Death, where are your diseases?
Grave, where is your power?
Mercy will be hidden from my sight!

¹⁵ Israel, grows among his brothers.
But an east wind will come—
the Lord's wind will come up from the desert.

Then Israel's, well will become dry.
His spring of water will become dry.
The wind will take every valuable thing
from Israel's, treasure.

Gilgal A city in Israel. The people worship false gods there.
altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Israel Another name for Jacob. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

Baal The Canaanite people believed that this false god brought the rain and storms. They also thought that he made the land produce good crops.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

You asked for ... leaders See 1 Sam. 8:4-9.

- ¹⁶ Samaria will be blamed.
 Why? Because she has turned against
 her God.
 The Israelites will be killed with swords.
 Their children will be torn to pieces.
 And their pregnant women will be ripped
 open."

Return to the Lord

14 Israel, you fell and sinned against God.
 So come back to the Lord your God.
¹Think about the things you will say. And come
 back to the Lord. Say to him, "Take away our
 sin. Accept the good things that we are doing.
 We will offer praise from our lips.*

¹Assyria will not save us. We will not ride
 on horses. We will not say again, "Our god," to
 the things our hands made. Why? Because you
 are the One who shows mercy to children with
 no parents."

The Lord Will Forgive Israel

- ⁴ The Lord says,
 "I will forgive them for leaving me.
 I will love them freely.
 I am not angry at them now.
⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel.
 Israel will blossom like the lily.*
 He will grow like the cedar trees of
 Lebanon."

- ⁶ His branches will grow,
 and he will be like a beautiful olive tree.
 He will be like the sweet smell from
 the cedar trees of Lebanon.
⁷ The people of Israel will again live under
 my protection.
 They will grow like the grain.
 They will bloom like a vine.
 They will be as famous as the wine of
 Lebanon."

The Lord Warns Israel About Idols

- ⁸ "Ephraim,* I (*the Lord*) have nothing to
 do with idols.*
 I am the One who answers your prayers.
 I am the One who watches over you.*
 I am like a green fir tree.
 Your fruit comes from me."

Final Advice

- ⁹ A wise person should understand these
 things.
 A smart person should learn these
 things.
 The Lord's ways are right.
 Good people will live by them.
 Sinners will die by them.*

Ephraim Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:50-52). Ephraim's
 family became a family group in Israel. Here the name is used
 to mean the northern kingdom of Israel.

idols Statues of false gods that people worshiped.

I am the One who watches over you This is a
 word play. The Hebrew word is like the name "Assyria." God
 is saying that he, not some foreign country, protects Israel.

Good people ... die by them Literally, "Good people
 will walk on them. Sinners will stumble on them."

praise from our lips Literally, "the fruit of our lips."
 Illy A kind of flower.

Joel

Locusts Will Destroy the Crops

1 Joel son of Pethuel received this message from the Lord:

- ² Leaders, listen to this message!
Listen to me, all you people that live in the land.
Has anything like this happened before during your lifetime? No!
Did anything like this happen during your fathers' lifetime? No!
- ³ You will tell your children about these things.
And your children will tell their children.
And your grandchildren will tell the people of the next generation.
- ⁴ What the cutting locust* has left, the swarming locust has eaten.
And what the swarming locust has left, the hopping locust has eaten.
And what the hopping locust has left, the destroying locust* has eaten!

The Locusts Arrive

- ⁵ Drunks, wake up and cry!
All of you people that drink wine, cry.

locust Insects, like grasshoppers. Locusts can quickly destroy all trees and plants in a farmer's fields. So locusts made the people very scared. Here, Joel might be talking about an enemy's army.

cutting ... destroying locusts These are the different names for the locusts. These may be different names for the same kind of locusts—only at different times of the locust's growth period.

Why? Because your sweet wine is finished.

You will not get another taste of that wine.

- ⁶ A large and powerful country is coming to fight against my nation.
There are too many soldiers to count.
(Those "locusts" (enemy soldiers) will be able to tear you apart!).
It is like they have teeth like a lion.
- ⁷ The "locusts" will eat all of the grapes from my grapevines!
They will destroy my fig tree.
The locusts will eat the bark off my trees.
The branches will become white.
The trees will be destroyed.

The People Cry

- ⁸ Cry like the young woman that was ready to be married,
and her husband-to-be was killed.
- ⁹ Priests! Servants of the Lord, cry!
Why? Because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in the Lord's temple.*
- ¹⁰ The fields are ruined.
Even the ground is crying.
Why? Because the grain is destroyed;
the new wine is dried up,
and the olive oil is gone.
- ¹¹ Be sad, farmers!
Cry loud, grape farmers!

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

“Cry, for the wheat and for the barley!”

Why? Because the harvest in the field is lost.

- ¹² The vines have become dry.
And the fig tree is dying.
The pomegranate tree,
the palm tree,
and the apple tree—
all the trees in the field have become dry.

And happiness among the people is dead.

- ¹³ Priests, put on your clothes of sadness and cry loudly.
Servants of the altar,* cry loudly.
Servants of my God, you will sleep in your clothes of sadness.
Why? Because there will be no more grain and drink offerings in God's temple.*

The Terrible Destruction of the Locusts

“Tell the people that there will be a special time for not eating food. Call the people together for a special meeting. Bring the leaders and all the people that live in the land together. Bring them to the temple* of the Lord your God, and pray to the Lord.

“Be sad! Why? Because the Lord's special day is near. At that time, punishment will come like an attack from God All-Powerful. “Our food is gone. Joy and happiness are gone from the temple* of our God. “We planted seeds, but the seeds became dry and dead lying in the soil. Our plants are dry and dead. Our barns are empty and falling down.

“The animals are hungry and, groaning. The herds of cattle wander around, confused. They have no grass to eat. The sheep are dying.* “Lord, I am calling to you for help. Fire has changed our green fields into a desert. Flames have burned all the trees in the field.

barley A kind of grain.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

dying Literally, “being punished.”

²⁰Wild animals also need your help. The streams are dry—there is no water! Fire has changed our green fields into a desert.

The Coming Day of the Lord

2 Blow the trumpet at Zion.*

Shout a warning on my holy mountain.

Let all the people that live in the land shake with fear.

The Lord's special day is coming.

The Lord's special day is near.

² It will be a dark, gloomy day.

It will be a dark and cloudy day.

At sunrise, you will see the army spread over the mountains.

It will be a great and powerful army.

There has never been anything like it before.

And there will never be anything like it again.

³ The army destroys the land like a burning fire.

In front of them, the land is like the Garden of Eden.

Behind them, the land is like an empty desert.

Nothing will escape them.

⁴ They look like horses.

They run like war horses.

⁵ Listen to them.

It is like the noise of chariots* riding over the mountains.

It is like the noise of flames burning chaff.*

They are a powerful people.

They are ready for war.

⁶ Before this army, people shake with fear.

Their faces become pale from fear.

⁷ The soldiers run fast.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

chaff The seed coverings and stems separated from the seeds of plants like wheat or barley. Farmers saved the seeds but let the wind blow the useless chaff away.

- The soldiers climb over the walls.
Each soldier marches straight ahead.
They don't move from their path.
They don't trip each other.
Each soldier walks in his own path.
If one of the soldiers is hit and falls down,
the others keep right on marching.
They run to the city.
They quickly climb over the wall.
They climb into the houses.
They enter through the windows like a thief.
Before them, earth and sky shake.
The sun and the moon become dark.
And the stars stop shining.
The Lord calls loudly to his army.
His camp is very large.
That army obeys his commands.
That army is very powerful.
The Lord's special day is a great and terrible day.
No person can stop it.

The Lord Tells the People to Change

- This is the Lord's message:
"Now come back to me with all your heart,
You did bad things,
cry, cry and don't eat any food!
Tear your hearts, not your clothes."
Come back to the Lord your God.
He is kind and merciful.
He does not become angry quickly.
He has great love.
Maybe he will change his mind about the bad punishment that he planned.
Who knows, maybe the Lord will change his mind.
And maybe he will leave behind a blessing for you.
Then you can give a grain and drink offering to the Lord your God.

Tear ... clothes People tore their clothes to show their sadness. Here God wants the people to truly be sad for the bad things they did.

Pray to the Lord

- Blow the trumpet at Zion.*
Call for a special meeting.
Call for a special time for not eating.
Bring together the people.
Call for a special meeting.
Bring together the older men.
Bring together the children,
even the small babies that still suck their mother's breasts.
Let the bride and her new husband come from their bedroom.
Let the priests, the Lord's servants, cry between the porch* and the altar.*
All of those people should say these things:
"Lord, have mercy on your people.
Don't let your people be put to shame.
Don't let other people tell jokes about your people.
Don't let people in other nations laugh and say,
'Where is their God?'"

The Lord Will Restore the Land

- Then the Lord became excited about his land.
He felt sorry for his people.
The Lord spoke to his people.
He said,
"I will send you grain, wine, and oil.
You will have plenty.
No more will I shame you among the nations.
No, I will force those people from the north* to leave your land.
I will make them go into a dry, empty land.
Some of them will go into the eastern sea.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

porch An open area in front of the temple.

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering sacrifices.

north The Babylonian army came from this direction to attack Judah. Armies from countries north and east of Israel often came this way to attack Judah and Israel.

And some of them will go into the western sea.
Those people did such terrible things.
But they will be like a dead and rotting thing.
There will be such a terrible smell!"

The Land Will Be Made New Again

- ²¹ Land, don't be afraid.
Be happy and be full of joy.
Because the Lord will do great things.
²² Animals of the field, don't be afraid.
The pastures of the wilderness will grow grass.
The trees will grow fruit.
The fig trees and the vines will grow much fruit.
²³ So be happy, people of Zion.*
Be joyful in the Lord your God.
Why? Because he will be good and give you rain.
He will send the early rain and late rain for you, like before.
²⁴ And the threshing floors* will be full of wheat.
And the barrels will flow over with wine and olive oil.
²⁵ I, the Lord, sent my army against you.
Those swarming locusts, and the hopping locusts and the destroying locusts and the cutting locusts* ate your things.
But I, the Lord, will pay you back for those years of trouble.
²⁶ Then you will have plenty to eat.
You will be full,
You will praise the name of the Lord your God.
He has done wonderful things for you.
My people will never again be ashamed.
²⁷ You will know that I am with the people of Israel.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
threshing floor(s) A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.
swarming ... locusts Read Joel 1:4.

You will know that I am the Lord your God.
There is no other God.
My people will never be ashamed again.

The Lord Promises to Give His Spirit to All People

- ²⁸ After this,
I will pour (give) my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and your daughters will prophesy,*
Your old men will dream dreams.
Your young men will see visions.*
²⁹ At that time, I will also pour (give) my Spirit on men and women servants.
³⁰ I will show amazing things in the sky and on the earth—
There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke.
³¹ The sun will be changed into darkness,
The moon will be changed into blood.
And then the great and wonderful Day of the Lord will come!
³² Then, any person that calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
On Mount Zion* and Jerusalem there will be people that were saved.
This will happen just like the Lord said.
Among those survivors,* are the people that the Lord called.

The Lord Promises Punishment for Judah's Enemies

3 "In those days, and at that time, I will bring back Judah and Jerusalem from captivity. I will also gather all the nations together. I will bring all these nations down into Jehoshaphat Valley.* There I will judge

prophesy To receive special messages from God, and then teach those things to people.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

Jehoshaphat Valley This name means, "The Lord judged."

them. Those nations scattered my people, Israel. They forced them to live in other nations. So I will punish those nations. Those nations divided up my land. ³They threw lots* for my people. They sold a boy to buy a prostitute.* And they sold a girl to buy wine to drink.

⁴"Tyre! Sidon! All of you areas of Philistia! You are not important to me!* Are you punishing me for something I did? You might think that you are punishing me, but I will soon punish you. ⁵You took my silver and gold. You took my precious treasures and put it in your temples.*

⁶"You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks. That way, you could take them far from their land. ⁷You sent my people to that faraway place. But I will bring them back. And I will punish you for what you did. ⁸I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah. Then they will sell them to the faraway Sabeans people." The Lord said those things.

Prepare for War

- ⁹ Announce this among the nations:

Prepare for war!

Wake up the strong men!

Let all the men of war come near,

Let them come up!

- ¹⁰ Beat the blades of your plows to make them swords.

Make spears from your pruning hooks.*

Let the weak man say, "I am a strong soldier."

- ¹¹ All of you nations, hurry!
Come together in that place!

Lord, bring your strong soldiers!

- ¹² Wake up, nations!

Come to Jehoshaphat Valley!

There I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.

- ¹³ Bring the sickle,*

because the harvest is ripe.*

Come, walk on the grapes,

because the winepress is full.

The barrels will be full and spilling over,
because their evil is great.

- ¹⁴ There are many, many people in the Valley of Decision.*

The Lord's special day is near in the Valley of Decision.

- ¹⁵ The sun and the moon will become dark.
The stars will stop shining.

- ¹⁶ The Lord God will shout from Zion,*

He will shout from Jerusalem,

And the sky and the earth will shake.

But the Lord God will be a safe place for his people.

He will be a place of safety for the people of Israel.

- ¹⁷ Then you will know that I am the Lord your God,

I stay in Zion, my holy mountain.

Jerusalem will become holy.

Strangers will never pass through that city again.

A New Life for Judah Promised

- ¹⁸ On that day, the mountains will drip with sweet wine.

The hills will flow with milk.

And water will flow through all the empty rivers of Judah.

A fountain will come from the Lord's temple.*

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

You ... me Literally, "What are you to me?"

temples Buildings used for worship. Here, the temples were used to worship idols.

pruning hooks These tools were used to prune (cut) branches of trees. Read Isaiah 2:4.

sickle A tool with a curved blade for cutting grain.

harvest is ripe This time of judgment is compared to harvest time.

Valley of Decision This is like the name, "Jehoshaphat Valley."

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

It will give water to Acacia Valley.

- ¹⁹ Egypt will become empty,
And Edom* will become an empty
wilderness.

Why? Because they were cruel to the
people of Judah.

They killed innocent people* in their
country.

- ²⁰ But there will always be people living in
Judah,
People will live in Jerusalem through
many generations.

- ²¹ Those people killed my people.
So I really will punish those people!
The Lord God lives in Zion.

Edom A country southeast of Judah.

killed innocent people Literally, "shed innocent
blood."

Amos

Introduction

1 The message of Amos. Amos was a shepherd from the city Tekoa. Amos saw visions* about Israel during the time that Uzziah was king of Judah and during the time that Jeroboam son of Joash was king of Israel. This was two years before the earthquake.

Punishment Against Syria

² Amos said:

The Lord will shout like a lion in Zion.*
His loud voice will roar from Jerusalem.
The green pastures of the shepherds will
become dry.
Even Mount Carmel* will become dry.

³The Lord says these things: "I will definitely punish the people of, Damascus* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they beat* Gilead* with iron threshing tools.*" ⁴So I

will start a fire at Hazael's* house (Syria). And that fire will destroy the high towers of Ben-Hadad.*

⁵"I will also break the strong bar on the gates of Damascus. I will destroy the person that sits on the throne, in the valley of Aven. I will destroy the king that holds the scepter* in Beth-Eden. The people of Syria will be defeated. People will take them to the country Kir." The Lord said those things.

Punishment for the Philistines

⁶The Lord says this: "I will definitely punish the people of, Gaza* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they took an entire nation of people and sent them as slaves to Edom.*" ⁷So I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza.* This fire will destroy the high towers in Gaza. ⁸And I will destroy the one that sits on the throne, in Ashdod.* I will destroy the king that holds the scepter in Ashkelon.* I will punish the people of Ekron.* Then the Philistines that are still left alive, will die." The Lord God said those things.

vision(s) Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Mount Carmel A mountain in north Israel. This name means, "God's vineyard." This shows it was a very fertile hill.

Damascus The capital of Syria.

for the many crimes they did Literally, "For three crimes ... and for four ..." This shows that these people had done plenty of sins—and it was time to punish those people.

beat Literally, "threshed."

Gilead An area where some of the people from the family group of Manasseh lived. See Numbers 26:29.

threshing tools Tools for breaking the hulls from grain.

Hazael Hazael was the king of Syria. He murdered Ben-Hadad I so he could become king. See 2 Kings 8:7.

Ben-Hadad The son of Hazael, king of Syria. His name is the same as the person (Ben-hadad I) killed by Hazael. See 2 Kings 13:3.

scepter A special stick that shows a person is the king or queen of a country.

Gaza An important city of the Philistines.

Edom A nation southeast of Israel.

Ashdod Another important city of the Philistines.

Ashkelon Another important city of the Philistines.

Ekron Another important city of the Philistines.

Punishment for Phoenicia

"The Lord says these things: "I will definitely punish the people of Tyre* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they took an entire nation and sent them as slaves to Edom.* They did not remember the agreement they had made with their brothers (*Israel*). "So I will start a fire at the walls of Tyre. That fire will destroy the high towers in Tyre."

Punishment for the Edomites

"The Lord says these things: "I will definitely punish the people of Edom* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because Edom chased his brother (*Israel*) with the sword. Edom showed no mercy. Edom's anger continued forever—he kept tearing and tearing at Israel like a wild animal. "So I will start a fire at Teman.* That fire will destroy the high towers of Bozrah."*

Punishment for the Ammonites

"The Lord says these things: "I will definitely punish the people of Ammon* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they killed the pregnant women in Gilead.* The Ammonite people did this so they could take that land, and make their country larger. "So I will start a fire at the wall of Rabbah.* That fire will destroy the high towers of Rabbah. Troubles will come to them like a whirlwind* into their country. "Then their kings and leaders will be captured. They will all be taken together." The Lord said those things.

Tyre The capital of Phoenicia.

for the many crimes they did Literally, "For three crimes ... and for four ..." This shows that these people had done plenty of sins—and it was time to punish those people.

Edom A nation southeast of Israel.

Teman A city at the north part of the country of Edom.

Bozrah A city at the south part of the country of Edom.

Ammon The Ammonites were the descendants of Ben-Ammi, son of Lot. Read Genesis 19:38.

Gilead An area where some of the people from the family group of Manasseh lived. See Numbers 26:29.

Rabbah The capital of the Ammonites.

whirlwind A strong wind that blows in a circle.

Punishment for Moab

2 The Lord says these things: "I will definitely punish the people of Moab* for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because Moab burned the bones of the king of Edom* into lime. "So I will start a fire in Moab. And that fire will destroy the high towers of Kerioth.* There will be terrible shouting and the sounds of a trumpet, and Moab will die. "So, I will bring an end to the kings* of Moab. And I will kill all the leaders of Moab." The Lord said those things.

Punishment for Judah

"The Lord says this: "I will definitely punish Judah for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they refused to obey the Lord's commands. They didn't keep his commands. Their ancestors* believed lies. And those same lies caused the people of Judah to quit following God. "So I will start a fire in Judah. And that fire will destroy the high towers of Jerusalem."

Punishment for Israel

"The Lord says this: "I will definitely punish Israel for the many crimes they did.* Why? Because they sold good, innocent, people for a little silver. They sold poor people for the price of a pair of shoes. "They pushed those poor peoples' faces into the ground and walked on them. They stopped listening to suffering people. Fathers and sons have sexual relations with the same woman. They have ruined my holy name. "They take clothes from poor people, and then they sit on those clothes while they worship at their altars.* They loaned money to poor people, and then took their

Moab A country east of Israel. The Moabite people were descendants of Lot's son, Moab. See Genesis 19:37.

Kerioth A city in Moab. This might be Ar, the capital of Moab.

kings Literally, "judge."

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

clothes as collateral.* They make people pay fines, and then they use that money to buy wine for themselves to drink in the temple of their God.

⁹"But it was I who destroyed the Amorites* before them. The Amorites* were tall like cedar trees. They were as strong as oak trees. But I destroyed their fruit above and their roots below.*

¹⁰"I was the One who brought you from the land of Egypt. For 40 years I led you through the desert. I helped you take the Amorites' land. ¹¹I made some of your sons to be prophets. I made some of your young men to be Nazirites.* People of Israel, it is true." The Lord said these things. ¹²"But you made the Nazirites drink wine. You told the prophets not to prophesy. ¹³You are like a heavy weight to me. I am bent low like a wagon loaded with too much straw. ¹⁴No person will escape—not even the fastest runner. Strong men will not be strong enough. Soldiers will not be able to save themselves. ¹⁵People with bows and arrows, will not survive. Fast runners will not escape. People on horses will not escape alive. At that time, even very brave soldiers will run away. They will not take the time to put their clothes on." The Lord said these things!

Warning to Israel

3 People of Israel, listen to this message! The Lord said these things about you, Israel. This message is about all the families (Israel) that I brought from the land of Egypt. ²"There are many families on earth. But you are the only family I chose to know in a special way. (And you turned against me.) So I will punish you for all your sins."

collateral Things that a person uses to borrow money. If that person does not pay his debt, then the person he borrowed from can keep those things. It was against Moses' law to take a person's clothes as collateral. See Deuteronomy 24:12-13.

Amorites One of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites came. They were the people that scared the Israelites while Moses was leading them in the desert. See Numbers 13:33.

fruit ... below This means the parents and their children.

Nazirite(s) A person that has made a special promise to God. This name is from the Hebrew word meaning "to separate from."

The Cause of Israel's Punishment

¹Two people will not walk together unless they agree! "A lion in the forest will roar only after catching an animal. If a young lion is roaring in his cave, then it means he caught something. ²A bird will not fly into a trap on the ground if there is no food in the trap. And if the trap closes, then it will catch the bird. ³If a trumpet blows a warning, then the people will surely shake with fear. If trouble comes to a city, then the Lord caused it. ⁴The Lord my Master might decide to do something. But before he does anything, he will tell his plans to his servants, the prophets. ⁵If a lion roars, people will be scared. If the Lord speaks, prophets will prophesy.*

⁶"Go to the high towers in Ashdod* and Egypt and announce this message: "Come to the mountains of Samaria. There you will see great confusion. Why? Because the people don't know how to live right. Those people were cruel to other people. They took things from other people and hid those things in their high towers. Their treasures are filled with things they took in war."

⁷So the Lord says, "An enemy will come to that land. That enemy will take away your strength. He will take the things you hid in your high towers."

⁸The Lord says this:

"A lion might attack a lamb.

The shepherd will save only a part of that lamb.

He might pull two legs or a part of an ear from the lion's mouth.

In the same way, most of the people of Israel will not be saved.

The people living in Samaria will save only a corner from a bed, or maybe a piece of cloth from a couch."

⁹My Master, the Lord God All-Powerful, says these things: "Warn Jacob's family (Israel)

prophesy To speak for God.

Ashdod Another important city of the Philistines.

about these things. "Israel sinned, and I will punish them for their sins. I will also destroy the altars* at Bethel.* The horns of the altar* will be cut off and fall to the ground. "I will destroy the winter house with the summer house. The houses of ivory will be destroyed. Many houses will be destroyed." The Lord said those things.

The Women That Love Pleasure

4 Listen to me, you cow of Bashan* on Samaria's mountain. You hurt poor people. You crush those poor people. You tell your husbands,* "Bring us something to drink!"

²The Lord my Master made a promise. He promised by his holiness, that troubles will come to you. People will use hooks and take you away as prisoners. They will use fishhooks to take away your children. ³Your city will be destroyed. Each of you women will go out of the city through holes in the walls. You will throw your dead babies onto the pile.* The Lord says this. "Go to Bethel and sin! Go to Gilgal* and sin even more. Offer your sacrifices in the morning. Bring a tenth of your crops for the three-day holiday. And offer a thank offering made with yeast. Tell everyone about the freewill offerings.* Israel, you love to do those things. So go and do them." The Lord said this.

altar(s) A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Bethel A town in Israel. This name means "God's house."

horns ... altar The corners of the altars were made in the shape of horns. These were important parts of the altar.

cow of Bashan This means the wealthy women in Samaria. Bashan was a place east of the Jordan River. It was famous for its big bulls and cows.

your husbands Literally, "their masters."

You ... pile Or, "You will be thrown away. People will take you to Mount Hermon." The Hebrew is hard to understand. It is not clear if the women will be "thrown away" or if the women will be "throwing something away."

Bethel ... Gilgal Places of worship for the people of Israel. God wanted the people of Israel and the people of Judah to worship him only in the temple at Jerusalem.

Offer ... offerings All of these things were against the Law of Moses. The leaders and false priests started these new holidays and different ways of worshiping God.

"I did many things to try to make you come to me. I didn't give you any food to eat.* There was no food in any of your cities. But you didn't come back to me." The Lord said those things.

²"I also stopped the rain—and it was three months before harvest time. So no crops grew. Then I let it rain on one city, but not on another city. Rain fell on one part of the country. But on the other part of the country, the land became very dry. "So the people from two or three cities staggered to another city to get water—but there was not enough water for every person. Still you didn't come to me for help." The Lord said those things.

³"I made your crops die from heat and disease. I destroyed your gardens and your fields of grapes. Locusts* ate your fig trees and olives trees. But you still didn't come to me for help." The Lord said those things.

⁴"I sent diseases against you, like I did to Egypt. I killed your young men with swords. I took away your horses. I made your camp smell very bad from all the dead bodies. But still you didn't come back to me for help." The Lord said those things.

⁵"I destroyed you like I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.* And those cities were completely destroyed. You were like a burnt stick pulled from a fire. But still you didn't come back to me for help." The Lord said those things.

⁶"So I will do these things to you, Israel. I will do this to you. Get ready to meet your God, Israel. "Who am I?, I am the One who made the mountains. I created your minds.* I taught people how to speak. I change the dawn into darkness. I walk over the mountains of the earth. Who am I?, My name is Yahweh, God of the armies.*"

I didn't ... eat Literally, "I gave you clean teeth."

Locusts Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop very quickly.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were very evil.

your minds Or, "the wind."

Yahweh ... armies This is like the name that is usually translated, "Lord All-Powerful."

A Sad Song for Israel

5 People of Israel, listen to this song. This funeral song is about you.

- ¹ The virgin* of Israel has fallen.
She will not get up any more.
She was left alone, lying in the dirt.
There is no person to lift her up.

³The Lord my Master says these things:

"Officers leaving the city with 1,000 soldiers,
will return with only 100 men.
Officers leaving the city with 100 soldiers,
will return with only ten men.

The Lord Encourages Israel to Come Back to Him

"The Lord says this to the nation* of Israel:

"Come looking for me and live.

- ⁵ But don't look in Bethel.
Don't go to Gilgal.
Don't cross the border and, go down to Beersheba.*

The people of Gilgal will be taken away as prisoners.*

And Bethel will be destroyed.*

- ⁶ Go to the Lord, and live.
If you don't go to the Lord,
then a fire will start at Joseph's

virgin The Hebrew word can mean "a woman that has not had sexual relations with anyone," "bride," or "fiancee." Here it means the city Samaria.

nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

Bethel, Gilgal, Beersheba These were ancient places of worship. Abraham and Jacob built altars in these places. But God had told the people of Israel that they should go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship him.

taken away as prisoners In Hebrew this sounds like the name "Gilgal."

destroyed The Hebrew word is like the name "Beth Aven." This name means "House of Wickedness." The prophets often used this name for Bethel.

Joseph's house Here this means the ten-family-group nation of Israel. Joseph was the ancestor of the family groups of Ephraim and Manasseh in Israel.

house.*

That fire will destroy Joseph's house,
and no person will be able to stop that fire at Bethel.

- ^{7*} You should look for God.
He is the One who made the Pleiades and Orion.*

He changes darkness into the morning light.

He changes the day into the dark night.

He calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out on the earth.

His name is Yahweh!*

He keeps one strong city safe,
and he lets another strong city be destroyed."

The Evil Things That the Israelites Did

It will be very bad for you people.

You change goodness to poison.*

You kill fairness, and let it fall to the ground.*

- ¹⁰ Prophets, go to the public places and speak against the bad things people are doing.

And the people hate those prophets.

The prophets, teach good, simple truths.

And the people hate those prophets.

- ¹¹ You take unfair taxes* from poor people.

You take loads of wheat from them.

And you use this wealth, to build fancy houses made with cut stone.

But you will not live in those houses.

You plant beautiful fields of grapes.

But you will not drink the wine from them.

Pleiades and Orion Two well-known constellations (groups) of stars.

Yahweh This name is usually translated, "Lord."

poison Literally, "wormwood," a type of plant with bitter leaves. It could be used as a medicine, or if strong enough, as a poison.

You kill fairness ... ground Literally, "You lay fairness on the ground."

take unfair taxes We are not sure of the exact meaning of this Hebrew word.

- ¹² Why? Because I know about your many sins.
You have done some really bad things.
You hurt people that do right.
You accept money to do wrong.
You push away the poor in public places.
- ¹³ At that time, the wise teachers, will be quiet.
Why? Because it is a bad time.
- ¹⁴ You say, that God is with you.
So do good things, not evil.
Then you will live.
And the Lord God All-Powerful really will be with you.
- ¹⁵ Hate evil.
And love good.
Bring fairness back into the courts.
And then, maybe the Lord God All-Powerful will be kind to the survivors* from Joseph's family.

A Time of Great Sadness Is Coming

¹⁶ That is why my Master, God All-Powerful, says this:

"People will be crying in all the public places.
The people will be crying in the streets.
The people will hire the professional criers.*

- ¹⁷ People will be crying in all the fields of grapes.
Why? Because I will pass through, and punish, you."
The Lord said those things.

- ¹⁸ Some of you want to see, the Lord's special day of judgment.
Why do you want to see, that day?
The Lord's special day will bring darkness for you, not light!

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

professional criers People that went to funerals and cried loudly for the dead people. Families and friends of the dead person often gave food or money to these people.

- ¹⁹ You will be like a man that runs away from a lion,
and a bear attacks him!
You will be like a man that goes into a house,
and puts his hand on the wall,
and a snake bites him!
- ²⁰ So the Lord's special day will bring darkness, not light—
It will be a time of sadness, not joy!*

The Lord Refuses to Accept the Worship of the Israelites

- ²¹ "I hate your holidays!
I will not accept them!
I don't enjoy your religious meetings!
- ²² Even if you offer me burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them!
I will not even look at the fat animals you give as peace offerings.
- ²³ Take your noisy songs away from here.
I will not listen to the music from your harps.
- ²⁴ You should let fairness flow like water, through your country.
Let goodness flow like a stream that never becomes dry.
- ²⁵ Israel, you offered me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40 years.*
- ²⁶ But you also, carried statues of Sakkuth, your king, and Kaiwan.*
And you made yourselves that star for your gods!*
- ²⁷ So I will cause you to be taken captive beyond Damascus."

time ... joy Literally, "darkness, not shining."

Israel ... years Or, "Israel, did you offer me sacrifices and offerings in the desert for 40 years? No!"

Sakkuth ... Kaiwan These were names of Assyrian gods.

star ... gods This might be to honor a special god, or it might be to honor all the stars in the sky. The people often thought the sun, moon, stars, and planets were gods or angels. This verse might also be translated, "You carried the shelter for your king and the footstool for your idols—the star of your gods which you made for yourselves." The ancient Greek translation gives the names, Moloch and Raphan.

The Lord says those things.
His name is God All-Powerful.

Good Times Will Be Taken Away from Israel

- 6** Some of you people in Zion* have a very comfortable life.
Some of you people on Mount Samaria feel safe.
But you will have many troubles.
You are important people of the best cities of the nations.
The people of Israel come to you for help.
- ² Go look at Calneh.*
From there, go to the large city Hamath.*
Go to the Philistine city Gath.
Are you better than these kingdoms? No.
Their countries are larger than your country.
- ³ You people are doing things that bring the day of punishment nearer.
You bring that rule of violence nearer and nearer.
- ⁴ But you enjoy all the comforts.
You lie on ivory beds,
and stretch out on your couches.
You eat tender young lambs from the flock,
and young calves from the stable.
- ⁵ You play your harps.
And like David, you practice on* your musical instruments.
- ⁶ You drink wine in fancy cups.*
You use the best perfumes.
And you are not even upset that Joseph's family is being destroyed."

*Those people are stretched out on their couches now. But their good times will end. They will be taken away like prisoners to a

foreign country. And they will be some of the first people taken. *The Lord my Master made this promise. He used his own name—Lord God All-Powerful—and made this promise:

"I hate the things that Jacob* is proud of.
I hate his strong towers.
So I will let the enemy take the city
and everything in it."

There Will Be Few Israelites Left Alive

At that time, there might be ten people left alive in some house. And maybe some more people in that house will die. ¹⁰A relative will come to get the body so he can take it out and burn it. The relative will go to bring the bone out of the house. The people will call to an person that might be hiding inside the house: "Is there any other dead bodies with you?"

That person will answer, "No ..."
Then the man's relative will say, "Hush! We must not use the name of the Lord."

- ¹¹ Look, the Lord God will give the command,
and the large houses will be broken to pieces.
And the small houses will be broken to small pieces.
- ¹² Do horses run on hard ground? Yes!
Do people use cows for plowing? Yes!
Those things are true,
and this is just as true:
You have changed goodness and fairness to poison.
- ¹³ You are happy in Lo-Debar*;
You say, "We have taken Karnaïm* by our own strength."

"*But Israel, I will bring a nation against you. That nation will bring troubles to your whole country—all the way from Lebo-Hamath

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

Calneh A powerful city in northern Syria.

Hamath A powerful city in Syria.

practice on Or, "invent." The Hebrew word means to "think," "become skilled," or "design."

fancy cups Very large bowls used in worship rituals.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

A relative ... it The exact meaning of the Hebrew is not clear here.

No This answer might have been, "No, bless the Lord." But the next person stopped him before he finished speaking.

Lo-Debar A place name, meaning "nothing."

Karnaïm Another place name, meaning "horns." Horns are often a symbol (picture) for strength.

to Arabah brook." The Lord God All-Powerful said those things.

The Vision of the Locusts

7 The Lord showed this to me: He was making locusts* at the time the second crop began growing. It was the second crop after the king's cutting of the first crop. The locusts ate all the grass in the country. After that I said, "Lord my Master, I beg you, forgive us! Jacob* can't survive! He is too small!"

Then the Lord changed his mind about this. The Lord said, "That thing will not happen."

The Vision of the Fire

The Lord my Master showed these things to me: I saw the Lord God calling for judgment by fire. The fire destroyed the Great Deep. The fire was beginning to eat up the land. But I said, "O Lord God, stop, I beg you! Jacob* can't survive! He is too small!"

Then the Lord changed his mind about this. The Lord God said, "That thing will not happen either."

The Vision of the Plumbline

The Lord showed me this: The Lord stood by a wall with a plumbline* in his hand. (The wall had been made straight with a plumbline.) The Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A plumbline."

Then my Master said, "See, I will put a plumbline among my people Israel. I will not let their 'crookedness' pass inspection any more. I will remove those bad spots. Isaac's high places* will be destroyed. Israel's holy

places will be made into a pile of rocks. I will attack and kill Jeroboam's* family with swords."

Amaziah Tries to Stop Amos from Prophesying

Amaziah, a priest at Bethel,* sent this message to Jeroboam, the king of Israel: "Amos is making plans against you. He is trying to make the people of Israel fight against you. He has been speaking so much that this country can't hold all his words. Amos has said, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and the people of Israel will be taken as prisoners out of their country.'"

Amaziah also said to Amos, "You seer,* go down to Judah and eat there.* Do your preaching there. But don't prophesy* any more here at Bethel! This is Jeroboam's holy place. This is Israel's temple!"

Then Amos answered Amaziah, "I am not a professional prophet. And I am not from a prophet's family. I keep cattle and take care of sycamore trees. I was a shepherd, and the Lord took me from following the sheep. The Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' So listen to the Lord's message. You tell me, 'Don't prophesy* against Israel. Don't preach against Isaac's family.' But the Lord says: 'Your wife will become a prostitute* in the city. Your sons and daughters will be killed with swords. Other people will take your land and divide it among themselves. And you will die in a foreign* country. The people of Israel will definitely be taken from this country as prisoners.'"

Jeroboam's The king of Israel. See verse 10.

Bethel A town in Israel. This name means "God's house."

seer This is another name for a prophet. See 1 Samuel 9:9-11.

eat there This shows that Amaziah thought that Amos was a professional prophet. He thought he preached to receive food or money.

prophesy To speak for God.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin. Sometimes this also means a person that is not faithful to God and stops following him.

foreign Literally, "unclean."

locusts Insects like grasshoppers that could destroy a large crop very quickly.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

plumbline A string with a weight on one end. Workers used plumblines to make sure the walls they were building were straight. The workers often put paint on the string and popped the string. This left a straight line of paint on the wall. Then the workers chipped away the crooked part of the wall.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

The Vision of the Ripe Fruit

8 The Lord showed me this: I saw a basket of summer fruit. ²The Lord said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"

I said, "A basket of summer fruit."

Then the Lord said to me, "The end* has come to my people Israel. I will not overlook their sins any more. ³The temple* songs will become sad funeral songs. The Lord my Master said those things. There will be dead bodies everywhere. In silence, people will take out the dead bodies and throw them onto the pile."

Israel's Businessmen Are Interested Only in Making Money

⁴ Listen to me!

You people walk on helpless people.
You are trying to destroy the poor people of this country.

⁵ You businessmen say,
"When will the New Moon* be over so we can sell grain?"

"When will the Sabbath be over so we can bring our wheat to sell?"

We can raise the price and make the measure smaller.* We can adjust the scales and cheat the people.*

Since the poor people can't pay their loans, we will buy them as slaves.

We will buy those helpless people for the price of a pair of shoes.

Oh, and we can sell the wheat that was spilled on the floor."

⁷The Lord made a promise. He used his name, Pride of Jacob, and made this promise:

"I will never forget the things those people did.

end The Hebrew word for "summer fruit" is like the word for "end."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
New Moon This was the first day of the Hebrew month.

There were special meetings on these days to worship God.
We can ... smaller Literally "We will make the ephah small and the shekel large."

We can ... people Literally, "and cheat with lying balances."

⁸ The whole land will shake because of those things.

Every person that lives in the land will cry for people that died.

The whole land will rise and fall like the Nile River in Egypt.

The land will be tossed around."

⁹The Lord also said these things:

"At that time I will cause the sun to go down at noon.

I will make the earth dark on a clear day.

¹⁰ I will change your holidays into days of crying for the dead.

All your songs will be songs of sadness for dead people.

I will put clothes of sadness on everyone.
I will make every head bald.*

I will make it like heavy crying for an only son that has died.

It will be a very bitter end."

A Terrible Time of Hunger for God's Word Is Coming

¹¹The Lord says:

"Look, the days are coming when I will cause a time of hunger in the land.
The people will not be hungry for bread.
The people will not be thirsty for water.
No, the people will be hungry for words from the Lord.

¹² The people will wander from sea to sea.
They will wander from the north to the east.

The people will go back and forth looking for the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.

¹³ At that time, the beautiful young women and the young men
will become weak from thirst.

Those people made promises by the sin of Samaria,*

head bald People often cut their hair to show they were very sad or upset.

sin of Samaria The calf god in Samaria.

They said, "Dan,* as surely as your god
lives, we promise," ...
And "As surely as the god of
Beersheba* lives, we promise," ...
So those people will fall,
and they will never get up again."

The Vision of the Lord Standing by the Altar

9 I saw my Master standing by the altar.* He said,

"Hit the top of the columns,
and the building will shake all the way
down to the thresholds*
Make the columns fall on the peoples'
heads.

If anyone is left alive, then I will kill
them with a sword.

A person might run away, but he will not
escape.

Not one of the people will escape.

2 If they dig deep into the ground,*

I will pull them from there.

If they go up into the skies,*

I will bring them down from there.

3 If they hide at the top of Mount Carmel,*

I will find them there,

and I will take them from that place.

If they try to hide from me at the bottom
of the sea,

I will command the snake,

and it will bite them.

4 If they are captured and taken away by
their enemies,

I will command the sword,

and it will kill them there.

Yes, I will watch over them,

but I will watch for ways to give them

troubles,
not for ways to do good things."

Punishment Will Destroy the People of the Land

5 My Master, the Lord All-Powerful, will
touch the land,
and the land will melt.

Then all the people that live in the land
will cry for the dead.

The land will rise and fall like the Nile
River in Egypt.

6 The Lord built his upper rooms above the
skies.

He put his skies* over the earth.

He calls for the waters of the sea,
and pours them out as rain, on the land.

Yahweh* is his name.

The Lord Promises Destruction for Israel

"The Lord says this:

"Israel, you are like the Ethiopians to me.
I brought up Israel out of the land of
Egypt.

I also brought the Philistine people
from Caphtor,*

and the Aramean people from Kir.*"

8 The Lord my Master is watching the
sinful kingdom (*Israel*).

The Lord said this:

"I will destroy Israel from off the earth
surface.

But I will not completely destroy
Jacob's family.

9 I am giving the command to destroy the
nation Israel.

I will scatter the people of Israel among
all nations.

Dan One of Israel's holy places was in this city.

Beersheba A town in Judah. This name means "well of the
oath (promise)."

altar(s) A stone table or raised area used for offering
sacrifices.

thresholds The wood or stone under the door.

ground Literally, "Sheol, the place of the dead."

skies Or "heaven."

Mount Carmel A hill in north Israel very good for
growing plants. This name means "God's vineyard."

Yahweh This Hebrew name for God is usually translated
"Lord." This name is like the Hebrew word meaning "He is"
or "He makes things exist."

Caphtor This might be Crete or Cyprus.

Kir A place of exile for the Aramean people. We are not sure
where Kir was.

But it will be like a person sifting
flour.

A person shakes flour through a sifter.*

The good flour falls through,

but the bad lumps are caught.

It will be that way with Jacob's family.

- ¹⁰ Sinners among my people say,
'Nothing bad will happen to us!'

But all those people will be killed with
swords!"

The Lord Promises to Restore the Kingdom

- ¹¹ "David's tent* has fallen,
but at that time, I will set his tent up
again.

I will fix the holes in the walls.

I will build the ruined buildings again.

I will build it like it was before.

- ¹² Then* the people left alive in Edom,
and all the people called by my name,
will look to the Lord for help."

The Lord said those things,
and he will make them happen.

- ¹³ The Lord says,

"The time is coming when the person
plowing the field,
will catch up with the person harvesting
the crops.

The person that walks on grapes,
will catch up with the person that pulls
the grapes from the plants.

The sweet wine will pour from the
hills and mountains.

- ¹⁴ I will bring my people, Israel, back from
captivity.

They will build the ruined cities again.
And they will live in those cities.

They will plant fields of grapes,
and they will drink the wine that comes
from those fields.

They will plant gardens,
and they will eat the crops from those
gardens.

- ¹⁵ I will plant my people on their land,
and they will not be pulled out again
from the land which I have given
them.

The Lord your God said those things.

sifter Something like a cup with a screen on its bottom. A
sifter is used for removing large lumps from the good flour.

David's tent This probably means the city Jerusalem or the
country Judah.

Then This follows the ancient Greek translation. The Hebrew
has, "Then they will take the people that are left in Edom and
the other nations that are called by my name."

Obadiah

Edom Will Be Punished

1 This is the vision* of Obadiah. The Lord my Master says this about Edom:*

We heard a report from the Lord God.
A messenger has been sent among the nations.
He said,
"Let's go fight against Edom."

The Lord Speaks to Edom

- ² "Look, I will make you small among the nations.
People will hate you very much.
³ Your pride has fooled you.
You live in those caves high on the cliff.
Your home is high in the hills.
So you say to yourself,
in your heart,
'No person can bring me down to the ground.'"

Edom Will Be Brought Low

- ⁴ The Lord God says this:
"Even though you go high like the eagle,
even though you put your nest among the stars,

I will bring you down from there."

- ⁵ You will really be ruined!
Thieves will come to you!
Robbers will come in the night!
And those thieves will take all they want!

When workers come to your fields to gather grapes,
they leave a little fruit behind.

- ⁶ But the enemy will search for all of Esau's hidden treasures.
And they will find them!

- ⁷ All the people that are your friends will force you out of the land.
The people at peace with you will trick you and defeat you.
Those people eat your bread with you.
But they are planning a trap for you.
But you* will not notice it.

- ⁸ The Lord says,
"On that day,
I will destroy wise people from Edom*
and I will destroy understanding from Esau's Mountain.*"

- ⁹ Then, Teman,* your mighty men will be scared.
And every person will be destroyed from the mountain of Esau.*

vision Something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Edom A country southeast of Judah. The people of Edom are descendants of Esau, Jacob's twin brother. They were enemies of the Israelites.

you Literally, "he."

Esau's Mountain That is, Mount Seir.

Teman One of Edom's important cities in the south, maybe its capital.

mountain of Esau That is, Mount Seir.

- Many, many people will be killed.
 10 You will be covered with shame,
 and you will be destroyed forever.
 Why? Because you were so cruel to
 your brother Jacob.*
 11 At the time, you stood on the other side
 (without helping).
 Strangers carried Israel's treasures
 away.
 Foreigners entered Israel's (city, gate).
 Those foreigners threw lots* (to
 decide what part of Jerusalem
 they would take).
 At that time, you were like one of those
 foreigners.
 12 You laughed at* your brother's time of
 trouble.
 You should not have done that.
 You were happy when people destroyed
 Judah.
 You should not have done that.
 You bragged* at the time of their trouble.
 You should not have done that.
 13 You entered the city gate of my people,
 and laughed at* their problems.
 You should not have done that.
 At the time of their trouble,
 You took their treasures.
 You should not have done that.
 14 You stood where the roads cross,
 and you destroyed the people that were
 trying to escape.
 You should not have done that.
 You captured those people that escaped
 alive.
 You should not have done that.

Judgment Coming on All the Nations

- 15 The Day of the Lord is soon coming to all
 the nations.

Jacob Israel was Jacob's other name. (See Genesis 32:28.)
 Jacob is often used to mean Israel, the nation that descended
 from him.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for
 making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

laughed at Literally, "looked at."

bragged Literally, "made your mouth big."

You did bad things to other people.
 Those bad things will happen to you.
 Those same bad things will come
 falling onto your own head.

- 16 Why? Because you spilled* blood on my
 holy mountain.*
 So other nations will spill your blood.*
 And you will be finished.
 It will be like you never existed.
 17 But on Mount Zion* there will be some
 survivors.*
 They will be my special people.
 The nation of Jacob*
 will take back the things that belong to it.
 18 The family of Jacob will become like a
 fire.
 The nation of Joseph will become like a
 flame.
 But the nation of Esau* (will be like,
 ashes.
 The people of Judah will burn the
 Edomites.
 The people of Judah will destroy the
 Edomites.
 Then there will be no person alive in
 the nation of Esau.
 Why? Because the Lord God has said it.
 19 Then people from the Negev* will live on
 the mountain of Esau.
 And people from the foothills will take
 the Philistine (lands).
 Those people will live in the land of
 Ephraim and Samaria.
 Gilead will belong to Benjamin.
 20 People from Israel were forced to leave
 (their homes).
 But those people will take the (land, of
 the Canaanites

spilled Literally, "drank."

holy mountain, Mount Zion One of the mountains
 Jerusalem was built on. Sometimes Zion is used to mean
 Jerusalem itself.

spill your blood Literally, "drink and swallow."

survivors People who escape and live through an accident
 or a war.

nation of Jacob Literally, "the house of Jacob." This
 could mean the people of Israel, or the leaders.

nation of Esau Literally, "the house of Esau."

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

all the way to, Zarephath.
People from Judah were forced to leave
Jerusalem and live in Sepharad.
But those people will take the cities of
the Negev.*

²¹ The Winners*
will be on Mount Zion.*
Those men will rule the people living
on Esau's mountain.
And the kingdom will belong to the Lord.

Negev The desert area south of Judah.

Winners Or "Saviors." People that led their people to
victory in war.

holy mountain, Mount Zion One of the mountains
Jerusalem was built on. Sometimes Zion is used to mean
Jerusalem itself.

Jonah

God Calls and Jonah Runs

1 The Lord spoke to Jonah* son of Amittai. The Lord said, "Nineveh* is a big city. I have heard about the many evil things people are doing there. So go to that city and tell the people to stop doing those bad things."

¹Jonah did not want to obey God,^{1,2} so Jonah tried to run away from the Lord. Jonah went to Joppa.* Jonah found a boat that was going to the faraway city of Tarshish.* Jonah paid money for the trip and went on the boat. Jonah wanted to travel with the people on this boat to Tarshish and run away from the Lord.

The Great Storm

"But the Lord brought a great storm on the sea. The wind made the sea very rough. The storm was very strong and the boat was ready to break apart. ³The men wanted to make the boat lighter to stop it from sinking. So they began throwing the cargo* into the sea. The sailors were very scared. Each man began praying to his god.

Jonah This is probably the same prophet mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25.

Nineveh The capital of Assyria. The Assyrian army destroyed north Israel in 723–721 B.C.

Joppa A town on the coast of Israel by the Mediterranean Sea.

Tarshish This is probably a city in Spain. This was as far west as Jonah could travel. Nineveh was east of Israel.

cargo The Hebrew word can mean "dishes, jars, or tools." Here this could mean all the jars and boxes the boat carried on its way to Tarshish or the rigging and other heavy tools on the boat.

Jonah had gone down into the boat to lie down. Jonah was sleeping. "The captain of the boat saw Jonah and said, "Wake up! Why are you sleeping? Pray to your god! Maybe your god will hear your prayer and save us!"

What Caused This Storm?

⁴Then the men said to each other, "We should throw lots* to learn why these troubles are happening to us."

So the men threw lots. The lots showed that the trouble happened because of Jonah. ⁵Then the men said to Jonah, "It is your fault that this terrible thing is happening to us! So tell us what you have done? What is your job? Where are you coming from? What is your country? Who are your people?"

⁶Jonah said to the men, "I am a Hebrew (*Jew*). And I worship the Lord, the God of heaven. He is the God who made the sea and the land."

⁷Jonah told the men he was running away from the Lord. The men became very scared when they learned this. The men asked Jonah, "What terrible thing did you do against your God?"

⁸"The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming stronger and stronger. So the men said to Jonah, "What should we do to save ourselves? What should we do to you to make the sea calm?"

lots Small rocks, sticks, or pieces of bone used like dice. Lots were used for making a choice or decision. See Proverbs 16:33.

¹²Jonah said to the men, "I know I did wrong—that is why the storm came on the sea. So throw me into the sea, and the sea will become calm."

¹³But the men did not want to throw Jonah into the sea. The men tried to row the ship back to the shore, but they were not able to. The wind and the waves of the sea were too strong—and they were becoming stronger and stronger!

Jonah's Punishment

¹⁴So the men cried to the Lord, "Lord, we are throwing this man into the sea because of the bad things he did. Please don't say we are guilty of killing an innocent man. Please don't make us die for killing him. We know you are the Lord, and you will do whatever you want. But please be kind to us."

¹⁵So the men threw Jonah into the sea. The storm stopped—the sea became calm! ¹⁶When the men saw this, they began to fear and respect the Lord. The men offered a sacrifice* and made special promises to the Lord.

¹⁷When Jonah fell into the sea, the Lord chose a very big fish to go and swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish's stomach for three days and three nights.

2 While Jonah was in the fish's stomach, he prayed to the Lord his God. Jonah said,

- ¹ "I was in very bad trouble.
I called to the Lord for help,
and he answered me!
I was deep in the grave.*
I cried to you, Lord,
and you heard my voice!

- ³ "You threw me into the sea.
Your powerful waves splashed over me.
I went down, down into the deep sea.
The water was all around me.
⁴ Then I thought,
'Now I am forced to go where you
cannot see me.'

But I continued looking to your holy temple* for help.

- ⁵ "The seawater closed over me.
The water covered my mouth, and I
could not breathe.*
I went down, down into the deep sea.
Seaweed wrapped around my head.
⁶ I was at the bottom of the sea,
the place where mountains begin.
I thought I was locked in this prison
forever.
But the Lord my God took me out of
my grave!
God, you gave me life again!
⁷ "My soul gave up all hope.
But then I remembered the Lord.
Lord, I prayed to you.
And you heard my prayers in your holy
temple.*

- ⁸ "Some people worship useless idols.
But those statues never help them.*
⁹ Salvation comes only from the Lord!

"Lord, I will give sacrifices to you,
and I will praise and thank you.
I will make special promises to you,
and I will do the things I promise."

¹⁰Then the Lord spoke to the fish. And the fish vomited Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

God Calls and Jonah Obeys

3 Then the Lord spoke to Jonah again. The Lord said, ¹"Go to that big city Nineveh, and preach the things that I tell you."

²So Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh. Nineveh was a very big city. A person had to walk for three days to travel through the city.

temple The special building in Jerusalem where God wanted Jews to go to worship him.

mouth ... breathe Or, "The water surrounded me to my soul." The Hebrew word for soul also means "life, self, appetite," and "throat or mouth."

Some ... them Or, "People that worship useless things have left the One who is kind to them."

sacrifice(s) Offerings or gifts to God. Usually these were animals that were killed and burned on an altar.

grave Or, "Sheol," the place where dead people go.

¹Jonah went to the center of the city and began preaching to the people. Jonah said, "After 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!"

²The people of Nineveh believed the message from God. The people decided to stop eating for a time to think about their sins. The people put on special clothes to show that they were sorry. All the people in the city did this—the most important people and the least important people.

³The king of Nineveh heard about these things. And the king was also sorry for the bad things he did. So the king left his throne.* The king removed his robe and put on special clothes to show he was sorry. Then the king sat in ashes.* ⁴The king wrote a special message. The king sent this message through the city:

A command from the king and his great rulers:

For a short time no man or animal should eat anything. No herd or flock will be allowed in the fields. Nothing living in Nineveh will eat or drink water. ²But every person and every animal must be covered with a special cloth to show he is sad. People must cry loudly to God. Every person must change his life and stop doing bad things. ³Then maybe God will change and not do the things he had planned. Maybe God will change and not be angry. Then maybe we will not be punished.

⁴God saw the things the people did. God saw that the people stopped doing evil things. So God changed and did not do what he planned. God did not punish the people.

God's Mercy Makes Jonah Angry

4 Jonah was not happy that God saved the city. Jonah became angry. ²Jonah complained to the Lord and said, "I knew this would happen! I was in my own country, and

you told me to come here. At that time, I knew that you would forgive the people of this evil city. So I decided to run away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a kind God! I knew that you show mercy and don't want to punish people! I knew that you are full of kindness! I knew that if these people stopped sinning, you would change your plans to destroy them. ³So now I ask you, Lord, please kill me. It is better for me to die than to live!"

⁴Then the Lord said, "Do you think it is right for you to be angry just because I did not destroy those people?"

⁵Jonah was still angry about all these things. So he went out of the city. Jonah went to a place near the city on the east side. Jonah made a shelter for himself. Then he sat there in the shade, waiting to see what would happen to the city.

The Gourd Plant and the Worm

¹The Lord made a gourd plant grow quickly over Jonah. This made a cool place for Jonah to sit. This helped Jonah to be more comfortable. Jonah was very happy because of this plant.

²The next morning, God sent a worm to eat part of the plant. The worm began eating the plant and the plant died.

³After the sun was high in the sky, God caused a hot east wind to blow. The sun became very hot on Jonah's head and Jonah became very, very weak. Jonah asked God to let him die. Jonah said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁴But God said to Jonah, "Do you think it is right for you to be angry just because this plant died?"

Jonah answered, "Yes, it is right for me to be angry! I am angry enough to die!"

throne The special chair a king or queen sits on.
sat in ashes People did this to show they were sad.

¹⁰And the Lord said, "You did nothing for that plant! You did not make it grow. It grew up in the night, and the next day it died. And now you are sad about that plant. ¹¹If you can be upset about a plant,, then surely I can feel

sorry for a big city like Nineveh. There are many people and animals in that city. There are more than 120,000 people in that city that did not know they were doing wrong!¹²"

people ... wrong Literally, "People that do not know their right from their left." This might mean "innocent children."

Micah

Samaria and Israel to Be Punished

1 The word of the Lord came to Micah. This was during the time of kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. These men were kings of Judah. Micah was from Moresheth. Micah saw these visions, about Samaria and Jerusalem.

- ² You people, hear, all of you!
Earth and everyone on it,* listen!
My Master, the Lord will come from his holy temple.*
My Master will come as a witness* against you.
- ³ See, the Lord God is coming out from his place.
He is coming down to walk on the high places* of the earth.
- ⁴ The mountains will melt under the Lord God.
And the valleys will crack
like wax in front of the fire,
like water pouring down a deep place.
- ⁵ Why? Because of Jacob's* sin.
Because of the sins of the nation* of Israel.

everyone on it Literally, "its fullness."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

witness A person that tells in court what he has seen or heard.

high places Places for worshipping God or false gods. These places were often on the hills and mountains.

Jacob Israel was Jacob's other name. (See Genesis 32:28.) Jacob is often used to mean Israel, the nation that descended from him.

nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family of that country.

Samaria, the Cause of Sin

What caused Jacob to refuse to obey?

It is Samaria!

And what is the high place in Judah?

It is Jerusalem!

- ⁶ So I will make Samaria a pile of ruins in the open country.
It will be like a place for planting grapes.
I will pull Samaria's stones down into the valley.
And I will destroy her foundations.
- ⁷ All her idols* will be broken into pieces.
All the money she earned will be burned with fire.
And I will destroy all her statues, of false gods.
Why? Because Samaria got her things by being not faithful to me.*
So these things will go to other people that are not faithful to me.*

Micah's Great Sadness

- ⁸ I will be upset and cry because of this bad thing.
I will go without shoes and clothes.
I will cry loudly like the jackals.*

idols Statues of false gods that people worshipped.

got ... me Literally, "her wages were a prostitute's wages."

will ... me Literally, "will return to prostitute's wages."

jackals Animals like wild dogs.

- I will, cry like the ostriches.
 * Why? Because Samaria's* wound can't be healed.
 Her wound has spread to Judah.
 It has reached the city gate of my people.
 It has come all the way to Jerusalem.
 10 Don't tell it in Gath.*
 Don't cry in Acco.*
 Cry and, roll yourself in the dust at Beth Ophrah.*
 11 You that live in Shaphir,*
 pass on your way, naked and ashamed.
 The person that lives in Zaanah* will not go out.
 The people in, Beth Ezel* will cry,
 and take its support from you.
 12 The person that lives in Maroth* becomes weak waiting for good news to come.
 Why? Because trouble has come down from the Lord God to the city gate of Jerusalem.
 13 You, lady, living in Lachish,*
 join the chariot* to the fast horse.
 Zion's sins started in Lachish.
 Why? Because you follow in Israel's sins.
 14 So you must give good-bye gifts to Moresheth* in Gath.
 The houses in Accib* will trick the kings of Israel.
 15 You that live in Mareshah,*

- I will bring a person against you.
 That person will take the things you own.
 The Glory of Israel (God) will enter Adullam.*
 So cut off your hair, make yourself bald.*
 Why? Because you will cry for, the children you love.
 Make yourself bald like the eagle.*
 Why? Because your children will leave you.
 They will be, forced to leave, their homes,.

The Evil Plans of People

- 2 Trouble will come to people that plan sin.
 Those people lie on their beds and make evil plans.
 Then when the morning light comes, these people do, these bad things they planned.
 Why? Because they have the power to do them.
 1 They want fields, so they take them.
 They want houses, so they take them.
 They cheat a man and take his house.
 They cheat a man and take his things from him.

The Lord's Plans to Punish the People

- 1 That is why the Lord God says these things.
 "Look, I am planning trouble against this family.
 You will not be able to save yourselves.*

Samaria's The capital of the northern ten-family group kingdom of Israel. Here it is often used to mean the northern kingdom itself.

Gath This is a word play. This name means, "tell."

Acco This name means, "cry."

Beth Ophrah This name means, "House of Dust."

Shaphir This name means, "beautiful."

Zaanah This name means, "come out."

Beth Ezel This name means, "House of Support."

Maroth This name means, "bitter," "angry," or "sad."

Lachish This Hebrew word is like the word meaning, "horse."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

Moresheth Micah's home town.

Accib This name means, "lie," or "trick."

Mareshah The name means, "a person that takes things."

Adullam A cave in which David hid when he ran away from Saul (1 Samuel 22:1).

cut ... bald This showed a person made a special agreement with God, or it showed that a person was very sad.

eagle Or, "vulture."

save yourselves Literally, "take your necks off it."

You will not walk proudly.

Why? Because it will be a bad time.

- 4 At that time, people will talk about you.
People will sing sad songs about you.

You will say,

"We are ruined!

The Lord has taken away my people's
land.

And he has given it to other people.

Yes, he has taken my land away from
me.

The Lord has divided our fields
among our enemies."

- 5 People will not be able to measure your
land.

People will not throw lots* to divide the
land among the Lord's people.

Why? Because that land will not be
yours!"

Micah Is Asked Not to Preach

- 6 People say, "Don't preach to us.
Don't say those bad things about us.
Nothing bad will happen to us."

- 7 But I must, say these things, people of
Jacob.*

The Lord is becoming angry about the
things you have done.

If you people lived right,
then I could say nice words to you.

God's People Become His Enemies

- 8 But recently, my people have become my
enemy.

You take the coats from people that
pass by.

Those people think they are safe.

But you take things from them,
like they are prisoners of war.

- 9 You have forced out the women of my
people
from their nice and comfortable,

houses.

You have taken my glory from their
small children.

- 10 Get up and leave!

Why? Because this is not a place of rest.

Because this place is not clean.

It is ruined! It is a terrible ruin!

- 11 Maybe a false prophet* will come and tell
lies.

Maybe he will say,

"Give me wine and beer,

and I will say nice things to you."

Then he will become their preacher!

The Lord Will Bring His People Together

- 12 Yes, people of Jacob*, I will bring all of
you together.

I will bring together all the survivors*
of Israel.

I will put them together

like sheep in the sheepyard,

like a flock in its pasture.

Then the place will be filled with the
noise of many people.

- 13 A person* will push through and walk to
the front of his people.

He will break through the gates.

And the people will leave that city.

Their King will walk in front of them.

The Lord will be at the front of his
people.

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil

- 3 Then I said,
"Hear now, leaders of Jacob,*
and rulers of the nation* of Israel.

You should know what justice is!

- 2 But you hate good and love evil!
You tear off the skin from people.

false prophet Literally, "He that walks in the spirit," or
"He that walks after the wind."

survivors People that escape and stay alive after some
accident or war.

person Literally, "A crasher." Here this probably means God,
who will come and free his people.

nation Literally, "house." This might mean the royal family
of that country.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for
making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

You tear their flesh off their bones!

¹ You are destroying my people!*

You take their skin off them,
and break their bones.

You chop their bones up like meat,
to put in the pot!

⁴ Then you will pray to the Lord God.

But he will not answer you.

No, the Lord God will hide his face from
you.

Why? Because you have done evil
things!"

False Prophets

¹ False prophets teach the Lord's people the
wrong way of living. The Lord God says this
about those prophets:

"If people give these prophets food to eat,
then they shout, 'Peace!'

But if people don't give food to them,
then those prophets shout 'Prepare for
war!'

⁶ That is why it is like, night for you—

You, don't have vision.*

You can't tell what will happen in the
future,
so it is like darkness to you.

The sun will go down on the prophets.
And the day will become dark over
them.

⁷ The seers* will be ashamed.

The people that see the future will be
embarrassed.

Yes, all of them will cover their
mouths.

Why? Because there will be no answer
from God!

Micah Is an Honest Prophet of God

¹ But the Lord's Spirit has filled me with
power, goodness, and strength.

I will tell Jacob* about his sins.

Yes, I will tell Israel* about his
sins!"

The Leaders of Israel Are to Blame

⁹ Leaders of Jacob,* and rulers of Israel,*
listen to me!

You hate right ways.

If something is straight,
then you make it crooked!

¹⁰ You build Zion* by murdering people.*

You build Jerusalem with sin!

¹¹ The judges in Jerusalem take money in
secret,

then they decide who wins in court.

The priests in Jerusalem must be paid

before they will teach the people.

People must pay the prophets before
they look into the future.

And then those leaders say,

"Nothing bad will happen to us!

The Lord is with us!"

¹² Because of you, Zion* will be

destroyed.

It will be like, a plowed field.

Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks.

And Temple Mount will become an

empty hill covered with bushes.

The Law Will Come from Jerusalem

4 It will happen in the last days:

The mountain of the Lord God's
house

will become the most important of all
mountains.

It will be raised above the hills.

You ... people Literally, "They eat the flesh of my
people."

vision Like a dream. God used visions to teach prophets what
they should say to the people.

seers Another name for prophets.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Israel Another name for Jacob. Here it means the people of
Israel.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.
Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

murdering people Literally, "bloodshed."

People from other nations will come flowing to it.

- ² Many nations will come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the Lord's mountain!

Let us go to the house of the God of Jacob!*

Then the Lord will teach us his ways.
And we will walk in his paths."

Why? Because the Lord's teachings will come from Zion.*

And the word of the Lord will come from Jerusalem!

- ³ The Lord will judge between many nations.

He will make decisions for strong nations that are far away.

Then the nations will beat their swords,
and make them plows.

The nations will beat their spears,
and make them hooks for trimming trees.

Nations will not fight other nations with the swords.

And they will not study war any more.

- ⁴ No, each person will sit under his vine
and fig tree.

No person will make them afraid!

Why? Because the Lord All-Powerful has said it!

- ⁵ All the people from other nations, follow their own gods.

But we will remember the name of the Lord our God forever and ever!

The Kingdom to Be Brought Back

- ⁶ The Lord God says,
"Jerusalem was hurt and crippled.
Jerusalem was thrown away.
Jerusalem was hurt and punished.
But I will bring her back to me."

- ⁷ The people of that 'crippled' city will become the survivors.*

The people of that city were forced to leave.

But I will make them into a strong nation.

The Lord will be their king.

He will rule from Mount Zion* forever.

- ⁸ And you, Tower of Flocks,*

Ophel, hill of the Daughter of Zion,*
you will be a kingdom like in the past.

Yes, Daughter of Zion,* that kingdom will come to you."

Why Must the Israelites Go to Babylon?

- ⁹ Now, why do you cry so loudly?

Is your king gone?

Have you lost your leader?

You suffer like a woman trying to give birth.

- ¹⁰ Daughter of Zion*, be in pain.

Be like a woman trying to give birth.

Why? Because now you will leave the city (Jerusalem).

You will live in the field.

You will go to Babylon.

But you will be saved from that place.

The Lord will go there and take you back from your enemies.

The Lord Will Destroy the Other Nations

- ¹¹ Many nations have come to fight against you.

They say,

"Look at Zion!"

Attack her!"

- ¹² Those people have their plans.

But they don't know the things the Lord is planning.

The Lord brought those people here for a special purpose.

Those people will be crushed.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

survivors People that escape and stay alive after some accident or war.

Tower of Flocks Or, "Migdal Eder." This probably means a part of Jerusalem. The leaders would be like shepherds in a tower watching their sheep.

Daughter of Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked on to remove the hulls from the grain.

like a pile of grain on the threshing floor.*

Israel Will Win Defeat Its Enemies

- ¹³ Get up and crush those people, Daughter of Zion.*

I will make you very strong.

It will be like you have horns of iron,
and hooves* of bronze.

You will beat many people into small pieces.

"I will give their wealth to the Lord.

I will give their treasure to the Lord of
all the earth."

- 5** So, strong city,* gather your soldiers together.

Your enemies will hit you in the face
with their walking stick.

They will hit the Judge of Israel.*

The Messiah to be Born In Bethlehem

- ² But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are the smallest town in Judah.

Your family is almost too small to
count.

But from you will come my "Ruler of
Israel."

His beginnings come from ancient
times,
from the days of eternity.

- ³ The Lord will let his people stay in
Babylon.

They will stay there, until the woman*
gives birth to her child.

- ⁴ Then his brothers that are still alive will
return.

They will come back to the people of

Israel.

Then the Ruler of Israel will stand and
feed the flock.

He will lead them, with the Lord's
power,

with the power of the wonderful
name of the Lord God.

- ⁵ There will be peace.

Why? Because at that time, his
greatness

will reach to the ends of the earth.

The Assyrian army, will come into our
country.

That army will destroy* our large
houses.

But the Ruler of Israel will choose
seven shepherds.

No, he will find eight leaders.

- ⁶ They will use their swords and rule the
Assyrians.

They will rule the land of Nimrod*
from their own cities.

And use their swords to rule those
people.

The Lord Will Save Israel

Then the Ruler of Israel, will save us
from the Assyrians.

(Those people will come into our land.

They will walk over our large houses.)

- ⁷ Then the survivors* from Jacob*
will be like dew from the Lord
to many people.

They will be like rain on the grass.

They will not wait for any man.

They will not be afraid of anyone.

- ⁸ To many people, the survivors from
Jacob
will be like a lion among the animals of
the forest.

They will be like a young lion

threshing floor A place where grain is beaten or walked
on to remove the hulls from the grain.

Daughter of Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

hooves The hard part of a horse's foot.

strong city Literally, "Daughter of troops."

Your ... Israel Or, "With the Judge of Israel, your enemy
will hit you on your cheek with his walking stick."

woman This probably means Jerusalem.

destroy Literally, "trample."

land of Nimrod Another name for Assyria.

survivors People that escape and stay alive after some
accident or war.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

among flocks of sheep.
If the lion passes through,
he goes where he wants to go.
He attacks an animal,
and no person can save that animal.
The survivors will be like that.
You will lift your hand against your
enemies,
and you will destroy them.

People Will Depend on God

- 10 The Lord God says, "I will take your horses from you at that time.
I will destroy your chariots.*
- 11 I will destroy the cities in your country.
I will pull down all your fortresses.*
- 12 You will no longer try to do magic.
You will not have any more people that try to tell the future.
- 13 I will destroy your statues of false gods.
I will pull down your stones for remembering those false gods.
You will not worship the things your hands have made.
- 14 I will destroy the poles for worshipping Asherah.*
I will destroy your false gods.*
- 15 Some people will not listen to me.
I will show my anger.
And I will get even with those people.

The Lord God's Complaint

- 6** Now hear what the Lord God says:
Get up in front of the mountains!
Tell them your side of the story.
Let the hills* hear your story.
- 2 The Lord has a complaint against his people.
Mountains, listen to the Lord's

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

fortress(es) A building or city with tall, strong walls for protection.

Asherah An important Canaanite goddess. At this time, the people thought she was the wife of Baal.

false gods Or, "cities"

mountains ... hills This is like a case in court. The mountains and hills are like the jury.

- complaint.
Foundations of the earth, listen to the Lord.
He will prove that Israel is wrong!
- 3 The Lord God says:
"My people, did I do something wrong against you?
How did I make you tired of me?
Tell me the things I did to you!"
 - 4 I will tell you the things I did!
I brought you from the land of Egypt.
I freed you from slavery.
I sent Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to you.
 - 5 My people,
remember the evil plans of Balak king of Moab.
Remember the things Balaam son of Beor told Balak.
Remember the things that happened from Acacia to Gilgal.*
Then you will know the Lord God is right!"

What Does God Want from Us?

- 6 What can I bring with me when I come before the Lord God,
and bow myself in front of God?
Should I come to the Lord with burnt-offerings,
with a year-old calf?
- 7 Will the Lord God be pleased with 1,000 rams,*
or with 10,000 rivers of oil?
Should I give my first child for my sins,
the child from my body for my sins?
- 8 Man, the Lord told you the things that are good.
These are the things the Lord wants from you:
Be fair to other people.
Love being kind to people.*
And live humbly with your God.

from ... Gilgal This story is found in Numbers 22-25.

ram(s) A male sheep.

Love being kind to people Or, "Love mercy."

What Were the Israelites Doing?

- ⁹ The voice of the Lord God shouts to the city (*Jerusalem*).
The wise person honors the Lord's* name.
So pay attention to the rod of punishment,
and to the One who has the rod!*
- ¹⁰ Do the bad people still hide treasures they have stolen?
Do bad people still cheat people with baskets that are too small?*
- The Lord, hates that way of cheating people,!
- ¹¹ Do bad people still use weights and scales to cheat people?
Do those people still have bags with weights that give the wrong measure?
Yes! All of those things are still happening!
- ¹² The rich men in that city still do cruel things!
The people that live in that city still tell lies.
Yes, those people tell their lies!
- ¹³ So I have started to punish you.
I will destroy you, because of your sins.
- ¹⁴ You will eat,
but you will not become full.
You will still, be hungry and empty.*
You will try to escape.
But you will not escape!
People with swords will catch you.
- ¹⁵ You will plant your seeds,
but you will not gather food.
You will try to squeeze oil from your olives,
but you will not get any oil.
You will not be allowed to drink your sweet wine.

the Lord's Literally, "your."

So pay ... rod The Hebrew is not clear here.

baskets ... small Literally, "short ephahs." An ephah is about 1/2 bushel.

You ... empty The Hebrew is not clear here.

- ¹⁶ Why? Because you obey the laws of Omri,*
You do all the bad, things that Ahab's family does.
You follow their teachings.
So I will let you be destroyed.
The people in your city will be laughed at.*
My disgusting people will be carried away as prisoners.

Micah Is Upset at the Evil Things People Do

- 7** I am upset!
Why? Because I am like summer fruit, that is already, gathered.
I am, like grapes, that are already, ripe.
There are no grapes left, to eat.
There are none of the early figs that I love.
- ² This means that, all of the faithful people are gone.
There are no good people left in this country.
Every person is waiting to kill someone.
Every person is trying to trap his brother.
- ³ People are good at doing bad things with both hands.
An official asks for money,
and a judge takes money to change his decisions in court.
"Important leaders" don't make good and fair decisions.
They do the things they want to do.
- ⁴ Even, the best of them is like a thorn bush.
Even the best of them is more crooked than a thorn bush.

The Day of Punishment Is Coming

Your prophets said this day would come.

Omri He was a king of Israel that led his oastoo to worship false gods. See 1 Kings 16:21-26.

be laughed at Literally, "be a whistie."

And the day of your watchmen* has come.

Now you will be punished!

Now you will be confused!

⁵ Don't trust your neighbor!

Don't trust a friend!

Don't even speak freely with your wife!

⁶ A person's enemies will be the people in his own house.

A son will not honor his father.

A daughter will turn against her mother.

A daughter-in-law will turn against her mother-in-law.

The Lord God Is the Savior

⁷ So I will look to the Lord for help!

I will wait for God to save me.

My God will hear me.

⁸ I have fallen.

But enemy, don't laugh at me!

I will get up again.

I sit in darkness now.

But the Lord God will be a light for me.

The Lord God Forgives

⁹ I sinned against the Lord.

So he was angry at me.

But he will argue my case for me in court.

He will do the things that are right for me.

Then he will bring me out into the light.

And I will see that he is right.

¹⁰ Then my enemy will see this,

and she will be ashamed.

My enemy said to me,

"Where is the Lord your God?"

At that time, I will laugh at her.*

People will walk over her,

like mud in the streets.

watchmen Another name for prophets. This shows that the prophets were like guards that stood on a city's wall and watched for trouble coming from far away.

laugh at her Literally, "look at her."

The Jews to Return

¹¹ The time will come when your walls will be built again.

At that time, their country will grow.

¹² Your people will come back to your land.

They will come from Assyria and from the cities of Egypt.

Your country will go from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates River, from the sea in the west to the mountains in the east.

¹³ The land was ruined.

Why? Because of the people that live in it,

and because of the things they did.

¹⁴ So rule your people with your rod.

Ruin the flock of people that belong to you.

That flock lives alone in the woods, and up on Mount Carmel.

That flock lives in Bashan and Gilead like they did in time past.

Israel Will Defeat Its Enemies

¹⁵ I did many miracles when I took you out of Egypt.

I will let you see more miracles like that.

¹⁶ The nations will see those miracles, and they will be ashamed.

They will see that their "power" is nothing compared to mine.

They will be amazed, and put their hands over their mouths!

They will cover their ears and refuse to listen.

¹⁷ They will crawl in the dust like a snake.

They will shake with fear.

They will crawl on the ground like insects crawling from their holes.

They will come, afraid, to the Lord our God.

They will be afraid before you!

Praise for the Lord

- ¹⁸ There is no God like you.
 You forgive people that are guilty of
 sin.
 You don't look at the sins of your
 survivors.*
 The Lord God will not stay angry forever.
 Why? Because he enjoys being kind.

- ¹⁹ Lord, comfort us again.
 Take away our sins.
 Throw away all our sins
 into the deep sea.
- ²⁰ Be true to Jacob.*
 Be kind to Abraham.*
 You promised that to our ancestors* long
 ago.

survivors People that escape and stay alive after some accident or war.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

Abraham The father of the Israelites. Here Abraham is used to mean all the people of Israel.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Nahum

1 This is the sad message about the city of Nineveh.*

The Lord Is Angry at Nineveh

- 2** The Lord is a jealous God.
The Lord punishes guilty people.
The Lord punishes guilty people,
and the Lord is very angry!
The Lord punishes his enemies.
He stays angry at his enemies.
- 3** The Lord is patient.
But he is also very powerful!
And the Lord will punish guilty people.
He will not let them go free.
The Lord is coming to punish the bad people.
He will use whirlwinds and storms to show his power.
A man walks on the dust on the ground.
But the Lord walks on the clouds!
- 4** The Lord will speak harshly to the sea,
and it will become dry.
He will make all the rivers become dry!
The rich lands of Bashan and Carmel become dry and dead.
The flowers in Lebanon fade away.
- 5** The Lord will come,
and the mountains will shake with fear,
and the hills will melt away.

The Lord will come,
and the earth will shake with fear,
The world and every one living on it
will shake with fear.

- 6** No one can stand before the Lord's great anger.
No one can endure his terrible anger.
His anger will burn like fire.
The rocks will shatter when he comes.
- 7** The Lord is good.
He is a safe place to go in times of trouble.
He takes care of the people who trust in him.
- 8** But he will destroy completely his enemies.
He will wash them away like a flood.
He will chase his enemies into the darkness.
- 9** Judah, people made plans against the Lord.
But he will end those plans.
And trouble will not come a second time.
- 10** Your enemy will be destroyed like tangled thorns.
They will burn fast,
like dry weeds.
- 11** Assyria, a man came from you.
He made evil plans against the Lord.
He gave evil advice.
- 12** The Lord said these things to Judah:
"The people of Assyria are at full

Nineveh . The capital city of the country of Assyria. Assyria destroyed Israel in 722-721 B.C. This is the book of Nahum's vision. Nahum was from Elkosh.

strength.

They have many soldiers.

But they will all be cut down.

They will all be finished.

My people, I made you suffer.

But I will make you suffer no more.

- ¹³ Now I will set you free from the power of Assyria.

I will take that yoke* off your neck.

I will tear away the chains holding you.

- ¹⁴ King of Assyria,
the Lord gave this command about you:
"You will not have any descendants to wear your name.

I will destroy your carved idols and metal statues

that are in the temple of your gods.

I am preparing your grave for you.

You are not important!"

- ¹⁵ Judah, look!

Look there, coming over the mountains.

Here comes a messenger bringing good news!

He says there is peace!

Judah, celebrate your special holidays.

Judah, do the things you promised.

Bad people will not attack and defeat you again!

All those bad people have been destroyed.

Nineveh Will Be Destroyed

- 2** Nineveh,, the destroyer is coming to fight against you.

So guard the strong places of your city.

Watch the road.

Get ready for war.

Prepare for battle!

- ² Why? Because the Lord is giving back the glory to Jacob,*

like the glory of Israel.

The Assyrians, destroyed the people of Israel,
and ruined their grape vines.

- ³ The shields of those soldiers are red.

Their uniforms are bright red.

Their chariots* are lined up for battle,
and shining like flames of fire.

And their horses are ready to go.

- ⁴ The chariots race wildly through the streets.

They rush back and forth through the open places. They look like burning torches,

like lighting flashing from place to place!

- ⁵ The king of Assyria, calls his best soldiers.

But they stumble and fall on the way.

They run to the wall to protect it.

They lower the protective shield.

- ⁶ But the gates by the rivers are open,
and the enemy comes in
and destroys the king's house.

- ⁷ The enemy takes away the queen.
And her slave girls moan sadly like doves.

They beat their breasts to show their sadness.

- ⁸ Nineveh is like a pool whose water is draining away.

People yell,

"Stop! Stop running away!"

But no one stops or pays any attention to them!

- ⁹ You soldiers that are destroying Nineveh,,
take the silver!

Take the gold!

There are many things to take.
There are many treasures!

- ¹⁰ Now Nineveh, is empty
Everything is stolen.

yoke A pole that was put on the shoulders of men or animals to help them carry or pull things. This often showed that a person was a slave.

Jacob Another name for Israel. See Gen. 32:22-28.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

The city is ruined!
People have lost their courage,
their hearts are melting with fear,
their knees are knocking together,
their bodies are shaking,
their faces grow white from fear.

- ¹¹ Where is the lion's cave (*Nineveh*) now?
The male and female lions lived there.
Their babies were not afraid.
- ¹² The lion (*king of Nineveh*) killed plenty
of people
to satisfy his cubs.
He filled his cave (*Nineveh*) with men's
bodies.
He filled his cave with women he had
killed.
- ¹³ The Lord All-Powerful says,
"I am against you, *Nineveh*!
I will burn your chariots.
I will kill your 'young lions' in battle.
You will not hunt down anyone on earth
again.
People will never again hear your
messengers."

Bad News for Nineveh

- 3** It will be very bad for that city of
murderers.
Nineveh is a city full of lies.
It is filled with things taken from other
countries.
It is filled with plenty of people that it
hunted and killed!
- ² You can hear the sound of whips
cracking,
the noise of wheels,
horses galloping,
and chariots bouncing along!
- ³ Soldiers on horses are attacking,
their swords are shining,
their spears are gleaming!
There are many dead people,
dead people piled up,
too many bodies to count!
People are tripping over all the dead
bodies.

- ⁴ All these things happened because of
Nineveh.
Nineveh is like a prostitute that could
never get enough.
She wanted more and more.
She sold herself to many nations,
and she used her magic to make them
her slaves.
- ⁵ The Lord All-Powerful says,
"I am against you *Nineveh*.
I will pull your dress* up over your
face.
I will show your naked body to all the
nations.
And those kingdoms will see your
shame.
- ⁶ I will throw dirty things on you.
I will treat you in a hateful way.
People will look at you and laugh.
- ⁷ Everyone who sees you will run away
from you.
They will say,
'*Nineveh* is destroyed.
Who will cry for her?'
I know I cannot find anyone to comfort
you, *Nineveh*."

**Nineveh*, are you better than Thebes* on the Nile River? No! Thebes also had water all around her. Thebes used the water to protect herself from enemies. She used that water like a wall too! *Ethiopia and Egypt gave Thebes much strength. The Sudan and Libya supported her. "But, Thebes was defeated. Her people were taken away as prisoners to a foreign country. Soldiers beat her small children to death at every street corner. They threw lots* to see who got to keep the important people as slaves. They put chains on all the important men of Thebes.

pull your dress This is a word play in Hebrew. The Hebrew word also means "to destroy a country and take its people away as prisoners to other nations."

Thebes A great city in Egypt. It was destroyed in 663 B.C. by the Assyrian army.

lot(s) Sticks, stones, or pieces of bone used like dice for making decisions. See Proverbs 16:33.

¹¹So Nineveh, you will also fall like a drunk person! You will try to hide. You will look for a safe place away from the enemy. ¹²But [Nineveh], all your strong places will be like fig trees. New figs become ripe. A person comes and shake the tree. The figs fall into the mouth of that person. He eats them, and they are gone!

¹³Nineveh, your people are all like women—and the enemy soldiers are ready to take them. The gates of your land are open wide for your enemies to come in. Fire has destroyed the wooden bars across the gates.

¹⁴Get water and store it inside your city. Why? Because the enemy soldiers will surround your city. [They will not let any person bring food or water into the city.] Make your defenses strong! Get clay to make more bricks! Mix the mortar! Get the molds for making bricks! ¹⁵You can do all those things, but the fire will still destroy you completely! And the sword will kill you. Your land will look like a swarm of grasshoppers came and ate everything.

Nineveh, you grew and grew. You became like a swarm of grasshoppers. You were like a swarm of locusts. ¹⁶You have many, many businessmen that go places and buy things. They are as many as the stars in the sky! And they are like locusts that come, eat everything until it is finished, and then leave. ¹⁷And your government officials are also like locusts. They are like locusts that settle on a stone wall on a cold day. But when the sun comes up, the rocks become warm, and the locusts all fly away. And no one knows where! [Your officials will be like that.]

¹⁸King of Assyria, your shepherds (*leaders*) fell asleep. Those powerful men are sleeping. And now your sheep (*people*) have wandered away on the mountains. And there is no person to bring them back. ¹⁹Nineveh, you have been hurt badly, and nothing can heal your wound. Everyone who hears the news of your destruction claps his hands. They are all happy! Why? Because they all felt the pain you always caused!

Habakkuk

Habakkuk Complains to God

1 This is the message that was given to Habakkuk the prophet.*

¹Lord, I continue to ask for help. When will you listen to me? I cried to you about the violence. But you did nothing! ²People are stealing things and hurting other people. People are arguing and fighting. Why do you make me look at these terrible things? ³The law is weak and not fair to people. Evil people win their fights against good people. So, the law is no longer fair.

God Answers Habakkuk

¹The Lord answered, „Look at the other nations! Watch them, and you will be amazed. I will do something in your lifetime that will amaze you. „You will have to see it to believe it.„ You would not believe it if you were told about it. ²I will make the Babylonian people a strong nation. Those people are mean and powerful fighters. They will march across the earth. They will take houses and cities that don't belong to them. ³The Babylonian people will scare the other people. The Babylonian people will do what they want to do and go where they want to go. ⁴Their horses will be faster than leopards* and meaner than wolves* at sunset. Their horse soldiers will come from

faraway places. They will attack their enemies quickly, like a hungry eagle swooping down from the sky. ⁵The one thing they all want to do is fight. Their armies will march fast like the wind in the desert. And the Babylonian soldiers will take many, many prisoners—as many as the grains of sand.

¹⁰“The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the kings of other nations. Foreign rulers will be like jokes to them. The Babylonian soldiers will laugh at the cities with tall, strong walls. The soldiers will simply build dirt roads up to the top of the walls and easily defeat the cities. ¹¹Then they will leave like the wind and go on to fight against other places. The only thing those Babylonians will worship is their own strength.”

Habakkuk's Questions to God

¹²Then Habakkuk said,„

“Lord, you are the Lord who lives forever!

You are my holy God who never dies!*

Lord, you have created the Babylonian people to do what should be done.

Our Rock,* you created them to punish
the people of Judah.„

¹³ Your eyes are too good to look at evil.
You can't watch people doing wrong.

prophet A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach to the people.

leopards A large animal, like a lion.

wolves A wolf is a type of wild dog.

Lord, you are ... never dies Or, “Lord, you have been my holy God forever! Surely we will not die.”

Rock A name for God. It shows he is like a fortress or a strong place of safety.

So how can you watch those evil people win?

How can you watch bad people defeating good people?

¹⁴ "You have made the people like fish in the sea.

They are like little sea-animals without a leader.

¹⁵ The enemy catches all of them with hooks and nets.

The enemy catches them in his net and drags them in.

And the enemy is very happy with what he caught.

¹⁶ His net helps him live like a rich man and enjoy the best food.

So the enemy worships his net.

He makes sacrifices* and burns incense* to honor his net.

¹⁷ Will he continue to take riches with his net?

Will he (*Babylonian army*) continue destroying people without showing mercy?

2 "I will stand like a guard and watch.

I will wait to see what the Lord will say to me.

I will wait and learn how he answers my questions."

God Answers Habakkuk

¹The Lord answered me, "Write down what I show you. Write clearly on a sign so people can read it easily.*" ²This message is about a special time in the future. This message is about the end, and it will come true! It may seem like that time will never come. But be patient and wait for it. That time will come. It will not be late. "This message can't help people that refuse to listen to it. But a good person will believe this message. And the good person will live because of his faith.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

Write ... easily Or, "Write clearly on tablets so the person that reads it can read and tell other people the message."

³God said, "Wine can trick a person. In the same way, a strong man's pride can fool him. But he will not find peace. He is like death—he always wants more and more. And, like death, he will never be satisfied. He will continue defeating other nations. He will continue to make those people his prisoners. "But soon enough all those people will laugh at him. They will tell stories about his defeat. They will laugh and say, 'It is too bad! That person stole many things. He took things that did not belong to him. He took a lot of money. It is too bad about that person.'

⁴"You (*a strong man*) have taken money from people. One day those people will wake up and realize what is happening. And they will stand against you. Then they will take things from you. And you will be very afraid. "You have stolen things from many nations. So those people will take much from you. You have killed many people. You have destroyed lands and cities. You have killed all the people there. "Yes, it will be very bad for the person that becomes rich by doing wrong. That person does those things to live in a safe place. He thinks that he can stop other people from stealing from him. But bad things will happen to him.

⁵"You (*a strong man*) have made plans to destroy many people. This has made your own people ashamed. And you will lose your life. "The stones of the walls will cry out against you. Even the wooden rafters* in your own house will agree that you are wrong.

⁶"It will be very bad for the leader that does wrong and kills people to build a city. "The Lord All-Powerful has decided that a fire will destroy everything that those people worked to build. All their work will be for nothing. "Then people everywhere will know the Lord's greatness. This news will spread like water spreads out into the sea. "It will be very bad for that person that becomes angry and then makes other people suffer. In anger, that person knocks other people to the ground. And he treats those people like they are naked and drunk.

rafters Boards that support the roof.

¹⁴“But that person will know the Lord’s anger. That anger will be like a cup of poison in the Lord’s right hand. That person will taste that anger and then he will fall to the ground like a drunk person.

“Evil ruler, you will drink from that cup. You will get shame, not honor. “You hurt many people in Lebanon. You stole many animals there. So you will be afraid because of the people that died and because of the bad things you did to that country. You will be afraid because of the things you did to those cities and to the people that lived in those cities.”

The Message About Idols

¹⁵“That person’s false god will not help him. Why? Because it is only a statue that some man covered with metal. It is only a statue. So the person that made it can’t expect it to help. That statue can’t even speak! ¹⁶It will be very bad for the person that says to a wooden statue, “Get up!” It will be very bad for the person that says to a stone that can’t speak, “Wake up!” Those things can’t help him. That statue may be covered with gold and silver, but there is no life in that statue.

²⁰But the Lord is different! The Lord is in his holy temple. So all the earth should be silent and show respect in front of the Lord.

3 The Shiggayon prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.*

¹ Lord, I have heard the news about you.

Lord, I am amazed at the powerful things you did in the past.

Now I pray that you will do great things in our time.

I pray that you will make those things happen in our own days.

But in your excitement, remember to show mercy to us.

SELAH*

The Shiggayon ... prophet Or, “The prayer of Habakkuk on the Shiggayon.” The exact meaning of “Shiggayon” is not clear.

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It probably means that the singers should pause or that the music should be louder here.

¹ God is coming from Teman.*

The Holy One is coming from Mount Paran.*

SELAH*

The Glory of the Lord covers the heavens!

His Glory fills the earth!

⁴ It is like a bright, shining light.

Rays of light shine from his hand.

And there is such power hiding in that hand.

⁵ The sickness went before him.

And the destroyer followed behind him.*

⁶ The Lord stood and judged the earth.

He looked at the people of all the nations.

And they shook with fear.

For many years the mountains stood strong.

But those mountains fell to pieces.

The old, old hills fell down.

God has always been like that!

⁷ I saw that the cities of Cushan were in trouble.

The houses of Midian trembled with fear.

⁸ Lord, were you angry at the rivers?

Were you angry at the streams?

Were you angry at the sea?

Were you angry when you rode your horses and chariots to victory?

⁹ Even then you showed your rainbow.

It was proof of your Agreement with the families of the earth.

SELAH*

And the dry land split the rivers.

¹⁰ The mountains saw you and shook.

The water flowed off the land.

Teman One of Edom’s important cities in the south, maybe its capital.

Mount Paran This is probably an important mountain west of the Gulf of Aqaba and north of Mount Sinai.

The sickness ... behind him This probably refers to the diseases and the Angel of Death God sent against the Egyptians when God freed Israel from slavery.

The water from the sea made a loud noise
as it lost its power over the land.

- ¹¹ The sun and the moon lost their
brightness.

They stopped shining when they saw
your bright flashes of lightning.

That lightning was like spears and
arrows shooting through the air.

- ¹² In anger you walked on the earth and
punished the nations.

- ¹³ You came to save your people.

You came to save your anointed*
person.

You killed the firstborn* in every evil
family,

from the least important to the most
important families in the land.*

SELAH*

- ¹⁴ You used Moses' walking stick to stop
the enemy soldiers.

Those soldiers came like a powerful
storm to fight us.

They thought they could defeat us
easily,

like robbing a poor man in secret.

- ¹⁵ But you marched through the sea with
your horses,

and you made the great waters turn over
and over.

- ¹⁶ I heard these things and my body
trembled.

My lips shook when I heard the loud
noises.

My bones felt weak.

My legs shook.

So I will wait patiently for the day of
destruction.

That day is coming to the people that
attack us.

- ¹⁷ Fig trees might not grow figs.

There may be no grapes on the vines.

There may be no olives growing on the
trees.

There may be no food growing in the
fields.

There may be no sheep in the pens.

There may be no cattle in the barns.

- ¹⁸ But I will still be glad in the Lord.

I will rejoice in God my savior.

- ¹⁹ The Lord, my Master, gives me my
strength.

He helps me run fast like a deer.

He leads me safely on the mountains.

To the music director. On my stringed
instruments.

anoint(ed) To pour olive oil on things or people to show
that they were chosen by God for a special work or purpose.

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn
son was very important in ancient times.

You killed ... in the land Literally, "You struck the
head from the evil house. From the foundation to the neck
they were laid bare."

SELAH This word is for the singers or the musicians. It
probably means that the singers should pause or that the music
should be louder here.

Zephaniah

1 This is the message that the Lord gave to Zephaniah. Zephaniah received this message during the time that Josiah son of Amon was king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi. Cushi was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah. Amariah was the son of Hezekiah.

The Lord's Day for Judging the People

¹The Lord says, "I will destroy everything on earth!* ²I will destroy all the people and all the animals. I will destroy the birds in the air and the fish in the sea. I will destroy the evil people and all the things that make them sin. I will remove all people from the earth." The Lord said those things!

³The Lord said, "I will punish Judah and the people living in Jerusalem. I will remove these things from that place: I will remove the last signs of Baal worship. I will remove the priests and all the people that 'go on their roofs* to worship the stars.* People will forget about those false priests. Some people say they worship me. Those people promised to worship me, but now they worship the false god Milcom.* So I will remove those people from that place. 'Some people turned away from the Lord. They quit following me. Those people stopped asking the Lord for help. So I will remove those people from that place."

earth Or, "the land," or "the country."

roof(s) In ancient Israel, houses had flat roofs that were used like an extra room.

stars Literally, "army of heaven." This might mean the stars and planets or the angels.

Milcom The god of the Ammonite people.

⁴Run away from the Lord my Master! Why? Because the Lord's day for judging the people is coming soon! The Lord has prepared his sacrifice. He has prepared his chosen people.*

⁵The Lord said, "On the Lord's day of sacrifice, I will punish the king's sons and other leaders. I will punish all the people wearing clothes from other countries. ⁶At that time, I will punish all the people that jump over the threshold.* I will punish the people that fill their master's house* with lies and violence."

⁷The Lord also said, "At that time, people will be calling for help at Fish Gate in Jerusalem. People will be crying in the other parts of town. And the people will hear loud noises of things being destroyed in the hills around the city. ⁸You people living in the lower part of town will cry. Why? Because all the businessmen and rich merchants will be destroyed.

⁹"At that time, I will take a lamp and search through Jerusalem. I will find all the people: that are satisfied to live their own way. Those people say, 'The Lord does nothing. He does not help and he does not hurt!' I will find those people and I will punish them! ¹⁰Then other people will take their wealth and destroy their

prepared ... people Literally, "prepared his sacrifice. He has made holy his called ones." This is like the time kings prepared for war. They brought a special sacrifice to God, and they prepared their soldiers for war.

people ... threshold This means the people that worshiped the foreign god Dagon, or people that copied their ways of worshiping. See 1 Samuel 5:5.

master's house This means the temple where the people worshiped God or their false gods.

houses. At that time, people that built houses will not live in them and people that planted fields of grapes will not drink the wine from those grapes—other people will get those things.”

“The Lord’s special day for judging is coming soon! That day is near and coming fast. People will hear very sad sounds on the Lord’s special day of judgment. Even strong soldiers will cry! ¹³God will show his anger at that time. It will be a time of terrible troubles. It will be a time of destruction. It will be a time of darkness—a black, cloudy, and stormy day. ¹⁴It will be like a time of war when, people hear horns and trumpets in the defense towers and protected cities.

“The Lord said, “I will make life very hard on the people. People will walk around like blind men that don’t know where they are going. Why? Because those people sinned against the Lord. Many people will be killed. Their blood will be spilled on the ground. Their dead bodies will lie like dung on the ground. ¹¹Their gold and silver won’t help them! At that time, the Lord will become very upset and angry. The Lord will destroy the whole world! ¹²The Lord will completely destroy everyone on earth!”

God Asks People to Change Their Lives

2 Shameless people, change your lives ¹before you become like a dry and dying flower. In the heat of day, a flower will wilt and die. You will be like that when the Lord shows his terrible anger. So change your lives before the Lord shows his anger against you! ²All you humble people, come to the Lord! Obey his laws. Learn to do good things. Learn to be humble. Maybe then you will be safe when the Lord shows his anger.

The Lord Will Punish Israel’s Neighbors

“No one will be left in Gaza. Ashkelon will be destroyed. By noon, the people will be

forced to leave Ashdod. Ekron will be empty! ³You Philistine people, you people living by the sea, this message from the Lord is about you. Land of Canaan, land of Palestine,* you will be destroyed—no one will live there! ⁴Your land by the sea will become empty* fields for shepherds and their sheep. ⁵Then that land will belong to the survivors* from Judah. The Lord will remember those people from Judah. Those people are prisoners in a foreign country. But the Lord will bring them back. Then the people from Judah will let their sheep eat the grass in those fields. In the evenings, they will lie down in the empty houses of Ashkelon.

⁶The Lord says, “I know what the people of Moab and Ammon did! Those people embarrassed my people. Those people took their land to make their own countries bigger. ⁷So, as surely as I live, Moab and the people of Ammon will be destroyed like Sodom and Gomorrah.* I am the Lord All-Powerful, the God of Israel. And I promise those countries will be completely destroyed forever. Their land will be overgrown with weeds. Their land will be like the land covered with salt by the Dead Sea. The survivors of my people will take that land and all the things left in it.”

⁸Those things will happen to the people of Moab and Ammon because they embarrassed the Lord All-Powerful’s people. ⁹Those people will be afraid of the Lord! Why? Because the Lord will destroy their gods. Then all the people in all the faraway lands will worship the Lord. ¹⁰People of Ethiopia, this means even you! The Lord’s sword will kill your people. ¹¹And the Lord will turn north and punish Assyria. He will destroy Nineveh—that city will be like an empty, dry desert. ¹²Then only sheep and wild animals will live in that ruined city.

Gaza ... empty In Hebrew, Zephaniah is making word plays on the names of these Philistine towns.

Palestine Or, “the Philistines.”

empty In Hebrew, this word is like the word meaning “Philistine people.”

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

Sodom and Gomorrah Two cities that God destroyed because the people were so evil.

world Or, “land,” “country.”

earth Or, “the land,” or “the country.”

Owls and crows will sit on the columns that are left standing. Their calls will be heard coming through the windows. Crows will sit on the doorsteps. Black birds* will sit in those empty houses. ¹⁵Nineveh is so proud now. It is such a happy city. The people think they are safe. They think Nineveh is the greatest place in the world. But that city will be destroyed! It will be an empty place where only wild animals go to rest. People that pass that place will whistle and shake their heads when they see how badly the city was destroyed.

The Future of Jerusalem

3 Jerusalem, your people fought against God! Your people hurt other people, and you have been stained with sin! Your people didn't listen to me! They didn't accept my teachings. Jerusalem didn't trust the Lord. Jerusalem didn't go to her God. ³Jerusalem's leaders are like roaring lions. Her judges* are like hungry wolves that come in the evening to attack the sheep—and in the morning nothing is left. Her prophets* are always making their secret plans to get more and more. Her priests have treated holy things like they are not holy. They have done bad things to God's teachings. ⁷But God is still in that city. And he continues to be good. God does not do anything wrong. He continues to help his people. Morning after morning he helps his people make good decisions. But those bad people are not ashamed of the bad things they do.

God says, "I have destroyed whole nations. I destroyed their defense towers. I destroyed their streets and now no one goes there any more. Their cities are empty—no one lives there any more. ⁷I tell you these things so you will learn a lesson. I want you to fear and respect me. If you do this, then your home won't be destroyed. If you do this, then I won't have to punish you the way I planned." But those bad people only wanted to do more of the

same bad things they had already done!

⁹The Lord said, "So just wait! Wait for me to stand and judge you. I have the right to bring people from many nations and use them to punish you. I will use those people to show my anger against you. I will use them to show how upset I am—and the whole country will be destroyed! ¹¹Then I will help the people from other nations to speak clearly. And they will praise the name of the Lord. They will all worship me together. ¹²People will come all the way from the other side of the river in Ethiopia. My scattered people will come to me. My worshipers will come and bring their gifts to me.

¹³Then, Jerusalem, you will no longer be ashamed of the bad things your people do against me. Why? Because I will remove all of those bad people from Jerusalem. I will take away all of those proud people. There won't be any of those proud people on my holy mountain. ¹⁴I will let only meek and humble people stay in my city (*Jerusalem*). And they will trust the Lord's name. ¹⁵The survivors* of Israel won't do bad things. They won't tell lies. They won't try to trick people with lies. They will be like sheep that eat and lie down in peace—and no one will bother them.

A Happy Song

- ¹ Jerusalem, sing and be happy!
Israel, shout for joy!
Jerusalem, be happy and have fun!
- ² Why? Because the Lord stopped your punishment!
He destroyed your enemies' strong towers!
King of Israel, the Lord is with you.
You don't need to worry about anything bad happening.
- ³ At that time, Jerusalem will be told,
"Be strong, don't be afraid!

Black birds Or, "cedar beams."

judge(s) A man that decides matters in court.

prophet(s) A person called by God to be a special servant. God used dreams and visions to show them things to teach the people.

holy mountain Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

survivor(s) People that escaped some disaster. Here this means the Jewish people that survived the destruction of Judah and Israel by its enemy armies.

- 17 The Lord your God is with you.
 He is like a powerful soldier.
 He will save you.
 He will show how much he loves you.
 He will show you how happy he is with
 you.
 He will laugh and be happy about you,
 "like people at a party."

The Lord said,
 "I will take away your shame.
 I will make those people stop hurting
 you.*

- 19 At that time, I will punish the people that
 hurt you.
 I will save my hurt people.
 I will bring back the people that were
 forced to run away.
 And I will make them famous.
 People everywhere will praise them.
- 20 At that time, I will bring you back.
 I will bring you back together.
 I will make you famous.
 People everywhere will praise you.
 That will happen when I bring back the
 prisoners before your very own eyes!"
 The Lord said those things.

Haggai

The People of Judah Think It Is Not Time to Build the Temple

1 The word of the Lord God came through the prophet Haggai to Zerubbabel (the son of Shealtiel), governor of Judah, and to Joshua (the son of Jehozadak), the high priest. This word came, in the second year of Darius the king, on the first day of the sixth month. This word, said, ¹"The Lord All-Powerful says this: 'These people say the time has not come, the time for the temple* of the Lord God to be built.'"

²Then the word of the Lord God came through Haggai the prophet, saying, ³"Is it time for you yourselves to live in your paneled houses while this temple* is still, empty?"

⁴This is why the Lord All-Powerful says:

"Think about your ways!

- ⁶ You have planted much,
but you harvest little.
You eat, but you are, not full.
You drink, but your thirst is not
satisfied.*
You put on clothes,
but you are not warm enough.*
The person that earns money,,
earns money, to put into a, purse full
of holes!"

⁷The Lord God All-Powerful says this:
"Think about your ways! ⁸Go up to the
mountains. Bring wood and build the temple.*

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
your ... satisfied Literally, "not to drunkenness."
you ... enough Literally, "no person is warm enough."

Then I will be pleased with the temple, and I will be honored." The Lord God says this.

⁹The Lord All-Powerful says: "You look for much, but you find, little! When you bring it home, I blow it away. Why? Because my house is empty. But each of you runs to his own house.

- ¹⁰ This is why the sky holds back its dew,
and why the ground holds back its
crops:

It is because of you!

- ¹¹ I am calling for a dry time for the
land,
on the mountains,
on the grain,
on the new wine,
on the oil,
on the crops that grow on the grounds,
on men,
on cattle,
and on all the work of your hands."

Work Begins on the New Temple

¹²Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai the prophet. The Lord their God had sent his words, to Haggai. All the people that were left, also obeyed. The people showed honor for the Lord God.

¹³The Lord God sent a message to Haggai the Lord God's messenger. This message was, for the people. The message, said, "The Lord God announces, 'I am with you.'"

¹⁴Then the Lord God made Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, excited. And the Lord God also excited, Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest. And the Lord God also excited, all the people that were left. Then they came and worked on the temple* of the Lord All-Powerful, their God. ¹⁵They did this, on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king.

The Lord Encourages the People

2 The word of the Lord God came to Haggai on the 21st day of the seventh month. The word, said, ¹"Now speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the people that are left. Say:

²"Who is left among you that saw this temple* in its past glory? How do you see it now? Does the temple now, seem nothing to your eyes when you compare it with the temple many years ago? ³'But now, Zerubbabel, be brave!' The Lord God says this. 'Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, be brave too! And all you people of the land, be brave.' The Lord God says this. 'Work, because I am with you.' The Lord All-Powerful says this.

⁴"As for the promise which I made to you when you came out of Egypt, my Spirit is among you. Don't be afraid! ⁵'Why? Because the Lord All-Powerful says this! 'Once more, in a short time, I will shake the heavens and the earth, and also the sea and the dry land. ⁶I will shake all the nations. And they will come with the wealth of all nations. Then I will fill this temple* with glory.' The Lord All-Powerful says this. ⁷"The silver is mine, and the gold is mine.' The Lord All-Powerful says this. ⁸"The later glory of this temple will be greater than that of the first temple.' The Lord All-Powerful says this. ⁹'And in this place I will give peace.' The Lord All-Powerful says this."

The People and the Things They Do Are Unclean

¹⁰The word of the Lord God came to Haggai the prophet on the 24th day, of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius. The word, said, ¹¹"The Lord All-Powerful says this:

¹²"Now ask the priests what the law says. ¹³'Maybe a man will carry holy meat in the fold of his clothes. Maybe the fold of his clothes that carries the holy meat, will touch bread, or cooked food, wine, oil or some other food. Will the thing the fold touches, become holy?'"

The priests answered, "No."

¹⁴Then Haggai said, "Maybe a person will touch, a dead body. He will then become unclean. But if he touches anything, will that thing become unclean?"

The priests answered, "It will become unclean."

¹⁵Then Haggai answered, "The Lord God says this: 'The same with this people, and the same with this nation before me! The same with everything their hands did. Anything they offer in their hands, is unclean. ¹⁶But now, please think: What happened before today, before one stone is put on another in the Lord God's temple? ¹⁷A person comes to a pile of 20 measures of grain but, there are only ten. And when a person comes to the wine vat to take out 50 measures, there are only 20. ¹⁸I punished you and the things your hands did. I punished you, with diseases that kill the plants, with mildew,* and with hail. But you still will not come to me.' The Lord God says this.

¹⁹"Think from this day on, from the 24th day of the ninth month, from the day when the foundation for the temple of the Lord God is prepared. Think: ²⁰'Is the seed still in the barn? Are the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree, not yet giving fruit? But from this day on, I will bless you!'"

²¹Then the word of the Lord God came a second time to Haggai on the 24th day, of the month. The word, said, ²²"Tell Zerubbabel: 'I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. ²³And I will throw down the thrones of

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

mildew A disease of plants. A bad growth ruins them.

kingdoms and destroy the power of the kingdoms of the nations. And I will throw down the chariots* and their riders. Then the horses and their riders will go down. Every person will fall, by the word of another person.' "The Lord God All-Powerful says

this. 'On that day I will take you, Zerubbabe son of Shealtiel, my servant.' The Lord God says this. 'And I will make you like a signet ring.* Why? Because I have chosen you!' The Lord God All-Powerful says this."

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

signet ring This ring had the owner's name or design on it.

When this ring was pressed on clay or wax, then the thing became a sign that it belonged to the person with the ring.

Zechariah

The Lord Wants His People to Come Back

1 Zechariah son of Berekiah received a message from the Lord. This was in the eighth month of the second year that Darius was king in Persia. (Zechariah was the son of Berekiah. Berekiah was the son of Iddo the prophet.) This is that message:

²The Lord became very angry at your ancestors.* ³So you must tell the people these things. The Lord says, "Come back to me and I will come back to you." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

⁴The Lord said, "Don't be like your ancestors. In the past, the prophets spoke to them. They said, 'The Lord All-Powerful wants you to change your bad way of living. Stop doing bad things!' But your ancestors did not listen to me." The Lord said those things.

⁵God said, "Your ancestors are gone. And those prophets did not live forever. 'The prophets were my servants. I used them to tell your ancestors about my laws and teachings. And your ancestors finally learned their lesson. They said, 'The Lord All-Powerful did the things he said he would do. He punished us for the way we lived and for all the bad things we did.' So they came back to God."

The Vision of The Horses

¹On the 24th day of the eleventh month (that is Shebat) of Darius' second year as king of Persia, Zechariah received another message

from the Lord. (This was Zechariah son of Berekiah, son of Iddo, the prophet.) This is the message:

²At night, I saw a man riding a red horse. He was standing among some myrtle bushes in the valley. Behind him, there were red, brown, and white horses. ³I said, "Sir, what are these horses for?"

Then the angel speaking to me said, "I will show you what these horses are for."

⁴Then the man standing among the myrtle bushes said, "The Lord sent these horses to go here and there on earth."

⁵Then the horses spoke to the Lord's angel standing among the myrtle bushes. They said, "We have walked here and there on the earth, and everything is calm and quiet."

⁶Then the Lord's angel said, "Lord, how long before you comfort Jerusalem and the cities of Judah? You have shown your anger at these cities for 70 years now."

⁷Then the Lord answered the angel that was talking with me. The Lord spoke good, comforting words. ⁸Then the angel told me to tell the people these things:

The Lord All-Powerful says:

"I have a strong love for Jerusalem and Zion.*

¹³ And I am very angry at the nations that feel so safe.

I was a little angry,

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.

and I used those nations to punish my people.

But those nations caused a lot of damage."

- ⁴ So the Lord says,
"I will come back to Jerusalem and comfort her."

The Lord All-Powerful says,
"Jerusalem will be built again.
And my house will be built there."

¹"The angel said, "Also, tell the people these things:

- "The Lord All-Powerful says,
'My towns will again be rich.
I will comfort Zion.
I will choose Jerusalem to be my special city.'"

The Vision of the Horns

¹"Then I looked up and I saw four horns.
²"Then I asked the angel that was talking with me, "What do these horns mean?"

He said, "These are the horns that forced the people of Israel, Judah, and Jerusalem to go to foreign countries."

³"Then the Lord showed me four workers. ⁴I asked him, "What are these four workers coming to do?"

He said, "These men have come to destroy the horns. Those horns forced the people of Judah to go to foreign countries. Those horns didn't show mercy to anyone. These horns represent the nations that attacked the people of Judah and forced them to go to foreign countries."

The Vision About Measuring Jerusalem

2 Then I looked up, and I saw a man holding a rope for measuring things. ²I asked him, "Where are you going?"

He said to me, "I am going to measure Jerusalem, to see how wide and how long it is."

³Then the angel that was speaking to me left. And another angel went out to talk to him. ⁴He said to him, "Run and tell that young man that Jerusalem will be too big to measure. Tell

him these things:

"Jerusalem will be a city without walls.
Why? Because there will be too many people and animals living there.

- ⁵ The Lord says,
'I will be a wall of fire around her, protecting her.
And to bring glory to that city, I will live there.'"

God Calls His People Home

The Lord says,
⁶ "Hurry! Run from the land in the North!
Yes, it is true that I scattered your people everywhere.

- ⁷ You people from Zion are prisoners in Babylon.
But now, escape! Run away from that city!"

The Lord All-Powerful said these things about me:

"Those nations took things from you in war.

- ⁸ Those nations received their honor.
But after that the Lord will send me against them.

Why? Because if they hurt you,
it would be like hurting the pupil of God's eye.

Those nations received their honor.

- ⁹ And I will hurt those people,
and their slaves will take their wealth.
Then you will know that the Lord sent me.

- ¹⁰ The Lord says,
"Zion, be happy!
Why? Because I am coming.
And I will live in your city.

- ¹¹ At that time, people from many nations will come to me.

And they will become my people.
I will live in your city,
and you will know that the Lord All-Powerful sent me to you."

- ¹² The Lord will again choose Jerusalem to be his special city.

And Judah will be his share of the holy land.

- ¹³ Everyone, be quiet!
The Lord is coming out of his holy house.

The Vision About the High Priest

3 Then the angel showed me Joshua the High Priest. Joshua was standing in front of the Lord's angel. And Satan was standing by Joshua's right side. Satan was there to accuse Joshua of doing bad things. ²Then the Lord's angel* said, "May the Lord criticize you, Satan. May the Lord judge you guilty! The Lord has chosen Jerusalem to be his special city. He saved that city—it was like a burning stick pulled from the fire."

³Joshua was standing in front of the angel. And Joshua was wearing a dirty robe. ⁴Then the angel said to the other angels standing near him, "Take those dirty clothes off of Joshua." Then the angel spoke to Joshua. He said, "Now, I have taken away your guilt, and I am giving you a new change of clothes."

⁵Then I said, "Put a clean turban* on his head." So they put the clean turban on him. They also put clean clothes on him while the Lord's angel stood there.

⁶Then the Lord's angel said these things to Joshua:

- ⁷ The Lord All-Powerful said these things.
"Live the way I tell you,
and do all the things I say.
And you will be in charge of my temple.
You will care for its courtyard.
You will be free to go anywhere in my temple,
just like these angels standing here."
⁸ So Joshua, you and the people with you must listen to me.
You are the high priest.
And the people with you can truly do great miracles.

And I really will bring my special servant.

He is called, THE BRANCH.

- ⁹ Look, I put a special stone in front of Joshua.

There are seven sides* on that stone.
And I will carve a special message on that stone.

This will show that in one day,
I will take away all the sins in this country."¹⁰

- ¹⁰ The Lord All-Powerful says,
"At that time, people will sit and talk with their friends and neighbors.
Each person will be at peace,
sitting under his own fig tree and grape vine."

The Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 Then the angel that was talking to me came to me and woke me up. I was like a person waking up from sleep. ²Then the angel asked me, "What do you see?"

I said, "I see a solid gold lampstand. There are seven lamps* on the lampstand. And there is a bowl on top of the lampstand. There are seven tubes coming from the bowl. One tube goes to each lamp. The tubes bring the oil in the bowl to each of the lamps." ³And there are two olive trees by the bowl, one on the right side and one on the left side." ⁴And then I asked the angel that was speaking with me, "Sir, what do these things mean?"

⁵The angel speaking with me said, "Don't you know what these things are?"

"No sir," I said.

⁶Then he told me, "This is the message from the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Your help will not come from your strength and power. No, your help will come from my Spirit.' The Lord All-Powerful said those things! ⁷That tall mountain will be like a flat place for Zerubbabel. He will build the temple, and when the last stone is put in place, the people will shout, 'Beautiful! Beautiful!'"

sides Literally, "eyes."

in this country Or, "on this earth."

lamps These lamps made light by burning olive oil.

Lord's angel Literally, "The Lord."

turban(s) A head covering made by wrapping a long piece of cloth around the head or around a cap worn on the head.

¹The Lord's message to me also said, "'Zerubbabel will build the foundations for my temple. And Zerubbabel will finish building the temple. Then you will know that the Lord All-Powerful sent me to you people.' "People will not be ashamed of the small beginnings, and they will really be happy when they see Zerubbabel with the plumbline* measuring and checking the finished building. Now, the seven sides of the stone you saw represent the eyes of the Lord looking in every direction. They see everything on earth."

¹¹Then I (*Zechariah*) said to him, "I saw one olive tree on the right side of the lampstand and one on the left side. What do those two olive trees mean?" ¹²I also said to him, "I saw two olive branches by the gold tubes with gold colored oil flowing from them. What do these things mean?"

¹³Then the angel said to me, "Don't you know what these things mean?"

I said, "No, sir."

¹⁴So he said, "Those represent the two men that were chosen* to serve the Lord of the whole world."

The Flying Scroll

5 I looked up again, and I saw a flying scroll.* ¹The angel asked me, "What do you see?"

I said, "I see a flying scroll. The scroll is 30 feet* long and 15 feet* wide."

²Then the angel told me, "There is a curse written on that scroll. On one side of the scroll, there is a curse about people that steal. And on the other side of the scroll is a curse about people that lie when they make promises. 'The

plumbline A string with a weight on one end. Workers used plumbines to make sure the walls they were building were straight. The workers often put paint on the string and popped the string. This left a straight line of paint on the wall. Then the workers chipped away the crooked part of the wall.

men that were chosen Literally, "sons of oil." Often a special oil was poured over new kings, priests, and prophets. This showed that these people were chosen by God.

Scroll(s) A long roll of leather or papyrus (*paper*) used for writing books, letters, and legal documents.

30 feet Literally, "20 cubits."

15 feet Literally, "10 cubits."

Lord All-Powerful says: I will send that scroll to the houses of thieves and to houses of people that lie when they use my name to make promises. That scroll will stay there, and it will destroy those houses. Even the stones and wooden posts will be destroyed."

The Woman and the Basket

³Then the angel that was talking to me went outside. He told me, "Look! What do you see happening?"

⁴I said, "I don't know—what is it?"

He said, "That is a measuring basket." He also said, "That basket is for measuring the sins of the people in this country."

⁵There was a woman sitting in the basket. And there was a 75 pound lead weight by the scales.* ⁶The angel said, "The woman represents evil." Then the angel pushed the woman down into the basket and put the lead weight in her mouth. ⁷This showed the sins were very heavy (*bad*). ⁸Then I looked up and saw two women with wings like a stork. They flew out, and with the wind in their wings, they picked up the basket. They flew through the air carrying the basket. ⁹Then I asked the angel that was speaking with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"

¹⁰The angel told me, "They are going to build a temple for it in Shinar.* After they build that temple, they will put the basket there."

The Four Chariots

6 Then I turned around. I looked up, and I saw four chariots* going between four bronze mountains. ¹Red horses were pulling the first chariot. Black horses were pulling the second chariot. ²White horses were pulling the third chariot. And horses with red spots were

And ... scales Or, "The basket weighed about 75 pounds."

Or, "A 75 pound lead weight was lifted from the basket." Or,

"A lead [lid], weighing 1 kitar was lifted off the basket." A kitar weighs about 75 pounds.

Shinar The flat land that the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:2) and the city of Babylon were built on.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war.

pulling the fourth chariot. "Then I asked the angel that was talking with me, "Sir, what do these things mean?"

"The angel said, "These are the four winds.* They have just come from before the Master of the whole world. "The black horses will go north. The red horses will go east. The white horses will go west. And the horses with red spots will go south."

"The red spotted horses were anxious to go looking at their part of the earth, so the angel told them, "Go walk through the earth." So they went walking through their part of the earth.

"Then the Lord, yelled at me. He said, "Look, those horses that were going north finished their job in Babylon. They have calmed my spirit—I am not angry now!"

Joshua the Priest Gets a Crown

"Then I received another message from the Lord. He said, "Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah have come from the captives* in Babylon. Get silver and gold from those men and then go to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. "Use that silver and gold to make a crown. Put that crown on Joshua's head. (Joshua was the high priest. Joshua was the son of Jehozadak.) Then tell Joshua these things:

- ¹² The Lord All-Powerful says these things:

"There is a man called THE BRANCH.

He will grow strong.

He will build the Lord's temple.

- ¹³ He will build the Lord's temple, and he will receive the honor.

He will sit on his throne and be the ruler.

A priest will stand by his throne.

And these two men will work together in peace.

"They will put the crown in the temple to help people remember. That crown will bring

honor to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Zephaniah's son, Josiah. "People living far away will come and build the temple. Then you will know for sure that the Lord sent me to you people. All these things will happen if you do what the Lord says."

The Lord Wants Kindness and Mercy

7 Zechariah received a message from the Lord in the fourth year that Darius was the king of Persia. This was on the fourth day of the ninth month. (That is Kislev.) "The people of Bethel sent Sharezer, Regem-Melech, and his men to ask the Lord a question. "They went to the prophets and to the priests at the temple of the Lord All-Powerful. Those men asked them this question: "For many years we have shown our sadness for the destruction of the temple. In the fifth month of each year we have had a special time of crying and fasting.* Should we continue to do this?"

"I received this message from the Lord All-Powerful: "Tell the priests and the other people in this country these things: You fasted and showed your sadness in the fifth month and in the seventh month. But was that fasting really for me? No! And when you ate and drank, was that for me? No! It was for your own good. "God used the earlier prophets to say these same things long ago. He said these things while Jerusalem was still a prosperous city filled with people. God said these things while there were still people living in the towns around Jerusalem, and in the Negev, and in the western foothills."

"This is the Lord's message to Zechariah:

- ⁹ The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

"You must do what is right and fair.

Each of you must be kind and merciful to each other.

- ¹⁰ Don't hurt widows and orphans,* strangers, or poor people.

four winds Or, "four spirits." Four winds often means "winds that blow from every direction: north, south, east, and west."

captives People taken away like prisoners. Here this means the Jewish people that were taken to Babylon.

fast(ing) To live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

Don't even think of doing bad things to each other!"

- ¹¹ But those people refused to listen.
They refused to do what he wanted.
They closed their ears so they could not hear what God said.
- ¹² They were very stubborn.
They would not obey the law.
By his Spirit, the Lord All-Powerful sent messages to his people through the prophets.
But the people would not listen.
So the Lord All-Powerful became very angry.
- ¹³ So the Lord All-Powerful said,
"I called to them, and they did not answer.
So now, if they call to me, I will not answer.
I will bring the other nations against them like a storm.
They didn't know them,
but the country will be destroyed after they pass through.
This pleasant country will be destroyed."

The Lord Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 This is a message from the Lord All-Powerful. ²The Lord All-Powerful says, "I truly love Zion.* I love her so much that I became angry when she was not faithful to me." ³The Lord says, "I have come back to Zion. I am living in Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be called FAITHFUL CITY. My mountain will be called HOLY MOUNTAIN."

⁴The Lord All-Powerful says, "Old men and women will again be seen in the public places in Jerusalem. People will live so long that they will need their walking sticks. ⁵And the city will be filled with children playing in the streets. ⁶The survivors* will think it is

wonderful. And I will think it is wonderful too!"

⁷The Lord All-Powerful says, "Look, I am rescuing my people from countries in the east and west. ⁸I will bring them back here, and they will live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their good and faithful God."

⁹The Lord All-Powerful says, "Be strong! You people are hearing the same message today that the prophets gave when the Lord All-Powerful first laid the foundations to build his temple again. ¹⁰Before that time, men didn't have the money to hire workers or to rent animals. And it was not safe for people to come and go. There was no relief from all the troubles. I had turned every man against his neighbor. ¹¹But it is not like that now. It will not be like that for the survivors.*" The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

¹²"These people will plant in peace. Their grapevines will produce grapes. The land will give good crops, and the skies will give rain. I will give all these things to these, my people. ¹³People began using the names Israel and Judah in their curses. But I will save Israel and Judah, and their names will become a blessing. So don't be afraid. Be strong!"

¹⁴The Lord All-Powerful says, "Your ancestors* made me angry. So I decided to destroy them. I decided not to change my mind." The Lord All-Powerful said these things. ¹⁵"But now I have changed my mind. And in the same way, I have decided to be good to Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. So don't be afraid! ¹⁶But you must do these things: Tell the truth to your neighbors. When you make decisions in your cities, do the things that are true and right and that bring peace. ¹⁷Don't make secret plans to hurt your neighbors! Don't make false promises! You must not enjoy doing those things. Why? Because I hate those things!" The Lord said these things.

¹⁸I received this message from the Lord All-Powerful. ¹⁹The Lord All-Powerful says,

Zion The southeast part of the mountain Jerusalem is built on. Sometimes it means the people of God living in Jerusalem.
survivors Jewish people that escaped the destruction of Judah and Israel.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

"You have special days of sadness and fasting in the fourth month, the fifth month, the seventh month, and the tenth month. Those days of sadness must be changed into days of happiness. Those will be good and happy holidays. And you must love truth and peace!"

- ¹⁰ The Lord All-Powerful says,
 "In the future, people from many cities
 will come to Jerusalem.
¹¹ People from one city will say to people
 they meet from some other city,
 'We are going to worship the Lord
 All-Powerful.
 Come with us!'"

¹² Many people and many powerful nations
 will come to Jerusalem looking for the Lord
 All-Powerful. They will come there to worship
 him. ¹³ The Lord All-Powerful says, "At that
 time, people that speak many different
 languages will come to a Jewish person and
 say, 'We heard that God is with you. Can we
 come with you to worship him?'"

Judgment Against Other Nations

9 A sad message.

This is the Lord's message about
 Hadrach's country and his capital city,
 Damascus. "The family groups of Israel are not
 the only people that know about God. Everyone
 can look to him for help." ¹ Hamath borders
 Hadrach's country. And so does Tyre and
 Sidon. (Those people are very wise.) ² Tyre is
 built like a fort. The people there have collected
 so much silver that it is as plentiful as dust.
 And gold is as common as clay. "But the Lord
 our Master will take it all. He will destroy her
 powerful navy and that city will be destroyed
 by fire!"

³ "The people in Ashkelon will see those
 things and they will be afraid. The people of
 Gaza will shake with fear. And the people of
 Ekron will lose all hope when they see those
 things happen. There will be no king left in
 Gaza. No person will live in Ashkelon any

more. "The people in Ashdod will not even
 know who their real fathers are. I will
 completely destroy the proud Philistine people.
⁷ They will no longer eat meat with the blood
 still in it or any other forbidden food. Any
 Philistine left living will become a part of my
 people—they will be just one more family group
 in Judah. The people of Ekron will become a
 part of my people, just like the Jebusite people
 did. I will protect my country. ⁸ I will not let
 enemy armies pass through it. I will not let
 them hurt my people any more. With my own
 eyes I saw how much my people suffered in
 the past."

The Future King

- ⁹ Zion, rejoice!
 People of Jerusalem, shout with joy!
 Look, your king is coming to you!
 He is the good king that won the
 victory.
 But he is humble.
 He is riding on a donkey,
 on the colt of a donkey.
¹⁰ The king says,
 "I destroyed the chariots in Ephraim and
 the horse soldiers in Jerusalem.
 I destroyed the bows used in war."
 The other nations heard the news about
 peace.
 That king will rule from sea to sea.
 He will rule from the river to all the
 faraway places on earth.

The Lord Will Save His People

- ¹¹ Jerusalem, we sealed our Agreement with
 blood.
 So I have set your prisoners free.
 Your people are no longer in that
 empty prison.
¹² Prisoners, go home!
 Now you have something to hope for.
 I am telling you now, I am coming
 back to you!
¹³ Judah, I will use you like a bow.
 Ephraim (*Israel*), I will use you like the

arrows.

I will use you like a strong sword to fight Greece.

- ¹⁴ The Lord will appear to them, and he will shoot his arrows like lightning.

The Lord my Master will blow the trumpet, and the army will rush forward like a desert dust storm.

- ¹⁵ The Lord All-Powerful will protect them. The soldiers will use rocks and slings* to defeat the enemy.

They will spill the blood of their enemies. It will flow like wine.

It will be like the blood thrown on the corners of the altar!

- ¹⁶ At that time, the Lord their God will save his people like a shepherd saves his sheep.

They will be very precious to him.

They will be like sparkling jewels on his land.

- ¹⁷ Everything will be good and beautiful! There will be a wonderful crop, but it will not be just food and wine.

No, it will be all the young men and women!

The Lord's Promises

10 Pray to the Lord for rain in the springtime. The Lord will send the lightning and the rain will fall. And God will make the plants grow in each person's field.

¹People use their little statues and magic to learn the things that will happen in the future—but that is all useless. Those people see visions and tell about their dreams, but it is nothing but worthless lies. So the people are like sheep wandering here and there crying for help—but there is no shepherd to lead them.

³The Lord says, "I am very angry at the shepherds (*leaders*). I made those leaders responsible for what happens to my sheep (*people*)."⁴ (The people of Judah are God's flock. And the Lord All-Powerful really does

take care of his flock. He cares for them like a soldier cares for his beautiful war horse.)

⁴"The cornerstone, the tent peg, the war bow, and the advancing soldiers will all come from Judah, together. ⁵They will defeat their enemy—it will be like soldiers marching through mud in the streets. They will fight, and since the Lord is with them, they will defeat even the enemy soldiers riding horses. ⁶I will make Judah's family strong. I will help Joseph's family win the war. I will bring them back safe and sound. I will comfort them. It will be like I never left them. I am the Lord their God, and I will help them. ⁷The people of Ephraim* will be as happy as soldiers that have too much to drink. Their children will be rejoicing and they, too, will be happy. They will all have a happy time together with the Lord.

⁸"I will whistle for them and call them all together. I really will save them. There will be many, many people. ⁹Yes, I have been scattering my people throughout the nations. But in those faraway places they will remember me. They and their children will survive. And they will come back. ¹⁰I will bring them back from Egypt and Assyria. I will bring them to the area of Gilead. And since there will not be enough room, I will also let them live in nearby Lebanon."¹¹ (It will be like it was before, when God brought them out of Egypt. He hit the sea waves, the sea split, and the people walked across that sea of troubles. The Lord will make the river streams become dry. He will destroy Assyria's pride and Egypt's power.) ¹²The Lord will make his people strong. And they will live for him and his name. The Lord said these things.

God Will Punish the Nations Around Judah

11 Lebanon, open your gates so the fire will come and burn your cedar trees.*

Ephraim This was another name for the northern kingdom of Israel.

cedar trees In this poem, the trees, bushes, and animals are symbols for the leaders of the countries around Judah.

sling(s) A strip of leather for throwing rocks.

- ² The cypress trees will cry because the cedar trees have fallen.

Those powerful trees were taken away.
Oak trees in Bashan cry for the forest that was cut down.

- ³ Listen to the crying shepherds.
Their powerful leaders were taken away.

Listen to the roaring of the young lions.
Their thick bushes near the Jordan River have all been taken away.

"The Lord my God says, "Care for the sheep that have been raised to be killed. 'Their leaders are like owners and businessmen. Owners kill their sheep and are not punished. Businessmen sell the sheep and say, 'Praise the Lord, I am rich!' The shepherds don't feel sorry for their sheep. 'And I don't feel sorry for the people living in this country.' The Lord said these things, "Look, I will let everyone be abused by his neighbor and king. I will let them destroy their country—I will not stop them!"

"So I took care of the sheep that had been raised to be killed—those poor sheep. I found two sticks. I called one stick Favor, and I called the other stick Union. Then I began caring for the sheep. "I fired the three shepherds all in one month. I became angry at the sheep, and they began to hate me. "Then I said, "I quit! I will not take care of you! I will let those that want to die, die. I will let those that want to be destroyed, be destroyed. And those that are left will destroy each other." "Then I took the stick named Favor, and I broke it. I did this to show that God's Agreement* with his people was broken. "So that day, the Agreement was finished. And those poor sheep watching me knew that this message was from the Lord.

"Then I said, "If you want to pay me, then pay me. If not, then don't!" So they paid me 30 pieces of silver. "Then the Lord told me, "So that's how much they think I'm worth. Throw that huge amount of money* into the temple

treasury." So I took the 30 pieces of silver and threw them into the treasury at the Lord's temple. "Then I cut the stick named Union into two pieces. I did this to show that the union between Judah and Israel had been broken.

"Then the Lord said to me, "Now, find a stick that can't really be used to lead sheep. "This will show that I will get a new shepherd for this country.

"But this young man will not be able to take care of the sheep that are being destroyed. He will not be able to heal the hurt sheep. He will not be able to feed those that are left alive. And the healthy ones will be eaten completely—only their hoofs will be left."

- ⁷ Oh my worthless shepherd.
You abandoned my sheep.
Punish him! Hit his right arm and right eye with a sword.
His right arm will be useless.
His right eye will be blind.

Visions About the Nations Around Judah

12 The sad message from the Lord about Israel. The Lord made the sky and the earth. He put man's spirit in him. And the Lord said these things. "Look, I will make Jerusalem like a cup of poison to the nations around her. The nations will come and attack that city. And all of Judah will be caught in the trap. "But I will make Jerusalem like a heavy rock—anyone that tries to take it will hurt himself. Those people will really be cut and scratched. But all the nations on earth will come together to fight against Jerusalem. "But at that time, I will scare the horse, and the soldier riding it will panic. I will make all the enemy horses blind, but my eyes will be open—and I will be watching over Judah's family. "The family leaders of Judah will encourage the people. They will say, 'The Lord All-Powerful is your God. He makes us strong.' "At that time, I will make the family leaders of Judah like a fire burning in a forest. They will destroy their enemies like fire burning straw. They will destroy the enemy all around them. And the people in Jerusalem will again be able

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

huge ... money The Lord was making fun. This was only the amount of money a person paid for a slave.

to sit back and relax."

"The Lord will save the people of Judah first, so the people in Jerusalem will not be able to brag too much. David's family and the other people living in Jerusalem will not be able to brag that they are better than the other people in Judah. ⁸But the Lord will protect the people in Jerusalem. Even the clumsiest person will be a great soldier like David. And the men from David's family will be like gods—like the Lord's own angel leading the people.

"The Lord says, "At that time, I will destroy the nations that came to fight against Jerusalem. ¹⁰I will fill David's family and the people living in Jerusalem with a spirit of kindness and mercy. They will look to me, the One they pierced. And they will be very sad. They will be as sad as a person crying over the death of his only son; as sad as someone crying over the death of his firstborn* son. ¹¹There will be a time of great sadness and crying in Jerusalem. It will be like the time people cried over the death of Hadad Rimmon in Megiddo Valley. ¹²Each and every family will cry by itself. The men in David's family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Nathan's family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. ¹³The men in Levi's family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. The men in Simeon's family will cry by themselves. And their wives will cry by themselves. ¹⁴And the same thing will happen in all the other family groups. The men will cry by themselves, and the women will cry by themselves."

13 But at that time, a new spring of water will be opened for David's family and for the other people living in Jerusalem. That fountain will be to wash away their sins and to make the people pure.

No More False Prophets

"The Lord All-Powerful says, "At that time, I will remove all the idols from the earth.

People will not even remember their names. And I will remove the false prophets and unclean* spirits from the earth. ³If a person continues to prophesy, then he will be punished. Even his parents, his own mother and father, will say to him, 'You have spoken lies in the name of the Lord, so you must die!' His own mother and father will stab him for prophesying. ⁴At that time, the prophets will be ashamed of their visions and prophecies. They will not wear the rough cloth that shows a person is a prophet. They will not wear those clothes to trick people with the lies they call prophecies. ⁵Those people will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer. I have worked as a farmer since I was a little child.' ⁶But other people will say, 'But what are these wounds in your hands?' He will say, 'I was hurt in my friend's house.'"

"The Lord All-Powerful says, "Sword, hit the shepherd! Hit my friend! Hit the shepherd and the sheep will run away. And I will punish those little ones. ²Two-thirds of the people in the land will be hurt and die. But one-third of them will survive. ³Then I will test those survivors. I will give them many troubles. The troubles will be like the fire a man uses to prove silver is pure. I will test them the way a person tests gold. Then they will call to me for help, and I will answer them. I will say, 'You are my people.' And they will say, 'The Lord is my God.'"

The Day of Judgment

14 Look, the Lord has a special day for judging. And the wealth you have taken will be divided in your city. ¹I will bring all the nations together to fight against Jerusalem. They will capture the city and destroy the houses. The women will be raped, and half of the people will be taken away as prisoners. But the rest of the people will not be taken from the city. ²Then the Lord will go to war with those nations. It will be a real battle. ³At that time, he will stand on the Mount of Olives, the hill east of Jerusalem. The Mount of

firstborn The first child born into a family. The firstborn son was very important in ancient times.

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God.

Olives will split. Part of the mountain will move to the north, and part to the south. A deep valley will open up, from the east to the west. ³You will try to run away as that mountain valley comes closer and closer to you. You will run away like the time you ran from the earthquake during the time of Uzziah, king of Judah. But the Lord my God will come, and all his holy ones will be with him.

^{6,7}That will be a very special day. There will not be any light, cold, or frost. Only the Lord knows how, but there will not be any day or night. Then, when darkness usually comes, there will still be light. ⁸At that time, water will flow continually from Jerusalem.* ⁹That stream will split and part of it will flow east, and part of it will flow west to the Mediterranean Sea. And it will flow all year long, in the summer as well as in the winter. ¹⁰And the Lord will be the King of the whole world at that time. The Lord is One. His name is One. ¹¹At that time, the whole area around Jerusalem will become empty, like the Arabah desert. The country will be like a desert from Geba to Rimmon in the Negev. But the whole city of Jerusalem will be built again—from Benjamin Gate to the First Gate (that is, the Corner Gate) and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses. ¹²The ban will be lifted and people will make their houses there. Jerusalem will be safe.

¹³But the Lord will punish the nations that fought against Jerusalem. He will cause them to catch a terrible disease. Their skin will begin to rot while the people are still alive. Their eyes will rot in their sockets and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ^{14,15}That terrible disease will be in the enemy camp. And their horses, mules, camels, and donkeys will all catch that terrible disease.

At that time, those people will really be afraid of the Lord. They will try to encourage each other. They will join hands and lift hands together to show they are united.* The people of Judah will fight in Jerusalem. But they will

get the wealth from all the nations around the city. They will get much gold, silver, and clothing. ¹⁶Some of the people that came to fight Jerusalem will survive. And every year they will come to worship the king, the Lord All-Powerful. They will come to worship the Festival of Shelters.* ¹⁷And if people from any of the families on earth don't go to Jerusalem to worship the king, the Lord All-Powerful, then the Lord will not let them have any rain. ¹⁸If any of the families in Egypt don't come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters, then they will get that terrible disease that the Lord caused the enemy nations to get. ¹⁹That will be the punishment for Egypt, and for any other nation that does not come to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.

²⁰At that time, everything will belong to God. Even the harnesses on the horses will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD.* And all the pots used in the Lord's temple will be just as important as the bowls used at the altar. ²¹In fact, every dish in Jerusalem and Judah will have the label, HOLY TO THE LORD ALL-POWERFUL. And every person that worships the Lord will be able to cook and eat from those dishes. And at that time, there will not be any businessmen buying and selling things* in the temple of the Lord All-Powerful.

Festival of Shelters During this happy, fall holiday, the people traveled to Jerusalem, built temporary shelters, camped out in them for a week, and had a happy time together with the Lord.

HOLY ... LORD These words were written on everything that was used in the temple. This showed that these things belonged to the Lord, and they could be used only for special purposes. Dishes with labels could only be used by the priests in a holy place.

businessmen ... things Or, "Canaanites."

water ... Jerusalem Literally, "Living water will flow from Jerusalem." Jerusalem's main water supply, the Gihon spring, did not flow continuously.

They ... united Here the Hebrew is hard to understand.

Malachi

1 A message from God. This message is from the Lord. Malachi gave this message to Israel.

God Loves Israel

¹The Lord said, "I love you people."

But you said, "What shows you love us?"

The Lord said, "Esau was Jacob's brother. Right? But I chose* Jacob. ²And I did not accept* Esau. I destroyed Esau's hill-country.* Esau's country was destroyed, and now only wild dogs* live there."

³Maybe the people of Edom will say, "We were destroyed. But we will go back and build our cities again."

But the Lord All-Powerful says, "If they build those cities again, then I will destroy them again!" So people say Edom is an evil country. People say that the Lord hates that country forever.

⁴You people saw these things and you said, "The Lord is great, even outside of Israel!"

The People Don't Respect God

¹The Lord All-Powerful said, "Children honor their father. Servants honor their masters. I am your Father, so why don't you honor me? I am your Master, so why don't you respect me? You priests don't respect my name."

But you say, "What have we done that shows we don't respect your name?"

²(The Lord said,) "You bring unclean* bread to my altar!"

But you say, "What makes that bread unclean*?"

(The Lord said,) "You don't show respect for my table (altar). ³You bring blind animals as sacrifices.* And that is wrong! You bring sick and crippled animals for sacrifices. And that is wrong! Try giving those sick animals as a gift to your governor. Would he accept those sick animals as gifts? No! He would not accept those gifts!" The Lord All-Powerful said these things!

⁴"Priests, you should ask the Lord to be good to us. But he will not listen to you. And it is all your fault." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

⁵"Surely, some of you priests could close the temple doors and light the fires correctly. I am not pleased with you. I will not accept your gifts." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

⁶"People all around the world respect my name. All around the world people bring good gifts to me. They burn good incense* as a gift to me. Why? Because my name is important to all those people." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

chose Or, "loved."

did not accept Or, "hated."

Esau's hill-country This means the country Edom.

Edom was another name for Esau.

wild dogs Literally, "jackals."

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

sacrifice(s) A gift to God. Usually, it was a special animal that was killed and burned on an altar.

incense Special dried tree sap. Burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke, it was offered as a gift to God.

"But you people show that you don't respect my name. You say that the Lord's table (*altar*) is unclean.* "And you don't like the food from that table. You smell the food and refuse to eat it. You say it is bad. But that is not true. Then you bring sick, crippled, and hurt animals to me. You try to give sick animals to me as sacrifices. But I will not accept those sick animals from you. "Some people have good, male animals that they could give as sacrifices. But they don't give those good animals to me. Some people bring good animals to me. They promise to give those healthy animals to me. But they secretly exchange those good animals and they give me sick animals. Bad things will happen to those people! I am the Great King. You should respect me! People all around the world respect me!" The Lord All-Powerful said those things!

Rules for Priests

2 "Priests, this rule is for you! Listen to me! Pay attention to the things I say! Show honor to my name! ²If you don't respect my name, then bad things will happen to you. You will say blessings,* but they will become curses.* I will make bad things happen because you don't show respect for my name!" The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

³"Look, I will punish your descendants.* During the holidays, you priests offer sacrifices to me. You take the dung and inside parts from the dead animals, and throw those parts away. But I will smear that dung on your faces, and you will be thrown away with it! Then you will learn why I am giving you this command. I am telling you these things so my Agreement*

with Levi* will continue." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

⁵(*The Lord said,*) "I made that Agreement with Levi. I promised to give him life and peace—and I gave those things to him! Levi respected me! He showed honor to my name! ⁶Levi taught the true teachings. Levi didn't teach lies! Levi was honest and he loved peace. Levi followed me and saved many people from being punished for the bad things they did. ⁷A priest should know God's teachings. People should be able to go to a priest and learn God's teachings. A priest should be God's messenger to the people.

⁸(*The Lord said,*) "You priests stopped following me! You used the teachings to make people do wrong. You ruined the Agreement with Levi!" The Lord All-Powerful said these things! ⁹"You don't live the way I told you! You have not accepted my teachings! So I will make you become not important—people will not respect you!"

Judah Was Not True to God

¹⁰We all have the same father (*God*). The same God made every one of us! So why do people cheat their brothers? Those people show that they don't respect the Agreement. They don't respect the Agreement that our ancestors* made with God. "The people of Judah cheated other people. People in Jerusalem and Israel did terrible things! The people in Judah didn't respect the Lord's holy temple.* God loves that place! The people of Judah began to worship that foreign goddess! ¹²The Lord will remove those people from Judah's family. Those people might bring gifts to the Lord—but it will not help. ¹³You can cry and cover the Lord's altar with tears, but the Lord will not accept your gifts. The Lord will not be pleased with the things you bring to him.

"You ask, "Why are our gifts not accepted by the Lord?" Why? Because the Lord saw the

unclean Not pure or not acceptable to God for worship.

blessings Words asking for good things to happen to a person that tries to obey God's law.

curses Warnings about bad things that will happen to a person that does not obey God.

descendants A person's children and all of their future families.

Agreement Literally, "Proof." The flat stones with the Ten Commandments written on them were proof of the Agreement between God and Israel.

Levi The family group of Israel that did the work of priests.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

bad things you did—he is a witness* against you. He saw you cheat on your wife. You have been married to that woman since you were young. She was your girlfriend. Then you made your vows* to each other—and she became your wife. But you cheated on her. ¹⁵God wants husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit. Why? So they would have holy children. So protect that spiritual unity. Don't cheat on your wife. She has been your wife from the time you were young.

¹⁶The Lord God of Israel says, "I hate divorce. And I hate the cruel things that men do. So protect your spiritual unity. Don't cheat on your wife."

The Special Time of Judgment

¹⁷You have taught wrong things. And those wrong teachings made the Lord very sad. You taught that God likes people that do bad things. You said God thinks those people are good. And you taught that God does not punish people for doing bad things.

3 "Look, I am sending my messenger. He will prepare the way for me. Suddenly, he will come to his temple. He is the Lord you are looking for. He is the messenger of the new Agreement that you want. And he really is coming!" The Lord All-Powerful said these things!

²"No person can prepare for that time. No person can stand against him when he comes. He will be like a burning fire. He will be like the strong soap people use to make things clean. ³He will make the Levite* people clean.* He will make them pure, like silver is made pure—with fire! He will make them like pure gold and silver. Then they will bring gifts to the Lord—and they will do those things the right way. Then the Lord will accept the gifts from

Judah and Jerusalem. It will be like in the past. It will be like the time long ago. ⁴Then I will come to you—and I will do the right thing. I will be like a person that is ready to tell the judge about the bad things people did. Some people do evil magic. Some people do the sin of adultery.* Some people make false promises. Some people cheat their workers—they don't pay them the money they promised. People don't help widows and orphans.* People don't help strangers. People don't respect me!" The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

Stealing from God

⁵"I am the Lord, and I don't change. You are Jacob's children, and you have not been completely destroyed. ⁶But you never obeyed my laws. Even your ancestors* stopped following me. Come back to me, and I will come back to you." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

You say, "How can we come back?"

⁷"Stop stealing things from God!" People should not steal things from God, but you stole things from me!"

You say, "What did we steal from you?"

⁸"You should have given me one-tenth of your things. You should have given me special gifts. But you did not give those things to me. ⁹In this way, your whole nation has stolen things from me. So bad things are happening to you." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

¹⁰The Lord All-Powerful says, "Try this test. Bring one-tenth of your things to me. Put those things in the treasury. Bring food to my house. Test me! If you do those things, then I will truly bless you. Good things will come to you like rain falling from the sky. You will have more than enough of everything. ¹¹I will not let pests destroy your crops. Your grapevines will all produce grapes." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

witness A person that tells what he has seen or heard.

vow(s) A special promise to God. Often the person who makes a vow gives special sacrifices or gifts to God after doing some special thing for a certain period of time.

Levite A person from the family group of Levi. The Levites helped the priests in the temple and also worked for the civil government.

clean Pure or acceptable to God for worship.

adultery Breaking the marriage promise by sexual sin.

widows and orphans Widows are women whose husbands have died, and orphans are children whose parents have died. Often these people have no one to care for them.

ancestors Literally, "fathers," meaning a person's parents, grandparents, and all the people they are descended from.

¹²"People from other nations will be good to you. You will truly have a wonderful country." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

The Special Time of Judgment

¹³The Lord says, "You said mean things to me."

But you ask, "What did we say about you?"

¹⁴"You said, 'It is useless to worship the Lord. We did the things the Lord told us—but we didn't gain anything. We were sad for our sins, like people crying at a funeral. But it didn't help. ¹⁵We think proud people are happy. Evil people succeed. They do bad things to test God's patience—and God does not punish them.'"

¹⁶God's followers spoke with each other, and the Lord listened to them. There is a book in front of him. In that book are the names of God's followers. Those are the people that honor the Lord's name.

¹⁷The Lord said, "Those people belong to me. I will be kind to them. A man is very kind to his children that obey him. In the same way, I will be kind to my followers. ¹⁸You people will come back to me. And you will learn the difference between good and evil. You will learn the difference between a person that follows God and a person that does not."

4 That time of judgment is coming. It will be like a hot furnace. All those proud people will be punished. All those evil people will burn like straw. At that time, they will be like a bush burning in the fire—and there will not be a branch or root left." The Lord All-Powerful said these things.

²"But, for my followers, goodness will shine on you like the rising sun. And it will bring healing power like the sun's rays. You will be free and happy, like calves freed from their stalls. ³Then you will walk on those evil people—they will be like ashes under your feet. I will make those things happen at that time of judgment." The Lord All-Powerful said these things!

⁴"Remember and obey the law of Moses. Moses was my servant. I gave those laws and rules to him at Mount Horeb (*Sinai*). Those laws are for all the people of Israel.

⁵The Lord said, "Look, I will send Elijah the prophet to you. He will come before that great and terrible time of judgment from the Lord. ⁶Elijah will help the parents become close to their children. And he (*Elijah*) will help the children become close to their parents. This must happen, or I (*God*) will come and completely destroy your country!"

The New Testament

Matthew

The Family History of Jesus

1 This is the family history of Jesus Christ. He came from the family of David. David came from the family of Abraham.

- ² Abraham was the father of Isaac.
Isaac was the father of Jacob.
Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.
- ³ Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah.
(Their mother was Tamar.)
Perez was the father of Hezron.
Hezron was the father of Ram.
- ⁴ Ram was the father of Amminadab.
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon.
Nahshon was the father of Salmon.
- ⁵ Salmon was the father of Boaz.
(Boaz' mother was Rahab.)
Boaz was the father of Obed.
(Obed's mother was Ruth.)
Obed was the father of Jesse.
- ⁶ Jesse was the father of King David.
David was the father of Solomon.
(Solomon's mother had been Uriah's wife.)
- ⁷ Solomon was the father of Rehoboam.
Rehoboam was the father of Abijah.
Abijah was the father of Asa.
- ⁸ Asa was the father of Jehoshaphat.
Jehoshaphat was the father of Joram.
Joram was the father of Uzziah.
- ⁹ Uzziah was the father of Jotham.
Jotham was the father of Ahaz.
Ahaz was the father of Hezekiah.

- ¹⁰ Hezekiah was the father of Manasseh.
Manasseh was the father of Amon.
Amon was the father of Josiah.
- ¹¹ Josiah was the father of Jechoniah and his brothers.
(This was during the time that the Jewish people were taken to Babylon (to be slaves).)
- ¹² After they were taken to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Shealtiel.
Shealtiel was the father of Zerubbabel.
- ¹³ Zerubbabel was the father of Abiud.
Abiud was the father of Eliakim.
Eliakim was the father of Azor.
- ¹⁴ Azor was the father of Zadok.
Zadok was the father of Achim.
Achim was the father of Eliud.
- ¹⁵ Eliud was the father of Eleazar.
Eleazar was the father of Matthan.
Matthan was the father of Jacob.
- ¹⁶ Jacob was the father of Joseph.
Joseph was the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus. Jesus is called the Christ.*

¹⁷ So there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David. And there were fourteen generations from David until the time when the people were taken to Babylon. And there were fourteen generations from the time when the people were taken to Babylon until Christ was born.

The Birth of Jesus Christ

"The mother of Jesus Christ was Mary. And this is how the birth of Jesus happened. Mary was engaged to marry Joseph. But before they married, Mary learned that she was pregnant with a child. Mary was pregnant by the power of, the Holy Spirit. "Mary's husband, Joseph, was a good man. He did not want to bring shame to Mary before the people. So he planned to divorce her secretly.

"But after Joseph thought about this, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Joseph, son of David,* don't be afraid to accept Mary to be your wife. The baby that is in her is from the Holy Spirit.* "She will give birth to a son. You will name the son Jesus.* Give him that name because he will save his people from their sins."

"All this happened to make clear the full meaning of the things the Lord said through the prophet*: "The virgin* will be pregnant and will give birth to a son. They will name him Immanuel."* (Immanuel means "God with us.")

"When Joseph woke up, he did the thing that the Lord's angel told him to do. Joseph married Mary. "But Joseph had no sexual union with Mary until she gave birth to the son. And Joseph named the son Jesus.

Wise Men Come to Visit Jesus

2 Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea. He was born during the time when Herod* was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. "The wise men asked people, "Where is the new baby that is the king of the

Jews? We saw the star that shows he was born. We saw the star rise in the sky in the east. We came to worship him."

"King Herod* heard about this new king of the Jews. Herod was troubled about this. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. "Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. Herod asked them where the Christ* would be born. "They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet* wrote about this in the Scriptures*:

" 'Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among
the rulers of Judah.

Yes, a ruler will come from you,
and that ruler will lead Israel,
my people.'"

Michah 5:2

"Then Herod* had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. Herod learned from the wise men the exact time they first saw the star. "Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. Herod said to the wise men, "Go and look carefully to find the new baby. When you find the baby, come tell me. Then I can go worship him too."

"The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. The wise men followed the star. The star went before them until it stopped above the place where the baby was. "The wise men were happy to see the star. They were filled with joy. "The wise men came to the house where the baby was. They saw the baby with his mother Mary. The wise men bowed down and worshiped the baby. The wise men opened the gifts they brought for the baby. They gave the baby treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.* "But God warned the wise men in a dream. God warned them not to go back to Herod. So the wise men went home to their own country a different way.

son of David Person from the family of David, second king of Israel, about 1010–970 B.C.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

Jesus The name Jesus means "salvation."

prophet Person that spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

virgin A pure girl that is not married.

"The virgin ... Immanuel!" Quote from Is. 7:14.

Herod Herod I (the Great), of Judea, 40–4 B.C.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

frankincense and myrrh Expensive perfumes.

Jesus' Parents Take Him to Egypt

¹³After the wise men left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the baby and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod* will start looking for the baby. Herod wants to kill him. So stay in Egypt until I tell you it is safe."

¹⁴So Joseph got up and left for Egypt with the baby and the baby's mother. They left during the night. ¹⁵Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod* died. This happened to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord said through the prophet.* The Lord said, "I called my son to come out of Egypt."*

Herod Kills the Baby Boys in Bethlehem

¹⁶Herod* saw that the wise men had fooled him. Herod was very, very angry. So Herod gave an order to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and in all the area around Bethlehem. Herod had learned from the wise men the time the baby was born. It was now two years from that time. So Herod said to kill all the boys that were two years old and younger. ¹⁷So the thing God said through the prophet* Jeremiah happened:

"A sound was heard in Ramah.
It was bitter crying
and much sadness.
Rachel cries for her children;
and she cannot be comforted,
because her children are dead."

Jeremiah 31:15

Joseph and Mary Return from Egypt

¹⁸After Herod* died, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. This happened while Joseph was in Egypt. ¹⁹The angel said, "Get up! Take the baby and his mother and go to Israel. The people that were trying to kill the baby are now dead."

Herod Herod I (the Great), of Judea, 40–4 B.C.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

"I called ... Egypt" Quote from Hosea 11:1.

²⁰So Joseph took the baby and the baby's mother and went to Israel. ²¹But Joseph heard that Archelaus was now king in Judea. Archelaus became king when his father Herod died. So Joseph was afraid to go there. Joseph was warned in a dream. So Joseph left there and went to the area of Galilee. ²²Joseph went to a town called Nazareth and lived there. And so the thing happened that God said through the prophets.* God said that the Christ* would be called a Nazarene.*

The Work of John the Baptizer

3 At that time John the Baptizer came and began preaching. He preached in the desert area of Judea. ²John said, "Change your hearts and lives because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon." ³John the Baptizer is the one that Isaiah the prophet* was talking about. Isaiah said:

"There is a person shouting
in the desert:
'Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight.'"

Isaiah 40:3

⁴John's clothes were made from camel's hair. John had a leather belt around his waist. For food, John ate locusts* and wild honey. ⁵People went to hear John preach. The people came from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the area around the Jordan River. ⁶People told the sins they had done, and John baptized* them in the Jordan River.

⁷Many Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to the place where John was baptizing people.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Nazarene A person from the city of Nazareth, a name probably meaning "branch" (See Is. 11:1).

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. The law of Moses said locusts could be eaten (Leviticus 11:21-22).

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

When John saw them he said to them: "You are all snakes! Who warned you to run away from God's anger that is coming? ¹You must do the things that show that you have really changed your hearts and lives. ²And don't think that you can boast and say to yourselves, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you that God could make children for Abraham from these rocks here. ³The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.* Every tree that does not make good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

⁴"I baptize you with water to show that you changed your hearts and lives. But there is a person coming later that is greater than I am. I am not good enough to take off his shoes for him. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit* and with fire. ⁵He will come ready to clean the grain.* He will separate the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. And he will burn the part that is not good. He will burn it with a fire that cannot be stopped."

Jesus Is Baptized by John

¹At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. Jesus came to John and wanted John to baptize* him. ²But John tried to say that he was not good enough to baptize Jesus. John said, "Why do you come to me to be baptized? I should be baptized by you!"

³Jesus answered, "Let it be this way for now. We should do all things that are right." So John agreed to baptize Jesus.

⁴Jesus was baptized and he came up out of the water. The sky opened, and he saw God's Spirit coming down on him like a dove. ⁵And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, "This (*Jesus*) is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him."

trees The people that don't accept Jesus. They are like "trees" that will be cut down.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

clean the grain John means that Jesus will separate the good people from the bad people.

baptize A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

The Temptation of Jesus

4 Then the Spirit* led Jesus into the desert. Jesus was taken there to be tempted by the devil. ²Jesus ate nothing for 40 days and nights. After this, he was very hungry. ³The devil came to Jesus to tempt him. The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these rocks to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written in the Scriptures,."

"It is not just bread that keeps people alive.

People's lives depend on what the Lord says."

Deuteronomy 8:3

⁵Then the devil led Jesus to the holy city (*Jerusalem*). The devil put Jesus on a very high place on the temple.* ⁶The devil said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off. Why? Because it is written in the Scriptures,."

"God will command his angels for you, and their hands will catch you, so that you will not hit your foot on a rock."

Psalms 91:11-12

⁷Jesus answered him, "It also says in the Scriptures,."

"You must not tempt the Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 6:16

⁸Then the devil led Jesus to the top of a very high mountain. The devil showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and all the great things that are in those kingdoms. ⁹The devil said, "If you will bow down and worship me, I will give you all these things."

¹⁰Jesus said to the devil, "Go away from me, Satan! It is written in the Scriptures,."

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

"You must worship the Lord your God.
Serve only him!"

Deuteronomy 6:13

"So the devil left Jesus. And then some angels came to Jesus and helped him.

Jesus Begins His Work In Galilee

"Jesus heard that John was put in prison. So Jesus went back to Galilee. ¹³Jesus did not stay in Nazareth. He went and lived in Capernaum, a town near the lake (*Lake Galilee*). Capernaum is in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴Jesus did this to make happen what the prophet* Isaiah said:

- ¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun
and the land of Naphtali,
the way to the sea,
past the Jordan River,
Galilee, the land of non-Jewish people—
¹⁶ those people live in darkness (*sin*),
but they have seen a great light;
the light has come for those people
that live in the land that is dark like a
grave."

Isaiah 9:1-2

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

"From that time Jesus began to preach. This is what he said: "Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon."

"Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Simon's brother Andrew. The two brothers were fishermen and they were fishing in the lake with a net. ¹⁸Jesus said, "Come follow me. I will make you a different kind of, fishermen. You will work to gather people, not fish."
¹⁹Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus.

²⁰Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with their

father Zebedee. They were preparing their nets to catch fish. Jesus told the brothers to come with him. ²²So the brothers left the boat and their father, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus Teaches and Heals People

²³Jesus went everywhere in the country of Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues* and preached the Good News about the kingdom of heaven. And Jesus healed all the people's diseases and sicknesses. ²⁴The news about Jesus spread all over Syria. And people brought all the sick people to Jesus. These sick people were suffering from different kinds of diseases and pain. Some people were suffering with very bad pain, some people had demons* inside them, some people were epileptics,* and some people were paralyzed (*crippled*). Jesus healed all these people. ²⁵Many, many people followed Jesus. These people were from Galilee, the Ten Towns,* Jerusalem, Judea, and the area across the Jordan River.

Jesus Teaches the People

5 Jesus saw the many people that were there. So Jesus went up on a hill and sat down. His followers came to him. ²Jesus taught the people. He said:

- ¹ "People that know they have great spiritual needs are blessed.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to those people.
- ⁴ People that are sad now are blessed.
God will comfort those people.
- ⁵ People that are humble are blessed.
They will have the land God promised.*
- ⁶ People that want to do right

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

epileptics People with a disease that causes them sometimes to lose control of their bodies.

Ten Towns Greek, "Decapolis," an area east of Lake Galilee. It once had ten main towns.

land God promised See Ps. 37:11.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

more than anything else are blessed.
God will fully satisfy them.

- 7 People that give mercy to other people are blessed.
Mercy will be given to them.
- 8 People that are pure in their thinking are blessed.
Those people will be with God.
- 9 People that work to bring peace are blessed.
God will call those people his sons.
- 10 People that are treated badly for doing good are blessed.
The kingdom of heaven belongs to those people.

11“People will say bad things against you and hurt you. They will lie and say all kinds of evil things against you because you follow me. But when people do those things to you, you are blessed. 12Be happy and glad. You have a great reward waiting for you in heaven. People did those same bad things to the prophets* that lived before you.

You Are like Salt and You Are like Light

13“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, then it cannot be made salty again. Salt is good for nothing if it loses its salty taste. It must be thrown out and people walk on it.

14“You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15And people don’t hide a light under a bowl. No. People put the light on a lamp table. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. 16In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that people will see the good things you do. Live so that people will praise your Father in heaven.

Jesus and the Old Testament Writings

17“Don’t think that I have come to destroy the law of Moses, or the teaching of the prophets.* I have not come to destroy their

teachings. I came to give full meaning to their teachings. 18I tell you the truth. Nothing will disappear from the law until heaven and earth are gone. The law will not lose even the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter until all has happened. 19A person should obey every command, even a command that does not seem important. If a person refuses to obey any command and teaches other people not to obey that command, then that person will be the least important in the kingdom of heaven. But the person that obeys the law and teaches other people to obey the law will be great in the kingdom of heaven. 20I tell you that you must do better than the teachers of the law and the Pharisees.* If you are not better people, then you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Teaches About Anger

21“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘Don’t kill any person.* And any person that kills will be judged.’ 22But I tell you, don’t be angry with another person. Every person is your brother. If you are angry with other people, you will be judged. And if you say bad things to another person, you will be judged by the Jewish council. And if you call another person a fool, then you will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23“So when you offer your gift to God, think about other people. If you are offering your gift before the altar,* and you remember that your brother has something against you, 24then leave your gift there at the altar. Go and make peace with that person. Then come and offer your gift.

25“If your enemy is taking you to court, then become friends with him quickly. You should do that before you go to court. If you don’t become his friend, then he might give you to the judge. And the judge might give you to a guard to put you in jail. 26And I tell you that you will not leave that jail until you have paid everything you owe.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

‘Don’t ... person’ Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Jesus Teaches About Sexual Sin

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘Don’t do the sin of adultery.’” ²⁸But I tell you that if a person looks at a woman and wants to sin sexually with her, then that person has already done that sin with the woman in his mind. ²⁹If your right eye makes you sin, then take it out and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand makes you sin, then cut it off and throw it away. It is better to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

³¹“It was also said, ‘Any person that divorces his wife must give her a written notice of divorce.’” ³²But I tell you that any person that divorces his wife is causing his wife to be guilty of the sin of adultery.* The only reason for a person to divorce his wife is if his wife had sexual relations with another man. And any person that marries that divorced woman is guilty of the sin of adultery.

Jesus Teaches About Making Promises

³³“You have heard that it was said to our people long ago, ‘When you make a vow* (promise), don’t break that promise. Keep the vows (promises) that you make to the Lord.’” ³⁴But I tell you, never make a vow. Don’t make a vow using the name of heaven, because heaven is God’s throne. ³⁵Don’t make a vow using the name of the earth, because the earth belongs to God. Don’t make a vow using the name of Jerusalem, because that is the city of the great King (God). ³⁶And don’t even say that your own head is proof that you will keep your vow. You cannot make one hair on your head become white or black. ³⁷Say only ‘yes’ if you

mean yes, and say only ‘no’ if you mean no. If you must say more than ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ it is from the Evil One (*the devil*).

Jesus Teaches About Fighting Back

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’” ³⁹But I tell you, don’t stand against an evil person. If someone hits you on the right cheek, then turn and let him hit the other cheek too. ⁴⁰If a person wants to sue you in court and take your shirt, then let him have your coat too. ⁴¹If a soldier forces you to walk with him one mile, then go with him two miles. ⁴²If a person asks you for something, then give it to him. Don’t refuse to give to a person that wants to borrow from you.

Love All People

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor* and hate your enemy.’” ⁴⁴But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those people that do bad things to you. ⁴⁵If you do this, then you will be true sons of your Father in heaven. Your Father lets the sun rise for the good people and the bad people. Your Father sends rain to people that do good and to people that do wrong. ⁴⁶If you love only the people that love you, then you will get no reward. Even the tax collectors* do that. ⁴⁷And if you are nice only to your friends, then you are no better than other people. Even the people without God are nice to their friends. ⁴⁸So you must be perfect, the same as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Jesus Teaches About Giving

6 ¹“Be careful! When you do good things, don’t do those things in front of people. Don’t do those things for people to see you. If you do that, then you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²“When you give to poor people, don’t announce that you are giving. Don’t do like the

Don’t ... adultery Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

Any ... divorce Quote from Deut. 24:1.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

vow A very strong promise that a person makes, often using the name of something important.

When ... Lord. See Lev. 19:12, Num. 30:2, and Deut. 23:21.

An ... tooth Quote from Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20.

Love your neighbor Quote from Lev. 19:18.

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes.

*They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

hypocrites* do. They blow trumpets before they give so that people will see them. They do that in the synagogues* and on the streets. They want other people to give honor to them. ³So when you give to poor people, give very secretly. Don't let any person know what you are doing. ⁴Your giving should be done in secret. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

⁵"When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites.* The hypocrites love to stand in the synagogues* and on the street corners and pray loudly. They want people to see them pray. I tell you the truth. They already have their full reward. ⁶When you pray, you should go into your room and close the door. Then pray to your Father that cannot be seen. Your Father can see the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

⁷"And when you pray, don't be like those people that don't know God. They continue saying things that mean nothing. Don't pray like that. They think that God will hear them because of the many things they say. ⁸Don't be like those people. Your Father knows the things you need before you ask him. ⁹So when you pray, you should pray like this:

"Our Father in heaven,
we pray that your name will always be kept holy.

¹⁰ We pray that your kingdom will come,
and that the things you want
will be done here on earth,
the same as in heaven.

¹¹ Give us the food we need for each day.

¹² Forgive the sins we have done,
the same as we have forgiven the people
that did wrong to us.

¹³ Don't cause us to be tempted (*tested*);
but save us from the Evil One (*the devil*)."

¹⁴Yes, if you forgive other people for the things they do wrong, then your Father in heaven will also forgive you for the things you do wrong. ¹⁵But if you don't forgive the wrong things people do to you, then your Father in heaven will not forgive the wrong things you do.

Jesus Teaches About Fasting

¹⁶"When you fast,* don't make yourselves look sad. The hypocrites* do that. Don't be like the hypocrites. They make their faces look strange to show people that they are fasting. I tell you the truth, those hypocrites already have their full reward. ¹⁷So when you fast, make yourself look nice. Wash your face. ¹⁸Then people will not know that you are fasting. But your Father that you cannot see will see you. Your Father sees the things that are done in secret. And he will reward you.

God Is More Important than Money

¹⁹"Don't save treasures for yourselves here on earth. Moths and rust will destroy treasures here on earth. And thieves can break into your house and steal the things you have. ²⁰So save your treasure in heaven. The treasures in heaven cannot be destroyed by moths or rust. And thieves cannot break in and steal that treasure. ²¹Your heart will be where your treasure is.

²²"The eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, then your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are evil, then your whole body will be full of darkness (*sin*). And if the only light you have is really darkness, then you have the worst darkness.

²⁴"No person can serve two masters at the same time. He will hate one master and love the other master. Or he will follow one master and refuse to follow the other master. So you cannot serve God and money at the same time.

Put God's Kingdom First

²⁵"So I tell you, don't worry about the food you need to live. And don't worry about the

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer.

clothes you need for your body. Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. ²⁶Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest or save food in barns. But your heavenly Father feeds those birds. And you know that you are worth much more than the birds. ²⁷You cannot add any time to your life by worrying about it.

²⁸"And why do you worry about clothes? Look at the flowers in the field. See how they grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. ²⁹But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. ³⁰God clothes the grass in the field like that. That grass is living today, but tomorrow it is thrown into the fire to be burned. So you know that God will clothe you much more. Don't have so little faith! ³¹Don't worry and say, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' ³²All the people that don't know God try to get these things. Don't worry, because your Father in heaven knows that you need these things. ³³The thing you should want most is God's kingdom and being right with him. Then all these other things you need will be given to you. ³⁴So don't worry about tomorrow. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Tomorrow will have its own worries.

Jesus Teaches About Judging People

7 "Don't judge other people, and God will not judge you. ²If you judge other people, you will be judged in the same way you judge them. And the forgiveness you give to other people will be given to you. ³Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your brother's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? ⁴Why do you say to your brother, 'Let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye'? Look at yourself first! You still have that big piece of wood in your own eye. ⁵You are a hypocrite.* First, take the wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your brother's eye.

hypocrite A bad person that acts like he is good.

⁶"Don't give holy things to dogs. They will only turn and hurt you. And don't throw your pearls to pigs. They will only step on them.

Continue to Ask God for All You Need

⁷"Continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. ⁸Yes, if a person continues asking, that person will receive. If a person continues looking, that person will find. And if a person continues knocking, the door will open for that person.

⁹"Do any of you have a son? If your son asked for bread, would you give him a rock? No! ¹⁰Or if your son asked for a fish, would you give him a snake? No! ¹¹You are not like God,—you are evil. But you know how to give good things to your children. So surely your heavenly Father will give good things to those people that ask him.

The Most Important Rule

¹²"Do to other people the same things you want them to do to you. This is the meaning of the law of Moses, and the teaching of the prophets.*

The Way to Heaven and the Way to Hell

¹³"Enter through the narrow gate that opens the way to heaven. The road that leads to hell is a very easy road. And the gate to hell is very wide. Many people enter that gate. ¹⁴But the gate that opens the way to true, life is very small. And the road to true, life is very difficult (*hard*). Only a few people find that road.

Watch the Things People Do

¹⁵"Be careful of false prophets.* They come to you and look gentle, like sheep. But they are really dangerous like wolves. ¹⁶You will know these people because of the things they

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

do. Good things don't come from bad people, the same as grapes don't come from thorn bushes. And figs don't come from thorny weeds.¹⁷ In the same way, every good tree gives good fruit. And bad trees give bad fruit.¹⁸ A good tree cannot give bad fruit. And a bad tree cannot give good fruit.¹⁹ Every tree that does not give good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.²⁰ You will know these false people by the fruit they give (*things they do*).

²¹"Not every person that says that I am his Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven. The only people that will enter the kingdom of heaven are those people that do the things that my Father in heaven wants.²² On the last day many people will say to me, 'You are our Lord! We spoke for you. And for you we forced out demons* and did many miracles.*'²³ Then I will tell those people clearly, 'Go away from me, you people that do wrong. I never knew you.'

A Wise Person and a Foolish Person

²⁴"Every person that hears these things I say and obeys these things is like a wise man. The wise man built his house on rock.²⁵ It rained hard and the water rose. The winds blew and hit that house. But the house did not fall, because the house was built on rock.²⁶ But the person that hears the things I teach and does not obey those things is like a foolish man. The foolish man built his house on sand.²⁷ It rained hard, the water rose, and the winds blew and hit that house. And the house fell with a loud noise."

²⁸When Jesus finished saying these things, the people were amazed at his teaching.²⁹ Jesus did not teach like their teachers of the law. Jesus taught like a person that had authority (*power*).

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

8 Jesus came down from the hill. Many, many people followed him.² Then a man sick with leprosy* came to Jesus. The man

bowed down before Jesus and said, "Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want."

³Jesus touched the man. Jesus said, "I want to heal you. Be healed!" And immediately the man was healed from his leprosy.*⁴ Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell any person about what happened. But go and show yourself to the priest.* And offer the gift that Moses commanded for people that are made well. This will show people that you are healed."

⁵Jesus went to the city of Capernaum. When he entered the city, an army officer* came to Jesus and begged for help.⁶ The officer said, "Lord, my servant is at home. He is very sick in bed. He can't move his body and has much pain."

⁷Jesus said to the officer, "I will go and heal him."

⁸The officer answered, "Lord, I am not good enough for you to come into my house. All you need to do is command that my servant be healed, and he will be healed. I myself am a man under the authority (*power*) of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, 'Go,' and he goes. I tell another soldier, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and my servant obeys me. I know that you also have power like this."

⁹When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Jesus said to those people that were with him, "I tell you the truth. This man has more faith than any person I have found, even in Israel.*¹⁰ Many people will come from the east and from the west. Those people will sit and eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* in the kingdom of heaven.¹¹ And those people (*the Jews*) that should have the kingdom will be thrown out. They will be thrown outside into the darkness. In that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain."

show ... priest The law of Moses said a priest must say when a Jew with leprosy was well.

officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob Three of the most important Jewish leaders of the past.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

miracles Amazing works done by God's power.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

¹¹Then Jesus said to the officer, ^{*}“Go home. Your servant will be healed the way you believed he would.” And at that same time his servant was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People

¹²Jesus went to Peter’s house. There Jesus saw that Peter’s mother-in-law was in bed with a high fever. ¹³Jesus touched her hand and the fever left her. Then she stood up and began to serve Jesus.

¹⁴That evening people brought to Jesus many people that had demons^{*} inside them. Jesus spoke and the demons left the people. Jesus healed all the people that were sick. ¹⁷Jesus did these things to make happen what Isaiah the prophet^{*} said:

“He took away our diseases
and carried away our sicknesses.”

Isaiah 53:4

Following Jesus

¹⁸Jesus saw that all the people were around him. So Jesus told his followers to go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹Then a teacher of the law came to Jesus and said, “Teacher, I will follow you any place you go.”

²⁰Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes to live in. The birds have nests to live in. But the Son of Man^{*} has no place where he can rest his head.”

²¹Another man, one of Jesus’ followers, said to Jesus, “Lord, let me go and bury my father first. Then I will follow you.”

²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the people that are dead bury their own dead.”

officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Jesus Stops a Storm

²³Jesus got into a boat and his followers went with him. ²⁴After the boat left the shore, a very bad storm began on the lake. The waves covered the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, “Lord, save us! We will drown!”

²⁶Jesus answered, “Why are you afraid? You don’t have enough faith.” Then Jesus stood and gave a command to the wind and the waves. The wind stopped, and the lake became very calm.

²⁷The men were amazed. They said, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the water obey him!”

Jesus Sends Demons Out from Two Men

²⁸Jesus arrived at the other side of the lake in the country of the Gadarene^{*} people. There, two men came to Jesus. They had demons^{*} inside them. These men lived in the burial caves. They were very dangerous. So people could not use the road by those caves. ²⁹The two men came to Jesus and shouted, “What do you want with us, Son of God? Did you come here to punish us before the right time?”

³⁰Near that place there was a large herd of pigs feeding. ³¹The demons begged Jesus, “If you make us leave these men, please send us into that herd of pigs.”

³²Jesus said to them, “Go!” So the demons left those men and went into the pigs. Then the whole herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs drowned in the water. ³³The men that had the work of caring for the pigs ran away. They went into town and told the people what happened. They told about all that happened with the pigs and with the men that had demons. ³⁴Then the whole town went out to see Jesus. When the people saw Jesus, they begged him to leave their area.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

9 Jesus got into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town. ²Some people

Gadarene From Gadara, an area southeast of Lake Galilee.

brought to Jesus a man that was paralyzed (*crippled*). The man was lying on his bed. Jesus saw that these people had much faith. So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Be happy, young man. Your sins are forgiven."

¹Some of the teachers of the law heard this. They said to themselves, "This man (*Jesus*) speaks like he is God—that is blasphemy.*"

²Jesus knew they were thinking this. So Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil thoughts? ³Which is easier: to tell this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to tell him, 'Stand up and walk'? ⁴But I will prove to you that the Son of Man* has power on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Stand up. Take your bed and go home." ⁵And the man stood up and went home. ⁶The people saw this and they were amazed. The people praised God for giving power like this to men.

Jesus Chooses Matthew

⁷When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew. Matthew was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." Then Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.

⁸Jesus ate dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors* and other bad people came and ate with Jesus and his followers. ⁹The Pharisees* saw that Jesus was eating with these people. The Pharisees asked Jesus' followers, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and other bad people?"

¹⁰Jesus heard the Pharisees* say this. So Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. ¹¹I will tell you something. Go and learn what it means: 'I don't want animal sacrifices. I want kindness among people.'* ¹²I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners."

blasphemy Saying things against God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

'I ... people' Quote from Hosea 6:6.

Jesus Is Not Like Other Religious Jews

¹³Then the followers of John* came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, "We and the Pharisees* fast* often. But your followers don't fast. Why?"

¹⁴Jesus answered, "When there is a wedding, the friends of the bridegroom* are not sad while he is with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. The friends are sad when the bridegroom leaves. Then they will fast.*"

¹⁵"When a person sews a patch over a hole on an old coat, that person never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and, pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. ¹⁶Also, people never pour new wine into old wine bags.* Why? Because the old bags will break. The wine will spill, and the wine bags will be ruined. But people always pour new wine into new wine bags. Then the wine and the wine bags will continue to be good."

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

¹⁷While Jesus was saying these things, a ruler of the synagogue* came to him. The ruler bowed down before Jesus and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and touch her with your hand, and she will live again."

¹⁸So Jesus stood up and went with the ruler. Jesus' followers went too.

¹⁹There was a woman that had been bleeding for twelve years. The woman came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of his coat. ²⁰The woman was thinking, "If I can touch his coat, then I will be healed."

²¹Jesus turned and saw the woman. Jesus said, "Be happy, dear woman. You are made well because you believed." Then the woman

John John the Baptizer. He preached to people about Christ's coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer.

bridegroom A man ready to be married.

wine bags Bags made from the skin of an animal and used for holding wine.

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

was healed.

²²Jesus continued going with the ruler, and went into the ruler's house. Jesus saw people there that make music for funerals. And he saw many people there crying (because the girl died). ²³Jesus said, "Go away. The girl is not dead. She is only asleep." But the people laughed at Jesus. ²⁴After the people were put out of the house, Jesus went into the girl's room. Jesus held the girl's hand, and the girl stood up. ²⁵The news about this spread all around the area.

Jesus Heals More People

²⁶When Jesus was leaving there, two blind men followed him. The blind men said loudly, "Show kindness to us, Son of David."^{*}

²⁷Jesus went inside, and the blind men went with him. Jesus asked the men, "Do you believe that I am able to make you see again?" The blind men answered, "Yes, Lord, we believe."

²⁸Then Jesus touched their eyes and said, "You believe that I can make you see again, so this will happen." ²⁹Then the men were able to see again. Jesus warned them very strongly. Jesus said, "Don't tell any person about this."

³⁰But the blind men left and spread the news about Jesus all around that area.

³¹When the two men were leaving, some people brought another man to Jesus. This man could not talk because he had a demon* inside him. ³²Jesus forced the demon to leave the man. Then the man that couldn't talk was able to speak. The people were amazed and said, "We have never seen anything like this in Israel."

³³But the Pharisees* said, "The leader of demons (*the devil*) is the one that gives him (*Jesus*) power to force demons out."

Jesus Feels Sorry for the People

³⁴Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages. Jesus taught in their synagogues* and told people the Good News about the kingdom. And Jesus healed all kinds of diseases and sicknesses. ³⁵Jesus saw the many people and felt sorry for them. Jesus felt sorry for the people because the people were worried and helpless. The people were like sheep without a shepherd to lead them. ³⁶Jesus said to his followers, "There are many, many people to harvest (*save*). But there are only a few workers to help harvest them. ³⁷God owns the harvest (*people*). Pray to him that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest."

Jesus Sends His Apostles to Preach

10 Jesus called his twelve followers together. Jesus gave them power over evil spirits. Jesus gave them power to heal every kind of disease and sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles*: Simon (also called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James, son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot* and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one that gave Jesus to his enemies.

⁵Jesus gave these twelve apostles* some orders. Then he sent them to tell people about the kingdom. Jesus said, "Don't go to the non-Jewish people. And don't go into any town where the Samaritans* live. ⁶But go to the people of Israel (*the Jews*). They are like sheep that are lost. ⁷When you go, preach this: 'The kingdom of heaven is coming soon.' ⁸Heal sick people. Give dead people life again. Heal those people that have leprosy.* Force demons* to leave people. I give you these powers freely. So

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Zealot The Zealots were a Jewish political group.

Samaritans Samaritans were people from Samaria.

Although part Jewish, the Jews did not accept them.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of David Name for the Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

help other people freely. ⁹Don't carry any money with you—gold or silver or copper. ¹⁰Don't carry a bag. Take for your trip only the clothes and shoes you are wearing. Don't take a walking stick. A worker should be given the things he needs.

¹¹"When you enter a city or town, find some worthy person there and stay in his home until you leave. ¹²When you enter that home say, 'Peace be with you.' ¹³If the people in that home welcome you, then they are worthy of your peace. Let your peace stay there. But if the people don't welcome you, then they are not worthy of your peace. Take back the peace you wished for them. ¹⁴And if a home or town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, then leave that place. Shake their dust off your feet.* ¹⁵I tell you the truth. On the judgment day it will be worse for that town than for the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Jesus Warns About Troubles

¹⁶"Listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. So be smart like snakes. But also be like doves and do nothing wrong. ¹⁷Be careful of people. They will arrest you and take you to be judged. They will whip you in their synagogues.* ¹⁸You will be taken to stand before governors and kings. People will do this to you because of me. You will tell about me to those kings and governors and to the non-Jewish people. ¹⁹When you are arrested, don't worry about what to say or how you should say it. At that time you will be given the things to say. ²⁰It will not really be you speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

²¹"Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and will send their parents to be

killed. ²²All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person that continues strong until the end will be saved. ²³When you are treated badly in one city, go to another city. I tell you the truth. You will not finish going through all the cities of Israel before the Son of Man* comes again.

²⁴"A student is not better than his teacher. A servant is not better than his master. ²⁵A student should be satisfied to become like his teacher. A servant should be satisfied to become like his master. If the head of the family is called Beelzebul (*the devil*), then the other members of the family will be called worse names!"

Fear God, Not People

²⁶"So don't be afraid of those people. Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. ²⁷I tell you these things in the dark (*secretly*). But I want you to tell these things in the light. I speak these things quietly and only to you. But you should tell these things freely to all people. ²⁸Don't be afraid of people. They can only kill the body. They cannot kill the soul. The only one you should fear is the One (*God*) that can destroy the body and the soul. He can send the body and the soul to hell. ²⁹When birds are sold, two small birds cost only a penny. But not even one of those little birds can die without your Father allowing it. ³⁰God even knows how many hairs are on your head. ³¹So don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds.

Telling People About Your Faith

³²"When a person stands before other people and says he believes in me, then I will say that person belongs to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven. ³³But when a person stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that person does not belong to me. I will say this before my Father in heaven.

Shake ... feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.
Sodom and Gomorrah Cities that God destroyed to punish the evil people that lived there.
synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

³⁴"Don't think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword. ³⁵I have come to make this happen:

'A son will be against his father,
a daughter will be against her mother,
a daughter-in-law will be against her
mother-in-law.'

³⁶ A man's enemies will be members
of his own family.'

Micah 7:6

³⁷"Any person that loves his father or mother more than he loves me is not good enough to follow me. Any person who loves his son or daughter more than he loves me is not good enough to follow me. ³⁸If a person will not accept the cross (*suffering*) that will be given to him when he follows me, then that person is not good enough for me. ³⁹Any person that loves his life more than he loves me, will lose true life. Any person that gives up his life for me will find true life. ⁴⁰The person that accepts you also accepts me. And the person that accepts me also accepts the One (*God*) that sent me. ⁴¹Any person that meets a prophet* and accepts him will get the reward of a prophet. And any person that accepts a good man because that man is good will get the reward of a good man. ⁴²If any person helps one of these little ones because they are my followers, then that person will truly get his reward. That person will get his reward even if he only gave my follower a cup of cold water."

Jesus and John the Baptizer

11 Jesus finished telling these things to his twelve followers. Then Jesus left there and went to the towns in Galilee to teach and preach.

²John the Baptizer was in prison. He heard about the things Christ was doing. So John sent some of his followers to Jesus. ³John's followers asked Jesus, "Are you the man that John said, was coming, or should we wait for another man?"

prophet A person who spoke for God.

'Jesus answered, "Go back to John and tell him about the things that you hear and see: ⁵Blind people are able to see again; crippled people are able to walk again; people that have leprosy* are healed; deaf people can hear again; dead people are raised from death; and the Good News* is told to the poor people. ⁶The person that can accept* me is blessed (*happy*)."

⁷While John's followers were leaving, Jesus began talking to the people about John. Jesus said, "What did you people go out to the desert to see? A weed* blown by the wind? No! ⁸Really, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No! Those people that wear fine clothes live in king's palaces. ⁹So what did you go out to see? A prophet*? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. ¹⁰This Scripture* was written about John:

'Listen! I (*God*) will send my helper*
ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.'

Malachi 3:1

¹¹I tell you the truth: John the Baptizer is greater than any man that has ever lived. But even the least important person in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. ¹²Since the time John the Baptizer came until now, the kingdom of heaven has been going forward strongly.* People using force have been trying to get the kingdom. ¹³All the prophets* and the law of Moses, spoke until the time John came. They told about the things that would happen. ¹⁴And if you will believe the things the law and the prophets said, then you will believe that John is Elijah.* The law and the prophets said he would come. ¹⁵You people that hear me, listen!

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

can accept Literally, "is not offended by."

weed Literally, "reed." It means that John was not weak like a reed blown by the wind.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

helper Literally, "messenger."

has ... strongly Or, "has suffered violence."

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Elijah A man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

¹⁶“What can I say about the people that live today? What are they like? The people today are like children sitting in the market place. One group of children calls to the other group,

¹⁷ ‘We played music for you, but you did not dance;
we sang a sad song, but you were not sad.’

¹⁸“Why do I say people are like that?’ Because John* came and he did not eat like other people, or drink wine. And people say, ‘He has a demon* inside him.’ ¹⁹“The Son of Man* came eating like other people, and drinking wine, and people say, ‘Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine. He is a friend of tax collectors* and other bad people.’ But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does.”

Jesus Warns People That Don't Believe

²⁰Then Jesus criticized the cities where he did most of his miracles.* Jesus criticized those cities because the people there did not change their lives and stop sinning. ²¹Jesus said, “It will be bad for you Chorazin* It will be bad for you Bethsaida* I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon,* then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their lives a long time ago. Those people would have worn sackcloth* and put ashes on themselves to show that they were sorry for their sins. ²²But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. ²³And you, Capernaum,* will you be lifted up to heaven? No! You will be

thrown down to the place of death. I did many miracles in you. If those same miracles had happened in Sodom, the people of Sodom would have stopped sinning and it would still be a city today. ²⁴But I tell you it will be worse for you in the day of judgment than for Sodom.”

Jesus Offers Rest to His People

²⁵Then Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and smart people. But you have shown these things to people that are like little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, you did this because this is what you really wanted to do.

²⁷“My Father has given me all things. No person knows the Son—only the Father knows the Son. And no person knows the Father—only the Son knows the Father. And the only people that will know about the Father are those people the Son chooses to tell.

²⁸“Come to me all you people that are tired and have heavy burdens. I will give you rest. ²⁹Accept my work and learn from me. I am gentle and humble in spirit. And you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰Yes, the work that I ask you to accept is easy. The burden I give you to carry is not heavy.”

Some Jews Criticize Jesus

12 About that same time, Jesus was walking through the fields of grain on a Sabbath day.* Jesus’ followers were with him, and they were hungry. So the followers began to pick the grain and eat it. ²The Pharisees* saw this. They said to Jesus, “Look! Your followers are doing something that is against the Jewish law to do on the Sabbath day.”

³Jesus answered, “You have read what David* did when he and the people with him

John John the Baptizer. He preached to people about Christ’s coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

demon Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes.

They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum Towns by Lake Galilee where Jesus preached to the people.

Tyre and Sidon Towns where very bad people lived.

sackcloth A rough cloth of animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

were hungry. 'David went into God's house. David and the people with him ate the bread that was offered to God. It was against the law for David or the people with him to eat that bread. Only the priests were allowed to eat it. 'And you have read in the law of Moses, that on every Sabbath day* the priests in the temple* break the law about the Sabbath day. But the priests are not wrong for doing that. 'I tell you that there is something here that is greater than the temple. 'The Scripture* says, 'I don't want animal sacrifices; I want kindness among people.'* You don't really know what those words mean. If you understood those words, then you would not judge those people that have done nothing wrong.

"The Son of Man* is Lord (*ruler*) over the Sabbath day.*

Jesus Heals a Man's Crippled Hand

'Jesus left that place and went into their synagogue.* 'In the synagogue, there was a man with a crippled hand. Some Jews there were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus of doing wrong. So they asked Jesus, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath day?"*

"Jesus answered, "If any of you has a sheep, and the sheep falls into a ditch on the Sabbath day, then you will take the sheep and help it out of the ditch. "Surely a man is more important than a sheep. So the law of Moses, allows people to do good things on the Sabbath day."

"Then Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, "Let me see your hand." The man put his hand out for Jesus, and the hand became well again, the same as the other hand.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

temple Special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

'I ... people' Quote from Hosea 6:6.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Is it ... day It was against Jewish law to work on the Sabbath day.

"But the Pharisees* left and made plans to kill Jesus.

Jesus Is God's Chosen Servant

"Jesus knew what the Pharisees* were doing. So Jesus left that place. Many people followed Jesus, and he healed all the sick people. "But Jesus warned the people not to tell other people who he was. "Jesus did these things to make happen what Isaiah the prophet* said. Isaiah said,

" "Here is my servant; I (*God*) have chosen him.

I love him and I am pleased with him;
I will put my Spirit on him,
And he will tell about the way
I will judge the non-Jewish people fairly.

" He will not argue or shout;
People will not hear his voice
in the streets.

" He will not break the reed
that is already bent;
He will not stop the light
that has almost stopped burning.
He will continue until he makes fair
judgment win the victory.

" All people will hope in him."

Isaiah 42:1-4

Jesus' Power Is from God

"Then some people brought a man to Jesus. This man was blind and could not talk, because he had a demon* inside him. Jesus healed the man, and the man could talk and see. "All the people were amazed. The people said, "Maybe this man (*Jesus*) is the Son of David*, that God promised to send to us!"

"The Pharisees* heard the people saying this. The Pharisees said, "Jesus uses the power

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

demon Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of David Name for the Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

of Beelzebul (*the devil*) to force demons out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons."

²⁵Jesus knew the things that the Pharisees* were thinking. So Jesus said to them, "Every kingdom that is fighting against itself will be destroyed. And every city that is divided cannot continue. And every family that is divided cannot succeed. ²⁶So if Satan (*the devil*) forces out his own demons,* then Satan is divided. And his kingdom will not be able to continue. ²⁷You say that I use the power of Satan when I force out demons. If that is true, then what power do your people use when they force out demons? So your own people prove that you are wrong. ²⁸But I use the power of God's Spirit to force out demons. This shows that the kingdom of God has come to you.

²⁹"If a person wants to enter a strong man's house and steal his things, first the person must tie the strong man. Then the person can steal the things from the strong man's house.

³⁰"If a person is not with me, then he is against me. The person that does not work with me is working against me. ³¹So I tell you, people can be forgiven of every sin they do. And people can be forgiven for every bad thing they say. But if a person speaks against (*refuses to accept*) the Holy Spirit,* then that person will not be forgiven. ³²Any person that says things against the Son of Man* can be forgiven. But any person that says things against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. That person will not be forgiven now or in the future.

The Things You Do Show What You Are

³³"If you want good fruit, you must make the tree good. If your tree is not good then it will have bad fruit. A tree is known by the kind of fruit it gives. ³⁴You snakes! You are evil

people! How can you say anything good? The mouth speaks the things that are in the heart.

³⁵A good person has good things saved in his heart. And so he speaks the good things that come from his heart. But an evil person has evil saved in his heart. So he speaks the evil things that come from his heart. ³⁶And I tell you that people will have to explain about every careless thing they have said. This will happen on the day of judgment. ³⁷The words you have said will be used to judge you. Some of your words will make you right, but some of your words will make you guilty."

The Jews Ask Jesus for Proof

³⁸Then some of the Pharisees* and teachers of the law answered Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to see you do a miracle* as a sign (*proof*)."

³⁹Jesus answered, "Evil and sinful people are the ones that want to see a miracle for a sign (*proof*). But no miracle will be given as a sign to those people. The only sign will be the miracle that happened to the prophet* Jonah. ⁴⁰Jonah was in the stomach of the big fish for three days and three nights. In the same way, the Son of Man* will be in the grave three days and three nights. ⁴¹And on the judgment day, the men from Nineveh* will stand up with you people that live today, and they will show that you are wrong (*guilty*). Why? Because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their lives. And I tell you that I am greater than Jonah! ⁴²On the judgment day, the Queen of the South* will stand up with you people that live today, and she will show that you are wrong (*guilty*). Why? Because that queen traveled from far, far away to listen to Solomon's wise teaching. And I tell you that I am greater than Solomon!

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

if Satan ... demons Literally, "if Satan forces out Satan."

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

miracle Amazing work done by the power of God.

prophet Person who spoke for God. The story of Jonah is in the Old Testament book of Jonah.

Nineveh City where Jonah preached. Read Jonah 3.

Queen ... South Queen of Sheba. She traveled 1000 miles to learn God's wisdom from Solomon. Read 1 Kings 10:1-13.

People Today Are Full of Evil

⁴“When an evil spirit [from the devil, comes out of a person, that spirit travels through dry places looking for a place to rest. But that spirit finds no place to rest. “So the spirit says, ‘I will go back to the home (*person*) I left.’ When the spirit comes back to that person, the spirit finds that home (*person*) still empty. That home is swept clean and made neat. “Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself. Then all the spirits go into that person and live there. And that person has even more trouble than he had before. It is the same way with the evil people that live today.”

Jesus' Followers Are His Family

“While Jesus was talking to the people his mother and brothers stood outside. They wanted to talk to Jesus. “A person told Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside. They want to talk to you.”

“Jesus answered, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” “Then Jesus pointed to his followers and said, “See! These people are my mother and my brothers. “My true brother and sister and mother is any person that does the things my Father in heaven wants.”

Jesus Uses a Story About Planting Seed

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ²Many, many people gathered around Jesus. So Jesus got into a boat and sat down. All the people stayed on the shore. ³Then Jesus used stories to teach the people many things. Jesus said: “A farmer went out to plant his seed. “While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁴Some seed fell on rocky ground. The ground there did not have enough dirt. The seed grew very fast there, because the ground was not deep. “But when the sun rose, it burned the plants. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. ⁵Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. ⁶Some other seed

fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed grew and made grain. Some plants made 100 times more grain. Some plants made 60 times more, and some made 30 times more grain. “You people that hear me, listen!”

Why Jesus Used Stories to Teach

⁷The followers came to Jesus and asked, “Why do you use these stories to teach the people?”

⁸Jesus answered, “Only you can know the secret truths about the kingdom of heaven. Those other people cannot know these secret truths. ⁹The person that has some understanding, will be given more. And he will have all he needs. But the person that does not have much understanding, will lose even the little understanding, that he has. ¹⁰This is why I use these stories to teach the people: The people see, but they don't really see. The people hear, but they don't really understand. “So these people show that the things Isaiah said about them are true:

“You people will listen
and you will hear,
but you will not understand.
You people will look
and you will see,
but you will not understand
what you see.

- ¹¹ Yes, the hearts (*minds*) of these people (*the Jews*) are now hard. These people have ears, but they don't listen, and these people refuse to see [the truth]. This has happened so that these people will not see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their minds. This has happened so that they will not turn to me to heal them.”

Isaiah 6:9-10

¹²But you are blessed. You understand the things you see with your eyes. And you understand the things you hear with your ears.

¹⁷"I tell you the truth. Many prophets* and good people wanted to see the things that you now see. But they did not see these things. And many prophets and good people wanted to hear the things that you now hear. But they did not hear these things.

Jesus Explains the Seeds

¹⁸"So listen to the meaning of that story about the farmer. ¹⁹What is the seed that fell by the path? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching about the kingdom but does not understand it. The Evil One (*the devil*) comes and takes away the things that were planted in that person's heart. ²⁰And what is the seed that fell on rocky ground? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching and quickly accepts that teaching with joy. ²¹But that person does not let the teaching go deep into his life. He keeps that teaching only a short time. When trouble or persecution* comes because of the teaching he accepted, then he quickly quits. ²²And what is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching but lets worries about this life and love for money stop that teaching from growing. So the teaching does not make fruit* in that person's life. ²³But what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That seed is like the person that hears the teaching and understands it. That person grows and makes fruit, sometimes 100 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 30 times more."

A Story About Wheat and Weeds

²⁴Then Jesus used another story to teach them. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man that planted good seed in his field. ²⁵That night, all the people were asleep. The man's enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. Then the enemy went away. ²⁶Later, the wheat grew and heads of grain grew on the wheat plants. But at the same time the weeds

also grew. ²⁷Then the man's servants came to him and said, 'You planted good seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?'

²⁸"The man answered, 'An enemy planted weeds.'

"The servants asked, 'Do you want us to go pull the weeds?'

²⁹"The man answered, 'No, because when you pull up the weeds, you might also pull up the wheat. ³⁰Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time. At the harvest time I will tell the workers this: First gather the weeds and tie them together to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it to my barn.'"

Jesus Teaches with More Stories

³¹Then Jesus told the people another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. A person plants that seed in his field. ³²That seed is one of the smallest of all seeds. But when the seed grows, it is one of the largest garden plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for the birds to come and make nests in its branches."

³³Then Jesus told the people another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough (*bread*) rise."

³⁴Jesus used stories to tell all these things to the people. Jesus always used stories to teach the people. ³⁵This is the same as what the prophet* said:

"I will speak using stories;
I will tell things that have been secrets
since the world was made."

Psalm 78:2

Jesus Explains a Hard Story

³⁶Then Jesus left the people and went into the house. His followers came to him and said, "Explain to us the meaning of the story about the weeds in the field."

prophets People that spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by God's enemies.

fruit The things God wants his people to do.

prophet Person that spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

³⁷Jesus answered, "The person that planted the good seed in the field is the Son of Man.*
³⁸The field is the world. And the good seed are all of God's children in the kingdom. The weeds are those people that belong to the Evil One (*the devil*).³⁹ And the enemy that planted the bad seed is the devil. The harvest time is the end of the world.* And the workers that gather are God's angels.

⁴⁰"The weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire. It will be the same at the end of this world.*
⁴¹"The Son of Man* will send his angels, and his angels will find the people that cause sin and all people that do evil. The angels will take those people out of his kingdom.
⁴²"The angels will throw those people into the place of fire. In that place the people will be crying and grinding their teeth (with pain).
⁴³"Then the good people will shine like the sun. They will be in the kingdom of their Father. You people that hear me, listen!

Stories About a Treasure and a Pearl

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. One day a man found the treasure. The man was very happy to find the treasure. He hid the treasure in the field again. The man went and sold everything that he owned to buy that field.

⁴⁵"Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a salesman looking for fine pearls. "One day the salesman found a very fine pearl. The salesman went and sold everything he had to buy that pearl.

A Story About a Fishing Net

⁴⁶"Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was put into the lake. The net caught many different kinds of fish. "The net became full, so the fishermen pulled the net to the shore. The fishermen sat down and put all the good fish in baskets. Then they threw away the bad fish.⁴⁷"It will be the same at the end of this world.* The angels will come and separate the evil people

from the good people. ³⁹The angels will throw the evil people into the place of fire. In that place the people will cry and grind their teeth (with pain)."

⁴⁰Jesus asked his followers, "Do you understand all these things?"

The followers answered, "Yes, we understand."

⁴¹Then Jesus said to the followers, "So every teacher of the law who has been taught about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house. That person has new things and old things saved in that house. And that person brings out those new things and old things."

Jesus Goes to His Home Town

⁴²When Jesus finished teaching with these stories, he left there. ⁴³Jesus went to the town where he grew up. Jesus taught the people in the synagogue,* and the people were amazed. The people said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and this power to do miracles?"⁴⁴ "This is only the son of the carpenter. And his mother is Mary. His brothers are James, Joseph, Simon and Judas.⁴⁵ And all his sisters are here with us. So where does this man get this wisdom and the power to do these things?"⁴⁶ And the people refused to accept Jesus.

But Jesus said to the people, "Other people give honor to a prophet.* But people in that prophet's own town or own home don't give honor to him."

⁴⁷The people there did not believe in Jesus. So Jesus did not do many miracles there.

Herod Hears About Jesus

14 At that time Herod,* the ruler of Galilee, heard the things people said about Jesus. ²So Herod said to his servants, "Jesus is really John the Baptizer. He is risen from death. That is why he is able to do these miracles.*"

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

prophet Person that spoke for God.

Herod Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

world Literally, "this age," or "this time."

How John the Baptizer Was Killed

¹Before this time, Herod* had arrested John. Herod had tied John with chains and put him into prison. Herod arrested John because of Herodias. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. Herod arrested John because John told Herod: "It is not right for you to have Herodias." Herod wanted to kill John, but he was afraid of the people. The people believed that John was a prophet.*

²On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced for Herod and his group. Herod was very pleased with her. So Herod promised that he would give her anything she wanted. Herodias told her daughter what to ask for. So she said to Herod, "Give me the head of John the Baptizer here on this plate." King Herod was very sad. But he had promised to give the daughter anything she wanted. And the people eating with Herod had heard his promise. So Herod ordered that the thing she asked be done. He sent men to cut off John's head in the prison. And the men brought John's head on a plate and gave it to the girl. Then the girl took the head to her mother, Herodias. John's followers came and got his body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus what happened.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

¹When Jesus heard what happened to John, Jesus left in a boat. Jesus went alone to a place where there were no people. But the people heard that Jesus left. So the people left their towns and followed Jesus. They went by land to the same place Jesus went. When Jesus came there, he saw many, many people there. Jesus felt sorry for them, and he healed the people that were sick.

²Late that afternoon, the followers came to Jesus and said, "No people live in this place. And it is already late. Send the people away so they can go to the towns and buy food for themselves."

Jesus answered, "The people don't need to go away. You give them some food to eat."

The followers answered, "But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish."

Jesus said, "Bring the bread and the fish to me." Then Jesus told the people to sit down on the grass. Jesus took the five loaves of bread and the two fish. Jesus looked into the sky and thanked God for the food. Then Jesus divided the loaves of bread. Jesus gave the bread to the followers, and the followers gave the bread to the people. All the people ate and were filled. After the people finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. There were about 5,000 men there that ate. There were also women and children that ate.

Jesus Walks on the Lake

¹Then Jesus made the followers get into the boat. Jesus told them to go to the other side of the lake. Jesus said that he would come later. Jesus stayed there to tell the people they could go home. After Jesus said good-bye to the people, he went up into the hills. Jesus went there alone to pray. It was late, and Jesus was there alone. At this time, the boat was already far away on the lake. The boat was having trouble because of the waves. The wind was blowing against it.

²Between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus' followers were still in the boat. Jesus came to them. He was walking on the water. The followers saw Jesus walking on the water and they were afraid. They said, "It's a ghost!" The followers shouted with fear.

But Jesus quickly spoke to them. Jesus said, "Don't worry! It's me! Don't be afraid."

Peter said, "Lord, if that is really you, then tell me to come to you on the water."

Jesus said, "Come, Peter."

Then Peter left the boat and walked on the water to Jesus. But while Peter was walking on the water, he saw the wind and the waves. Peter became afraid and began sinking down into the water. Peter shouted, "Lord, save me!"

Then Jesus caught Peter with his hand. Jesus said, "Your faith is small. Why did you

doubt?"

³²After Peter and Jesus were in the boat, the wind became calm. ³³Then those followers in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, "Truly you are the Son of God."

³⁴After they crossed the lake, they came to the shore at Gennesaret. ³⁵The people in that place saw Jesus. They knew who he was. So they told the other people all around there that Jesus had come. The people brought all their sick people to Jesus. ³⁶The people begged Jesus to let them only touch his coat to be healed. And all the sick people that touched Jesus' coat were healed.

God's Law and Rules That People Make

15 Then some Pharisees* and teachers of the law came to Jesus. They came from Jerusalem and asked Jesus, ²"Why do your followers not obey the rules given to us by our great people that lived before us? Your followers don't wash their hands before they eat!"

³Jesus answered, "And why do you refuse to obey God's command so that you can follow those rules you have? ⁴God said, 'Give honor to (respect) your father and mother.*' And God also said, 'Any person that says bad things to his father or mother must be killed.*' ⁵But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, 'I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it to help you. I will give it to God.' ⁶You teach that person to not honor his father. So you teach that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow those rules you have. ⁷You are hypocrites*! Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. Isaiah said:

⁸ "These people say they honor me,

but they don't really make me an important part of their lives.

⁹ Their worship of me is for nothing. The things they teach are only rules that people have made."

Isaiah 29:13

¹⁰Jesus called the people to him. Jesus said, "Listen and understand what I am saying. ¹¹It is not the things a person puts in his mouth that make him wrong.* It is the things a person says with his mouth that make him wrong."

¹²Then the followers came to Jesus and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees* are angry because of what you said?"

¹³Jesus answered, "Every plant that my Father in heaven has not planted himself will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴Stay away from the Pharisees.* They lead the people, but they are like blind men leading other blind men. And if a blind man leads another blind man, then both men will fall into a hole."

¹⁵Peter said, "Explain to us what you said earlier to the people."

¹⁶Jesus said, "You still have trouble understanding? ¹⁷Surely you know that all the food that enters a man's mouth goes into the stomach. Then that food goes out of the body. ¹⁸But the bad things a person says with his mouth come from the way a person thinks. And these are the things that make a person wrong.* ¹⁹All these bad things begin in a person's mind: evil thoughts, murder, adultery,* sexual sins, stealing, lying, saying bad things against other people. ²⁰These things make a person wrong. But not washing his hands before he eats does not make a person wrong."

Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman

²¹Jesus left that place and went to the area of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that area came to Jesus. The woman shouted, "Lord, Son of David,* please help me! My

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

'Give honor ... mother' Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

'Any ... killed' Quote from Ex. 21:17.

hypocrites Bad people who act like they are good.

wrong Literally, "unclean" or "not pure."

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

Son of David Name for Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

daughter has a demon* inside her, and she is suffering very much."

²But Jesus did not answer the woman. So the followers came to Jesus and begged him, "Tell the woman to go away. She is following us and shouting."

³Jesus said, "God sent me only to the lost people* of Israel (*the Jews*)."

⁴Then the woman came to Jesus again. She bowed before Jesus and said, "Lord, help me!"

⁵Jesus answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs."

⁶The woman said, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the pieces of food that fall from their master's table."

⁷Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! I will do the thing you wanted me to do." And at that time the woman's daughter was healed.

Jesus Heals Many People

⁸Then Jesus left that place and went to the shore of Lake Galilee. Jesus went up on a hill and sat down.

⁹Many, many people came to Jesus. These people brought many other sick people and put the sick people before Jesus. There were people that could not walk, blind people, crippled people, deaf people, and many others. Jesus healed all these people. ¹⁰People were amazed when they saw that people that could not speak were able to speak again. Crippled people were made strong again. People that could not walk were able to walk again. The blind were able to see again. All the people thanked the God of Israel (*the Jews*) for this.

Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People

¹¹Jesus called his followers to him and said, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me three days, and now they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry. They might faint while going home."

¹²The followers asked Jesus, "Where can we get enough bread to feed all these people? We are far away from any town."

¹³Jesus asked, "How many loaves of bread do you have?"

The followers answered, "We have seven loaves of bread and a few small fish."

¹⁴Jesus told the people to sit on the ground.

¹⁵Jesus took the seven loaves of bread and the fish. Then Jesus gave thanks to God for the food. Jesus divided the food and gave it to the followers. The followers gave the food to the people. ¹⁶All the people ate and were full. After this, the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. ¹⁷There were about 4,000 men there that ate. There were also women and children that ate. ¹⁸After they ate, Jesus told the people they could go home. Jesus got into the boat and went to the area of Magadan.

The Jewish Leaders Test Jesus

16 The Pharisees* and Sadducees* came to Jesus. They wanted to test Jesus. So they asked Jesus to show them a miracle* to prove that he was from God.

¹Jesus answered, "When you people see the sunset, you know what the weather will be. If the sky is red, then you say we will have good weather. ²And in the morning you watch the sunrise. If the sky is dark and red, then you say that it will be a rainy day. These things are signs of the weather. You see these signs in the sky and you know what they mean. In the same way, you see the things that are happening now. These things are also signs. But you don't know the meaning of these signs. ³Evil and sinful people are the kind of people that want a miracle* for a sign (*proof*). But those people

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

miracle A miracle is an amazing work done by the power of God.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.
people Literally, "sheep."

will have no sign—only the sign of Jonah.*” Then Jesus left that place and went away.

Jesus Warns Against the Jewish Leaders

“Jesus and his followers went across the lake (*Lake Galilee*). But the followers forgot to bring bread. “Jesus said to the followers, “Be careful! Guard against the yeast (*bad influence*) of the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.*”

“The followers discussed the meaning of this. They said, “Did Jesus say this because we forgot to bring bread?”

“Jesus knew that the followers were talking about this. So Jesus asked them, “Why are you talking about not having bread? Your faith is small. “You still don’t understand? Remember the five loaves of bread that fed the 5,000 people? And remember that you filled many baskets with bread after the people finished eating.” “And remember the seven loaves of bread that fed the 4,000 people? Remember that you filled many baskets with bread after the people finished eating.” “So I was not talking to you about bread. Why don’t you understand that? I am telling you to be careful and guard against the yeast (*bad influence*) of the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.*”

“Then the followers understood what Jesus meant. Jesus was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread. Jesus was telling them to guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Peter Says That Jesus is the Christ

“Jesus went to the area of Caesarea Philippi. Jesus said to his followers, “I am the Son of Man.* Who do the people say I am?”

“The followers answered, “Some people say you are John, the Baptizer. Other people

say you are Elijah.* And some people say that you are Jeremiah* or one of the prophets.*”

“Then Jesus said to his followers, “And who do you say I am?”

“Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ,* the Son of the living God.”

“Jesus answered, “You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah. No person taught you that. My Father in heaven showed you who I am. “So I tell you, you are Peter.* And I will build my church on this rock. The power of death* will not be able to defeat my church. “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God’s judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God’s forgiveness.*”

“Then Jesus warned his followers not to tell any person that he was the Christ.

Jesus Says That He Must Die

“From that time Jesus began telling his followers that he must go to Jerusalem. Jesus explained that the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law would make him suffer many things. And Jesus told his followers that he must be killed. Then, on the third day, he would be raised from death.

“Peter spoke to Jesus alone. Peter began to criticize Jesus. Peter said, “God save you from those things, Lord! Those things will never happen to you!”

“Then Jesus said to Peter, “Go away from me, Satan*! You are not helping me! You don’t care about the things of God. You only care about things that people think are important.”

Elijah Man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

Jeremiah Man who spoke for God about 600 B.C.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Peter The Greek name “Peter,” like the Aramaic name “Cephas,” means “rock.”

power of death Literally, the “gates of Hades.”

When ... forgiveness Literally, “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Satan Name for the devil meaning “the enemy.” Jesus means that Peter was talking like Satan.

sign of Jonah Jonah’s three days in a big fish are like Jesus’ three days in the grave. Read the book of Jonah.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don’t have another life after death.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

¹Then Jesus said to his followers, "If any person wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. That person must accept the cross (*suffering*) that is given to him, and he must follow me. ²The person that wants to save his life will lose it. And every person that gives his life for me will save it. ³It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he loses his soul. A person could never pay enough to buy back his soul. ⁴The Son of Man* will come again with his Father's glory and with his angels. At that time, the Son of Man will reward each person for the things he has done. ⁵I tell you the truth. There are some people standing here that will see the Son of Man coming with his kingdom before they die."

Jesus Seen with Moses and Elijah

17 Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James, and John the brother of James and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. ²While these followers watched him, Jesus was changed. His face became bright like the sun. And his clothes became white as light. ³Then two men were there, talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.*

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you want, I will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

⁵While Peter was talking, a bright cloud came over them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, "This (*Jesus*) is my Son and I love him. I am very pleased with him. Obey him!"

⁶The followers with Jesus heard this voice. They were very afraid, so they fell to the ground. ⁷But Jesus came to the followers and touched them. Jesus said, "Stand up. Don't be afraid." ⁸The followers looked up, and they saw Jesus was now alone.

⁹Jesus and the followers were walking down the mountain. Jesus commanded the followers, "Don't tell any person about the things you saw on the mountain. Wait until the Son of Man* has been raised from death. Then you can tell people about what you saw."

¹⁰The followers asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah* must come first, before the Christ* comes,?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah is coming. And it is true that Elijah will make all things the way they should be. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come. People did not know who he was. People did to him all the bad things they wanted to do. It is the same with the Son of Man.* Those same people will make the Son of Man suffer." ¹³Then the followers understood that Jesus meant that John the Baptizer was really Elijah.

Jesus Heals a Sick Boy

¹Jesus and the followers went back to the people. A man came to Jesus and bowed before him. ²The man said, "Lord, be kind to my son. He has epilepsy* and is suffering very much. My son often falls into the fire or into the water. ³I brought my son to your followers, but they could not heal him."

⁴Jesus answered, "You people have no faith. Your lives are all wrong. How long must I stay with you? How long must I continue to be patient with you? Bring the boy here."

⁵Jesus gave a strong command to the demon* inside the boy. Then the demon came out of the boy, and the boy was healed.

⁶Then the followers came to Jesus alone. They said, "We tried to force the demon out of the boy, but we could not. Why were we not able to make the demon go out?"

⁷Jesus answered, "You were not able to make the demon go out, because your faith is too small. I tell you the truth. If your faith is as

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Moses and Elijah Two of the most important Jewish leaders in the past.

Elijah Man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

epilepsy A disease that causes a person sometimes to lose control of his body.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

big as a mustard seed,* then you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there.' And the mountain will move. All things will be possible for you." ²⁰*

Jesus Talks About His Death

²¹Later, the followers met together in Galilee. Jesus said to the followers, "The Son of Man* will be given into the control of men. ²²Those men will kill the Son of Man. But on the third day the Son of Man will be raised from death." The followers were very sad to hear that Jesus would be killed,.

Jesus Teaches About Paying Taxes

²³Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. In Capernaum some men came to Peter. They were the men that collected the two-drachma tax.* They asked, "Does your teacher pay the two-drachma tax?"

²⁴Peter answered, "Yes, Jesus pays the tax."

Peter went into the house where Jesus was. Before Peter could speak, Jesus said to him, "The kings on the earth get different kinds of taxes from people. But who are the people that pay the taxes? Are these people the king's children? Or is it other people that pay the taxes? What do you think?"

²⁵Peter answered, "The other people pay the taxes."

Jesus said to Peter, "Then the children of the king don't have to pay taxes. ²⁶But we don't want to make these tax collectors angry. So pay the tax in this way: Go to the lake and fish. After you catch the first fish, open the fish's mouth. Inside its mouth you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that coin and give it to the tax collectors. That will pay the tax for you and me."

mustard seed This seed is very, very small, but the plant grows taller than a man.

Verse 21 Some copies add: "That kind of spirit comes out only if you use prayer and fasting."

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

two-drachma tax A tax that every Jew had to pay once each year for the temple.

Jesus Tells Who Is the Greatest

18 At that time the followers came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

²Jesus called a little child to come to him. Jesus stood the child before the followers.

³Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. You must change and become like little children in your hearts. If you don't do this, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴The greatest (*most important*) person in the kingdom of heaven is the person that makes himself humble like this child.

⁵"If a person accepts a little child like this in my name, then that person accepts me. ⁶If one of these little children believes in me, and another person causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for that person. It would be better for that person to have a large rock tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea. ⁷I feel sorry for the people in the world because of the things that make people sin. Those things must happen. But it will be very bad for the person that causes those things to happen. ⁸If your hand or your foot makes you sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and two feet but be thrown into the fire (*hell*) that burns forever. ⁹If your eye makes you sin, take it out and throw it away. It is better for you to have only one eye but have life forever. That is much better than to have two eyes but be thrown into the fire of hell.

Jesus Uses a Story About a Lost Sheep

¹⁰"Be careful. Don't think these little children are worth nothing. I tell you that these little children have angels in heaven. And those angels are always with my Father in heaven.

¹¹*

¹²"If a man has 100 sheep, but one of the sheep becomes lost, then the man will leave the other 99 sheep on the hill. He will go to look

Verse 11 Some Greek copies add verse 11: "The Son of Man came to save lost people."

for the lost sheep. Right? ¹³And if the man finds the lost sheep, the man is happier about that one sheep than about the 99 sheep that were never lost. I tell you the truth. ¹⁴In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want any of these little children to be lost.

When a Person Does Something Wrong

¹⁵"If your brother or sister, does something wrong to you, go and tell that person what he did wrong. Do this alone with that person. If that person listens to you, then you have helped that person to be your brother again. ¹⁶But if that person refuses to listen, then go to him again and bring one or two people with you. Then there will be two or three other people that will be able to tell all that happened. ¹⁷If that person refuses to listen to them, then tell the church (*group of believers*). If that person refuses to listen to the church, then treat him like he is a person that does not believe in God. Treat him like he is a tax collector.*

¹⁸"I tell you the truth. When you speak judgment here on earth, that judgment will be God's judgment. When you promise forgiveness here on earth, that forgiveness will be God's forgiveness.*

¹⁹"Also, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about something, then you can pray for it. And the thing you ask for will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰This is true, because if two or three people are together believing in me, I am there with them."

Story About Forgiveness

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, when my brother continues to do something wrong to me, how many times must I forgive him? Should I forgive him as many as seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, you must forgive him more than seven times. You must

continue to forgive him even if he does wrong to you seventy-seven times.*"

²³"So the kingdom of heaven is like a king that decided to collect the money that his servants owed him. ²⁴The king began to collect his money. One servant owed the king several thousand pounds of silver. ²⁵The servant was not able to pay the money to his master, the king. So the master ordered that everything the servant owned should be sold, even the servant's wife and children. The money would be used to pay the king what the servant owed.

²⁶"But the servant fell on his knees and begged, 'Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.' ²⁷The master felt sorry for his servant. So the master told the servant he did not have to pay. The master let the servant go free.

²⁸"Later, that same servant found another servant that owed him a few dollars' worth of silver. The servant grabbed the other servant around the neck and said, 'Pay me the money you owe me!'

²⁹"The other servant fell on his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me. I will pay you everything I owe.'

³⁰"But the first servant refused to be patient. The servant told the judge that the other servant owed him money, and the other servant was thrown into prison. The servant had to stay in prison until he could pay everything he owed. ³¹All the other servants saw what happened. They were very sorry. So they went and told their master everything that happened.

³²"Then the master called his servant in and said, 'You evil servant. You owed me much money, but you begged me to forgive your debt. So I told you that you did not have to pay anything. ³³So you should have given the same mercy to that other man that is a servant with you. You should have given him the same mercy that I gave you.' ³⁴The master was very angry, so he put the servant in prison to be punished. And the servant had to stay in prison until he could pay everything he owed.

tax collector A Jew hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

When ... forgiveness Literally, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

seventy-seven times Or, "seventy times seven." See Gen. 4:28.

³⁵"This king did the same as my heavenly Father will do to you. You must truly forgive your brother or sister, or my heavenly Father will not forgive you."

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

19 After Jesus said all these things, he left Galilee. Jesus went into the area of Judea on the other side of the Jordan River. ¹Many people followed Jesus. Jesus healed the sick people there.

²Some Pharisees* came to Jesus. They tried to make Jesus say something wrong. They asked Jesus, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife for any reason he chooses?"

³Jesus answered, "Surely you have read this in the Scriptures,*: When God made the world, he made people male and female.* ⁴And God said, 'So a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. And the two people will become one.*' ⁵So the two people are not two, but one. God joined those two people together. So no person should separate them."

⁶The Pharisees* asked, "So why did Moses give a command allowing a man to divorce his wife by writing a certificate of divorce?"

⁷Jesus answered, "Moses allowed you to divorce your wives because you refused to accept God's teaching. But divorce was not allowed in the beginning. ⁸I tell you that any person that divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of the sin of adultery.* The only reason for a person to divorce and marry again is if his first wife had sexual relations with another man."

⁹The followers said to Jesus, "If that is the only reason a man can divorce his wife, then it is better not to marry."

¹⁰Jesus answered, "Not every person can accept this truth about marriage,. But God has made some people able to accept it. ¹¹There are

different reasons why some men cannot marry.* Some men were born without the ability to make children. Other men were made that way later in life by other people. And other men have given up marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. But the person that can marry, should accept this teaching about marriage.*"

Jesus Welcomes Children

¹²Then the people brought their little children to Jesus so that Jesus could put his hands on them* and pray for them. When the followers saw this, they told the people to stop bringing their children to Jesus. ¹³But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people that are like these children." ¹⁴After Jesus put his hands on the children he left there.

A Rich Man Refuses to Follow Jesus

¹⁵A man came to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to have life forever?"

¹⁶Jesus answered, "Why do you ask me about what is good? Only God is good. But if you want to have life forever, obey the commands."

¹⁷The man asked, "Which commands?"

Jesus answered, "'You must not murder anyone, you must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not steal anything, you must not tell lies about other people, ¹⁸you must honor (respect) your father and mother,* and ¹⁹you must love other people the same as you love yourself.*"

²⁰The young man said, "I have obeyed all these things. What else do I need?"

some men cannot marry Literally, "some men are eunuchs."

But ... marriage This may also mean, "The person that can accept this teaching about not marrying should accept it." **put his hands on them** Showing that Jesus gave special blessings to these children.

'You must ... mother' Quote from Ex. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20.

'you ... yourself' Quote from Lev. 19:18.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
'he made ... female' Quote from Gen. 1:27 or 5:2.
'So ... one' Quote from Gen. 2:24.
adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

²¹Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, then go and sell all the things you own. Give the money to the poor people. If you do this, you will have a rich treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me!"

²²But when the man heard this, he was very sad. The man was very rich and wanted to keep his money. So he left Jesus.

²³Then Jesus said to his followers, "I tell you the truth. It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Yes, I tell you that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁵When the followers heard this they were very surprised. They asked, "Then who can be saved?"

²⁶Jesus looked at his followers and said, "This is something that people cannot do themselves. But God can do all things."

²⁷Peter said to Jesus, "We left everything we had and followed you. So what will we have?"

²⁸Jesus said to the followers, "I tell you the truth. When the new world is made, the Son of Man* will sit on his great throne. And all of you that followed me will also sit on thrones. You will sit on twelve thrones and you will judge the twelve family groups of Israel.*

²⁹And every person that has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or farms to follow me will get much more than he left. And that person will have life forever.

³⁰Many people that have the highest place in life now will have the lowest place in the future. And many people that have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future.

Jesus Uses a Story About Farm Workers

20 "The kingdom of heaven is like a man that owned some land. The man grew grapes on his land. One morning, the man went out very early to hire some other people to

work in his field. ²The man agreed to pay the workers one silver coin* for working that day. Then the man sent the people into the field to work.

³At about nine o'clock the man went to the market place and saw some other people standing there. These people were doing nothing. ⁴So the man said to them, 'If you go and work in my field, I will pay you what your work is worth.' ⁵So the people went to work in the field.

⁶The man went out again about twelve o'clock and again at three o'clock. Both times the man hired some other people to work in his field. ⁷At about five o'clock the man went to the market place again. He saw some other people standing there. The man asked them, 'Why did you stand here all day doing nothing?'

⁸The people answered, 'No person gave us a job.'

⁹The man said to them, 'Then you can go and work in my field.'

¹⁰At the end of the day, the owner of the field said to the boss of all the workers, 'Call the workers and pay all of them. Start by paying the last people I hired. Then pay all of them, ending with the workers I hired first.'

¹¹The workers that were hired at five o'clock came to get their pay. Each worker got one silver coin. ¹²Then those workers that were hired first came to get their pay. Those workers thought they would be paid more than the other workers. But each one of those workers also received one silver coin. ¹³When they got their silver coin, these workers complained to the man that owned the land. ¹⁴The workers said, 'Those people were hired last and worked only one hour. But you paid them the same as us. And we worked hard all day in the hot sun.'

¹⁵But the man that owned the field said to one of those workers, 'Friend, I am being fair with you. You agreed to work for one silver coin. Right? ¹⁶So take your pay and go. I want to give the man that was hired last the same pay

Son of Man Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Israel First, Israel was the Jewish nation, but the name is also used to mean all of God's people.

silver coin A Roman denarius. One coin was the average pay for one day's work.

that I gave you. ¹⁵I can do what I want with my own money. Are you jealous because I am good to those people.?"

¹⁶"So the people that have the last place now will have the first place in the future. And the people that have the first place now will have the last place in the future."

Jesus Talks About His Own Death

¹⁷Jesus was going to Jerusalem. His twelve followers were with him. While they were walking, Jesus gathered the followers together and spoke to them privately. Jesus said to them, ¹⁸"We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man* will be given to the leading priests and the teachers of the law. The priests and teachers of the law will say that the Son of Man must die. ¹⁹They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. Those people will laugh at him and beat him with whips, and then they will kill him on a cross. But on the third day after his death, he will be raised to life again."

A Mother Asks a Special Favor

²⁰Then the wife of Zebedee came to Jesus. Her sons were with her. The mother bowed before Jesus and asked him to do something for her.

²¹Jesus said, "What do you want?"

She said, "Promise that one of my sons will sit at your right side in your kingdom. And promise that the other son will sit at your left side in your kingdom."

²²So Jesus said to the sons, "You don't understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must have?"

The sons answered, "Yes, we can!"

²³Jesus said to them, "Truly you will suffer the same things that I will suffer. But I cannot choose the person that will sit at my right side or my left side. My Father has decided that will have those places. He has prepared those places

for those people. Those places belong to them."

²⁴The other ten followers heard this. They became angry with the two brothers. ²⁵Jesus called all the followers together. Jesus said, "You know that the rulers of the non-Jewish people love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority over the people. ²⁶But it should not be that way with you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. ²⁷If one of you wants to become first, then he must serve you like a slave. ²⁸It is the same with the Son of Man.* The Son of Man did not come for other people to serve him. The Son of Man came to serve other people. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people."

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹When Jesus and his followers were leaving Jericho, many, many people followed Jesus. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the road. The blind men heard that Jesus was coming by. So the blind men shouted, "Lord, Son of David,* please help us!"

³¹All the people criticized the blind men. They told the blind men not to speak. But the blind men shouted more and more, "Lord, Son of David, please help us!"

³²Jesus stopped and said to the blind men, "What do you want me to do for you?"

³³The blind men answered, "Lord, we want to be able to see."

³⁴Jesus felt sorry for the blind men. Jesus touched their eyes and they were able to see. Then the men followed Jesus.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King

21 Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. But first they stopped at Bethphage at the hill called the Mount of Olives.* There Jesus sent two of his followers into the town. ²Jesus said to the followers, "Go to the town you can see there.

Son of Man Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

accept ... have Literally, "drink the cup that I must drink." Jesus used the idea of drinking from a cup to mean accepting the terrible things that would happen to him.

Son of David Name for the Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

When you enter it you will find a donkey tied there. With the donkey you will find a young donkey. Untie the two donkeys and bring them to me. ¹If any person asks you why you are taking the donkeys, tell that person, 'The Master needs these donkeys. He will send them back soon.'"

"This happened to make clear the full meaning of what the prophet* said:

- ¹ "Tell the city of Zion,
 'Now your king is coming to you.
 He is humble and he is riding
 on a donkey.
 He is riding on a young donkey,
 born from a work animal.'"

Zechariah 9:9

"The followers went and did what Jesus told them to do. ²The followers brought the mother donkey and the young donkey to Jesus. They put their coats on the donkeys, and Jesus sat on the coats. ³Jesus rode along the road to Jerusalem. Many people spread their coats on the road for Jesus. Other people cut branches from the trees and spread the branches on the road. ⁴Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Other people were walking behind Jesus. The people shouted,

- "Praise* to the Son of David*
 God bless the One that comes
 in the name of the Lord!
 Praise* to God in heaven!"

Psalms 118:26

⁵Then Jesus went into Jerusalem. All the people in the city were confused. They asked, "Who is this man?"

"The many people following Jesus answered "This man is Jesus. He is the prophet* from the town of Nazareth in Galilee."

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

Praise Literally, "Hosanna," a Hebrew word used in praying to God for help. At this time it was probably a shout of joy used in praising God or His Messiah.

Son of David Name for the Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

¹²Jesus went into the temple.* He threw out all the people that were selling and buying things there. Jesus turned over the tables that belonged to the men that were exchanging different kinds of money. And Jesus turned over the benches of those men that were selling doves. ¹³Jesus said to all the people there, "It is written in the Scriptures,, 'My house will be called a house for prayer.*' But you are changing God's house into a 'hiding place for thieves.*"

"Some blind people and some crippled people came to Jesus in the temple.* Jesus healed these people. ¹⁴The leading priests and the teachers of the law saw what Jesus did. They saw that Jesus was doing great things and saw the children praising Jesus in the temple. The children were saying, "Praise* to the Son of David.*" All these things made the priests and the teachers of the law angry.

"The leading priests and the teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Do you hear the things these children are saying?"

Jesus answered, "Yes. The Scripture* says, 'You (God) have taught children and babies to give praise.*' Have you not read that Scripture?"

¹⁵Then Jesus left that place and went out of the city to Bethany. Jesus stayed there that night.

Jesus Shows the Power of Faith

¹⁶Early the next morning, Jesus was going back to the city. Jesus was very hungry. ¹⁷Jesus saw a fig tree beside the road. Jesus went to the fig tree, to get a fig to eat. But there were no figs on the tree. There were only leaves. So Jesus said to the tree, "You will never again have fruit!" And then the tree dried up and died.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

'My house ... prayer' Quote from Is. 56:7.

'hiding ... thieves' Quote from Jer. 7:11.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

'You ... praise' Quote from Ps. 8:3 (Greek version).

²⁰The followers saw this. They were very surprised. They asked, "How did the fig tree dry up and die so quickly?"

²¹Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. If you have faith and no doubts, you will be able to do the same as I did to this tree. And you will be able to do more. You will be able to say to this mountain, 'Go, mountain, fall into the sea.' And if you have faith, it will happen. ²²If you believe, you will get anything you ask for in prayer."

Jewish Leaders Doubt Jesus' Authority

²³Jesus went to the temple.* While Jesus was teaching there, the leading priests and the older leaders of the people came to Jesus. They said to Jesus, "Tell us! What authority (*power*) do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus answered, "I will ask you a question too. If you answer me, then I will tell you what authority I have to do these things. ²⁵Tell me: When John baptized* people, did that come from God or from man?"

The priests and the Jewish leaders talked about Jesus' question. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ²⁶But if we say, 'It was from man,' then all the people will be angry with us. We are afraid of the people, because they all believe that John was a prophet."²⁷

²⁸So they answered Jesus, "We don't know where John's authority came from."

Then Jesus said, "Then I won't tell you what authority I have to do these things!

Jesus Uses a Story About Two Sons

²⁹"Tell me what you think about this: There was a man that had two sons. The man went to the first son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my field of grapes.'

³⁰"The son answered, 'I will not go.' But later the son decided he should go, and the son went.

³¹"Then the father went to the other son and said, 'Son, go and work today in my field of grapes.' The son answered, 'Yes, sir, I will go and work.' But the son did not go.

³²"Which of the two sons obeyed his father?"

The Jewish leaders answered, "The first son."

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth. You think, the tax collectors* and the prostitutes* are bad people. But they will enter the kingdom of God before you enter. ³³John came showing you the right way to live. And you did not believe John. But the tax collectors and prostitutes believed John. And you saw that the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. But you still refused to change and believe him.

God Sends His Son

³⁴"Listen to this story: There was a man that owned a field. He planted the field with grapes. He put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a wine press.* Then the man built a tower. He leased the land to some farmers. Then he left for a trip. ³⁵Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent his servants to the farmers to get his share of the grapes.

³⁶"But the farmers grabbed the servants and beat one. They killed another one and then killed a third servant with rocks. ³⁷So the man sent some other servants to the farmers. The man sent more servants than he sent the first time. But the farmers did the same thing to the servants that they did the first time. ³⁸So the man decided to send his son to the farmers. The man said, 'The farmers will respect my son.'

³⁹"But when the farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours!' ⁴⁰So the farmers took the

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury person or thing briefly under water.

prophet Person that spoke for God.

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

prostitutes Women paid by men for sexual sin.

wine press Place dug in rock used to crush grapes and collect the juice for making wine.

son, threw him out of the field, and killed him.

“So what will the owner of the field do to these farmers when he comes?”

“The Jewish priests and leaders said, ‘He will surely kill those evil men. Then he will lease the field to some other farmers. He will lease it to farmers that will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.’”

“Jesus said to them, ‘Surely you have read this in the Scriptures*:

‘The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone.*

The Lord did this,
and it is wonderful to us.’

Psalm 118:22-23

“So I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you. God’s kingdom will be given to people that do the things God wants in his kingdom. ‘The person that falls on this stone will be broken. And if the stone falls on a person, then it will crush that person.’”

“The leading priests and the Pharisees* heard these stories that Jesus told. They knew that Jesus was talking about them. “They wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. But they were afraid of the people, because the people believed that Jesus was a prophet.*

Story About People Invited to a Dinner

22 Jesus used stories to say some other things to the people. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a king that prepared a wedding dinner for his son. “The king invited some people to the feast. When the feast was ready, the king sent his servants to tell those people to come. But the people refused to come to the king’s feast.

“Then the king sent some more servants. The king said to the servants, ‘I have already invited those people. So tell them that my feast is ready. I have killed my best bulls and calves to be eaten. Everything is ready. Come to the

wedding feast.’

“The servants went and told the people to come. But the people refused to listen to the servants. Those people went to do other things. One person went to work in his field, and another person went to his business. “Some of the other people grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. “The king was very angry. The king sent his army to kill those people that killed his servants. And the army burned their city.

“After that, the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready. I invited those people, but they were not good enough to come to my feast. “So go to the street corners and invite all the people you see. Tell them to come to my feast.’ “So the servants went into the streets. The servants gathered all the people they could find. The servants brought good people and bad people to the place where the wedding feast was ready. And that place was filled with people.

“Then the king came in to see all the people. The king saw a man there that was not dressed in the right clothes for a wedding. “The king said, ‘Friend, how were you allowed to come in here? You are not wearing the right clothes for a wedding.’ But the man said nothing. “So the king told some servants, ‘Tie this man’s hands and feet. Throw the man out into the darkness. In that place, people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.’”

“Yes, many people are invited. But only a few are chosen.”

Some Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

“Then the Pharisees* left the place where Jesus was teaching. They made plans to catch Jesus saying something wrong. “The Pharisees sent some men to Jesus (to trick him). They sent some of their own followers and some men from the group called Herodians.* These men said, ‘Teacher, we know that you are an honest man. We know that you teach the truth about God’s way. You are not afraid of what other people think about you. All men are the same

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

prophet Person that spoke for God.

Herodians A Jewish political group.

to you. ¹⁷So tell us what you think. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar* Yes or no?"

¹⁸But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. So Jesus said, "You hypocrites*! Why are you trying to catch me saying something wrong? ¹⁹Show me a coin used for paying the tax." The men showed Jesus a silver coin. ²⁰Then Jesus asked, "Whose picture is on the coin? And whose name is written on the coin?"

²¹The men answered, "It is Caesar's picture and Caesar's name."

Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And give to God the things that are God's."

²²Those men heard what Jesus said, and they were amazed. They left him and went away.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

²³That same day some Sadducees* came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. ²⁴They said, "Teacher, Moses told us that if a married man dies and he had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²⁵There were seven brothers among us. The first one married but died. He had no children. So his brother married the woman. ²⁶Then the second brother also died. The same thing happened to the third brother and all the other brothers. ²⁷The woman was last to die. ²⁸But all seven men had married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will she be?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "You don't understand because you don't know what the Scriptures* say. And you don't know about the power of God. ³⁰At the time when people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People will not be married to each other. All people will be like

the angels in heaven. ³¹Surely you have read what God said to you about the rising from death? ³²God said, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'* ³³If God said he is their God, then, these men are not really dead. He is the God only of living people."

³⁴All the people heard this. They were amazed at Jesus' teaching.

Which Command Is the Most Important?

³⁵The Pharisees* learned that Jesus told the Sadducees* things they could not argue with. So the Pharisees met together. ³⁶One Pharisee was an expert in the law of Moses. That Pharisee asked Jesus a question to test him. ³⁷The Pharisee said, "Teacher, which command in the law is the most important?"

³⁸Jesus answered, "You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." ³⁹This is the first and most important command. ⁴⁰And the second command is like the first: 'You must love other people the same as you love yourself.' ⁴¹All of the law and the writings of the prophets* take their meaning from these two commands."

Jesus Asks the Pharisees a Question

⁴²So while the Pharisees* were together, Jesus asked them a question. ⁴³Jesus said, "What do you think about the Christ* Whose son is he?"

The Pharisees answered, "The Christ is the Son of David.*"

Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob Three of the most important leaders of the Old Testament.

'I ... Jacob' Quote from Ex. 3:6.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

'You must ... mind' Quote from Deut. 6:5.

'You must ... yourself' Quote from Lev. 19:18.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of David Name for the Christ. He was from the family of David, king of Israel.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

hypocrites Bad people who act like they are good.

silver coin A Roman denarius. One coin was the average pay for one day's work.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

⁶Then Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Then why did David call him 'Lord'? David was speaking by the power of the Holy Spirit." David said,

" 'The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Christ):
Sit by me at my right side;
I will put your enemies under your control.' "

Psalms 110:1

"David calls the Christ 'Lord.' So how can he be David's son?" "None of the Pharisees could answer Jesus' question. And after that day no person was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions, to try to trick him.

Jesus Criticizes the Religious Leaders

23 Then Jesus spoke to the people and to his followers. Jesus said, ²"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees* have the authority (power) to tell you what the law of Moses says. ³So you should obey the things they say. You should do all the things they tell you to do. But their lives are not good examples for you to follow. They tell you to do things, but they don't do those things themselves. ⁴They make strict rules that are hard for people to obey. They try to force other people to obey all those rules. But they themselves will not try to follow any of those rules.

⁵"The only reason they do good things is for other people to see them. They wear special boxes* full of Scriptures.* They make these boxes bigger and bigger. And they make their special prayer clothes very long, so that people will see them. ⁶Those Pharisees* and teachers

of the law love to get the most important seats at the feasts. And they love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* ⁷They love for people to show respect to them in the market places. And they love to have people call them 'Teacher.'

⁸"But you must not be called 'Teacher.' You are all brothers and sisters, together. You have only one Teacher. ⁹And don't call any person on earth 'Father.' You have one Father. He is in heaven. ¹⁰And you should not be called 'Master.' You have only one Master, the Christ.* ¹¹The person that serves you like a servant is the greatest person among you. ¹²Every person that makes himself better than other people will be made humble. Every person that makes himself humble will be made great.

¹³"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites.* You close the way for people to enter the kingdom of heaven. You yourselves don't enter, and you stop the people that are trying to enter. ¹⁴"

¹⁵"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites.* You travel across the seas and across different countries to find one person that will follow your ways. When you find that person, you make him worse than you are. And you are so bad that you belong in hell!

¹⁶"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You guide the people, but you are blind. You say, 'If any person uses the name of the temple* to make a promise, that means nothing. But if any person uses the gold that is in the temple to make a promise, then he must keep that promise.' ¹⁷You are blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple? The temple makes that gold holy. So the temple is

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.
control Literally, "feet."

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
special boxes Small leather boxes containing four important Scriptures. Some Jews tied these to the forehead and left arm to show they were very religious.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

hypocrites Bad people who act like they are good.

Verse 14 Some Greek copies add verse 14: "It will be bad for you, teachers of the law and Pharisees. You are hypocrites. You take away widows' houses, and you make long prayers so that people can see you. So you will have a worse punishment."

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

greater.¹⁸ And you say, 'If any person uses the altar* to make a promise, that means nothing. But if any person uses the gift on the altar to make a promise, then he must keep his promise.'¹⁹ You are blind. You see (*understand*) nothing! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar? The altar makes the gift holy. So the altar is greater.²⁰ The person that uses the altar to make a promise is really using the altar and also everything on the altar.²¹ And the person that uses the temple* to make a promise is really using the temple and also everything in the temple.²² The person that uses heaven to make a promise is also using God's throne and the One that sits on that throne.

²³"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites* You give God one-tenth of everything you own—even your mint, dill, and cummin.* But you don't obey the really important teachings of the law—being fair, showing mercy, and being honest. These are the things you should do. And you should also continue to do those other things.²⁴ You guide the people, but you are blind! Think about a person picking a little fly out of his drink and then swallowing a camel! You are like that.*

²⁵"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites.* You wash clean the outside of your cups and dishes. But inside they are full of things that you got by cheating other people and pleasing yourselves.²⁶ Pharisees, you are blind! First make the inside of the cup clean and good. Then the outside of the cup can be truly clean.

²⁷"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites.* You are

like tombs* that are painted white. The outside of those tombs looks fine. But inside, the tombs are full of the bones of dead people. And all kinds of unclean things are inside there.²⁸ It is the same with you. People look at you and think that you are good. But on the inside you are full of hypocrisy* and evil.

²⁹"It will be bad for you teachers of the law and Pharisees.* You are hypocrites.* You build tombs for the prophets.* And you show honor to the graves of people that lived good lives.³⁰ And you say, 'If we had lived during the time of our fathers (*ancestors*), we would not have helped them kill these prophets.'³¹ You give proof that you are children (*descendants*) of those people that killed the prophets.³² And you will finish the sin that your fathers started!

³³"You are snakes! You are from a family of poisonous snakes! You will not escape God. You will all be judged guilty and go to hell!

³⁴So I tell you this: I send to you prophets* and wise men and teachers. You will kill some of these people. You will hang some of them on crosses. You will beat some of these people in your synagogues.* You will chase them from town to town.³⁵ So you will be guilty for the death of all the good people that have been killed on earth. You will be guilty for the killing of that good man Abel. And you will be guilty for the killing of Zechariah* son of Berachiah. He was killed between the temple* and the altar.* You will be guilty for the killing of all the good people that lived between the time of Abel and the time of Zechariah.³⁶ I tell you the truth. All of these things will happen to you people that are living now.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

hypocrites Bad people who act like they are good.

mint ... cummin Small plants grown in gardens and used for spices. Only very religious people would be careful enough to give a tenth of these plants.

You ... that Meaning, "You worry about the smallest mistakes, but do the biggest sin."

tombs Small buildings made to show respect for important persons that had died.

hypocrisy Acting like you are good when you are not.

prophets People that spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Abel ... Zechariah In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.

Jesus Warns the People of Jerusalem

¹"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets.* You kill with rocks those men that God sent to you. Many, many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather your people together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. ²Now your home will be left completely empty. ³I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, 'Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord (God).'"

Future Destruction of the Temple

24 Jesus left the temple* and was walking away. But his followers came to him to show him the temple's buildings. ²Jesus asked the followers, "See all these buildings? I tell you the truth. All these buildings will be destroyed. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another."

³Later, Jesus was sitting at a place on the Mount of Olives.* The followers came to be alone with Jesus. They said, "Tell us when these things will happen. And what will happen to show us that it is time for you to come again and time for the world* to end?"

⁴Jesus answered: "Be careful! Don't let any person fool you. Many people will come and use my name. They will say, 'I am the Christ.*' And they will fool many people. ⁵You will hear about wars and stories about wars that are being fought. But don't be afraid. These things must happen before the end comes. ⁶Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. ⁷These things are like the first pains when something new is born.

⁸"Then people will treat you badly. People will give you to the rulers, to be persecuted

(hurt) and killed. All people will hate you. All these things will happen to you because you believe in me. ⁹At that time, many believers will lose their faith. They will turn against each other and hate each other. ¹⁰Many false prophets* will come. They will cause many people to believe wrong things. ¹¹There will be more and more evil in the world. So most believers will stop showing love. ¹²But the person that continues strong to the end will be saved. ¹³The Good News about God's, kingdom will be preached in the whole world. It will be told to every nation. Then the end will come.

¹⁴"Daniel the prophet* spoke about 'the terrible thing that causes destruction.*' You will see this terrible thing standing in the holy place (the temple)." (You that read this should understand what it means.) ¹⁵"At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. ¹⁶People should run away without wasting the time to stop for anything. If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to get things out of his house. ¹⁷If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. ¹⁸At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies! ¹⁹Pray that it will not be winter or a Sabbath day* when these things happen and you have to run away. ²⁰Why? Because at that time there will be much trouble. There will be more trouble than has ever happened since the beginning of the world. And nothing as bad as that will ever happen again. ²¹God has decided to make that terrible time short. If that time were not made short, then no person would continue living. But God will make that time short to help the people he has chosen. ²²At that time, some person might say to you, 'Look, there is the Christ!*' Or another person might say, 'There he is!' But don't believe them.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

'the ... destruction' See Dan. 9:27; 12:11 (cf. Dan. 11:31).

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

prophets People who spoke for God.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

world Literally, "this age," or "this time."

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

²⁴False Christs and false prophets* will come and do great things and miracles.* They will do these things to the people God has chosen. They will do these things to try to fool his people, if that is possible. ²⁵Now I have warned you about this before it happens.

²⁶"Some person might tell you, 'The Christ* is there in the desert!' But don't go into the desert to look for the Christ. Another person might say, 'There is the Christ in that room!' But don't believe that. ²⁷When the Son of Man* comes, he will be seen by all people. It will be like lightning flashing in the sky that can be seen everywhere. ²⁸My coming will be clear, the same as, any time you see vultures* gathering, you know there is a dead body.

²⁹"Soon after the trouble of those days, this will happen:

'The sun will become dark,
and the moon will not give light.
The stars will fall from the sky,
and everything in the sky will be
changed.'

Isaiah 13:10;34:4

³⁰"At that time, there will be something in the sky that shows the Son of Man* coming. All the people of the world will cry. All the people will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds in the sky. The Son of Man will come with power and great glory. ³¹The Son of Man will use a loud trumpet to send his angels all around the earth. The angels will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

³²"The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When the fig tree's branches become green and soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. ³³It is the same with these things that I told you would happen. When you see all these things happening, you will know

that the time* is near, ready to come. ³⁴I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time* are still living!

³⁵The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed, but the words I have said will never be destroyed!

Only God Knows When the Time Will Be

³⁶"No person knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don't know when that day or time will be. Only the Father knows. ³⁷When the Son of Man* comes, it will be the same as the thing that happened during Noah's time. ³⁸In those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking. People were marrying and giving their children to be married. The people were still doing those things until the day Noah entered the boat. ³⁹Those people knew nothing about what was happening. But then the flood came and all those people were destroyed. It will be the same when the Son of Man comes. ⁴⁰Two men will be working together in the field. One man will be taken and the other left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding grain with a mill.* One woman will be taken and the other woman will be left.

⁴²"So always be ready. You don't know the day your Lord will come. ⁴³Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time the thief was coming, then the owner would be ready for him. The owner would watch and not let the thief enter his house. ⁴⁴So you also must be ready. The Son of Man* will come at a time when you don't expect him.

⁴⁵"Who is the wise and trusted servant? The master trusts one servant to give the other servants their food at the right time. Who is the servant that the master trusts to do that work? ⁴⁶When the master comes and finds that servant doing the work he gave him, the servant will be very happy. ⁴⁷I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

miracles False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of Satan.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

vultures Birds that eat dead animals.

time The time Jesus has been talking about when a very important thing will happen. In Luke Jesus says that it is the time for God's kingdom to come (Lk. 21:31).

the ... time Or, "the people of this nation."

mill Two large, round, flat rocks used for grinding grain to make flour.

everything the master owns. "But what will happen if the servant is evil and thinks his master will not come back soon? "Then that servant will begin to beat the other servants. That servant will eat the food and get drunk with other people like him. "Then the master of that servant will come when the servant is not ready. It will be a time when the servant is not expecting the master. "Then the master will punish that servant. The master will send him away to be with the hypocrites.* And in that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.

Story About Ten Girls

25 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten girls that went to wait for the bridegroom.* They brought their lamps with them. "Five of the girls were foolish. And five of the girls were wise. "The five foolish girls brought their lamps, but they did not bring more oil for the lamps to burn. "The wise girls brought their lamps and more oil in jars. "The bridegroom was very late. All the girls became tired and began sleeping.

"At midnight someone announced, 'The bridegroom is coming! Come and meet him!'

"Then all the girls woke up. The girls made their lamps ready. "But the foolish girls said to the wise girls, 'Give us some of your oil. The oil in our lamps is all gone.'

"The wise girls answered, 'No! The oil we have might not be enough for all of us. But go to the people that sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

"So the five foolish girls went to buy oil. While they were gone, the bridegroom came. The girls that were ready went in with the bridegroom to the wedding feast. Then the door was closed and locked.

"Later the other girls came. The girls said, 'Sir, sir, open the door to let us in.'

"But the bridegroom answered, 'I tell you the truth. I don't know you.'

"So always be ready. You don't know the day or the time when the Son of Man* will come.

Story About Three Servants

"The kingdom of heaven is, like a man leaving home to travel to another place for a visit. Before the man left, he talked with his servants. The man told his servants to take care of the things he owned while he was gone. "He decided how much each servant would be able to care for. The man gave one servant five bags of money. He gave another servant two bags of money. And he gave a third servant one bag of money. Then that man left. "The servant that got five bags of money went quickly to invest the money. Those five bags of money earned five more. "It was the same with the servant that had two bags of money. That servant invested the money and earned two more. "But the servant that got one bag of money went away and dug a hole in the ground. Then the servant hid his master's money in that hole.

"After a long time the master came home. The master asked the servants what they did with his money. "The servant that got five bags of money brought five more bags of money to the master. The servant said, 'Master, you trusted me to care for five bags of money. So I used your five bags of money to earn five more.'

"The master answered, 'You did right. You are a good servant that can be trusted. You did well with that small amount of money. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.'

"Then the servant that got two bags of money came to the master. The servant said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of money to care for. So I used your two bags of money to earn two more.'

"The master answered, 'You did right. You are a good servant that can be trusted. You did well with a small amount of money. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me.'

hypocrites Bad people who act like they are good.
bridegroom A man ready to be married.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

¹¹"Then the servant that got one bag of money came to the master. The servant said, 'Master, I knew that you were a very hard man. You harvest things you did not plant. You gather crops where you did not put any seed.' ¹²So I was afraid. I went and hid your money in the ground. Here is the one bag of money you gave me.'

¹³"The master answered, 'You are a bad and lazy servant! You say you knew that I harvest things I did not plant, and that I gather crops where I did not put any seed. ¹⁴So you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came home, I would get my money back. And I would also get the interest that my money earned.'

¹⁵"So the master told his other servants, 'Take the one bag of money from that servant and give it to the servant that has ten bags of money. ¹⁶Every person that uses what he has will get more. That person will have much more than he needs. But the person that does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him.' ¹⁷Then the master said, 'Throw that useless servant outside, into the darkness! In that place people will cry and grind their teeth with pain.'

The Son of Man Will Judge All People

¹⁸"The Son of Man* will come again. He will come with great glory. All his angels will come with him. He will be king and sit on his great throne. ¹⁹All the people of the world will be gathered before the Son of Man. Then the Son of Man will separate all people into two groups. This is like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ²⁰The Son of Man will put the sheep (*good people*) on his right and the goats (*bad people*) on his left.

²¹"Then the king will say to those good people on his right, 'Come. My Father has given you great blessings. Come and get the kingdom God promised you. That kingdom has been prepared for you since the world was made. ²²You can have this kingdom, because I

was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your home. ²³I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me.'

²⁴"Then the good people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink?' ²⁵When did we see you alone and away from home and invite you into our home? When did we see you without clothes and give you something to wear? ²⁶When did we see you sick or in prison and care for you?'

²⁷"Then the king will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here,* you also did for me.'

²⁸"Then the king will say to those bad people on his left, 'Go away from me. God has already decided that you will be punished. Go into the fire that burns forever. That fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. ²⁹You must go away, because I was hungry, and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me nothing to drink. ³⁰I was alone and away from home, and you did not invite me into your home. I was without clothes, and you gave me nothing to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

³¹"Then those people will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? When did we see you alone and away from home? Or when did we see you without clothes or sick or in prison? When did we see these things and not help you?'

³²"Then the king will answer, 'I tell you the truth. Anything you refused to do for any of my people here,* you refused to do for me.'

³³"Then those bad people will go away. They will have punishment forever. But the good people will go and have life forever."

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

any ... here Literally, "one of the least of these brothers of mine."

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

26 After Jesus finished saying all these things, he said to his followers, "You know that the day after tomorrow is Passover.* On that day the Son of Man* will be given to his enemies, to be killed on a cross."

¹Then the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had a meeting at the palace where the high priest* lived. The high priest's name was Caiaphas. ⁴In the meeting, they tried to find a way to arrest Jesus. They planned to lie so that they could arrest Jesus and kill him. ⁷The men in the meeting said, "We cannot arrest Jesus during Passover. We don't want the people to become angry and cause a riot."

A Woman Does Something Special

¹Jesus was in Bethany. He was at the house of Simon the leper.* ³While Jesus was there, a woman came to him. She had an alabaster* jar filled with very expensive perfume. The woman poured this perfume on Jesus' head while Jesus was eating.

⁵The followers saw the woman do this and became upset at the woman. The followers asked, "Why waste that perfume? ⁷That perfume could be sold for much money and the money could be given to poor people."

⁹But Jesus knew what happened. Jesus said, "Why are you troubling this woman? She did a very good thing for me. ¹¹You will always have poor people with you. But you will not always have me. ¹³This woman poured perfume on my body. She did this to prepare me for burial after I die. ¹⁵I tell you the truth. The Good News* will be told to people in all the world. And in every place where the Good News is told, the

story of what this woman did will also be told. And people will remember her."

Judas Becomes an Enemy of Jesus

¹⁶Then one of the twelve followers went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. ¹⁷Judas said, "I will give you Jesus. What will you pay me for doing this?" The priests gave Judas 30 silver coins. ¹⁹After that time Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to the priests.

Jesus Eats the Passover Meal

²⁰On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread,* the followers came to Jesus. The followers said, "We will prepare everything for you to eat the Passover* meal. Where do you want us to have the meal?"

²¹Jesus answered, "Go into the city. Go to a man I know. Tell him that the teacher says, 'The chosen time is near. I will have the Passover* meal with my followers at your house.'" ²³The followers obeyed and did the thing Jesus told them to do. They prepared the Passover meal.

²⁴In the evening Jesus was sitting at the table with the twelve followers. ²⁵They were all eating. Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. One of you twelve here will soon give me to my enemies."

²⁶The followers were very sad to hear this. Each follower said to Jesus, "Lord, surely I am not the one!"

²⁷Jesus answered, "The man that has dipped his hand into the same bowl with me is the person that will be against me. ²⁹The Son of Man* will go (and die). The Scriptures* say this will happen. But it will be very bad for the person that gives the Son of Man to be killed. It would be better for that person if he were never born."

²⁸Then Judas said to Jesus, "Teacher, surely I will not be against you!" (Judas is the one that would give Jesus to his enemies.)

Festival ... Bread Important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

leper A person that had leprosy, a very bad skin disease.

alabaster A beautiful kind of stone that can be carved to make things.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

The Lord's Supper

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave the bread to his followers. Jesus said, "Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body."

²⁷Then Jesus took a cup of wine. Jesus thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. Jesus said, "Every one of you drink this. ²⁸This wine is my blood. My blood (*death*) begins the new agreement from God to his people. This blood is given for many people to forgive their sins. ²⁹I tell you this: I will not drink this wine again until that day when we are together in my Father's kingdom and the wine is new. Then I will drink it again with you."

³⁰All the followers sang a song. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

Jesus Says His Followers Will Leave Him

³¹Jesus told the followers, "Tonight you will lose your faith because of me. It is written in the Scriptures,"

'I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away.'

Zechariah 13:7

³²But after I die, I will rise from death. Then I will go into Galilee. I will be there before you go there."

³³Peter answered, "All the other followers may lose their faith because of you. But I will never lose my faith."

³⁴Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don't know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows."

³⁵But Peter answered, "I will never say that I don't know you! I will even die with you!" And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone

³⁶Then Jesus went with his followers to a place called Gethsemane. Jesus said to his followers, "Sit here while I go there and pray."

³⁷Jesus told Peter and the two sons of Zebedee to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very sad and troubled. ³⁸Jesus said to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, "My soul is full of sorrow. My heart is breaking with sadness. Stay awake here with me and wait."

³⁹Then Jesus walked a little farther away from them. Jesus fell on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, don't give me this cup* of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want." ⁴⁰Then Jesus went back to his followers. Jesus found his followers sleeping. Jesus said to Peter, "You men could not stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake and pray that you will not be tempted. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak."

⁴¹Then Jesus went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done."

⁴²Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again Jesus found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. "So Jesus left them and went away one more time and prayed. This third time he prayed, he said the same thing."

⁴³Then Jesus went back to the followers and said, "You are still sleeping and resting? The time has come for the Son of Man* to be given to sinful people. Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man that is giving me to my enemies."

Jesus Is Arrested

⁴⁴While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came there. Judas was one of the twelve followers. Judas had many people with him. These people

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be very hard, like drinking a cup of something that tastes very bad.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14, this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

were sent from the leading priests and the older leaders of the people. These people with Judas had swords and clubs. "Judas* planned to do something to show the people which man was Jesus. Judas said, "The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him." "So Judas went to Jesus and said, "Hello, teacher!" Then Judas kissed Jesus.

"Jesus answered, "Friend, do the thing you came to do."

Then the men came and grabbed Jesus and arrested him. "When that happened, one of the followers with Jesus grabbed his sword and pulled it out. This follower hit the servant of the high priest* with the sword and cut off his ear.

"Jesus said to the man, "Put your sword back in its place. People that use swords will be killed with swords. "Surely you know I could ask my Father and he would give me more than twelve armies of angels. "But this thing must happen this way so that it will be like the Scriptures* said."

"Then Jesus said to all the people, "You came to get me with swords and clubs like I am a criminal. Every day I sat in the temple* teaching. You did not arrest me there. "But all these things have happened so that it will be like the prophets* wrote." Then all of Jesus' followers left him and ran away.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

"The men that arrested Jesus led him to the house of Caiaphas the high priest.* The teachers of the law and the older Jewish leaders were gathered there. "Peter followed Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. Peter followed Jesus to the yard of the high priest's house. He went in and sat with the guards. Peter wanted to see what would happen to Jesus.

"The leading priests and the Jewish council tried to find something against Jesus so that

they could kill him. They tried to find people to lie and say that Jesus had done wrong. "Many people came and told false things about Jesus. But the council could find no real reason to kill Jesus. Then two people came and said, "This man (Jesus) said, "I can destroy the temple* of God and build it again in three days."

"Then the high priest* stood and said to Jesus, "These people have said things against you. Do you have something to say about these charges against you? Are these people telling the truth?" "But Jesus said nothing.

Again the high priest* said to Jesus, "You are now under oath. I command you by the power of the living God to tell us the truth. Tell us, are you the Christ,* the Son of God?"

"Jesus answered, "Yes, I am. But I tell you, in the future you will see the Son of Man* sitting at the right side of God. And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven."

"When the high priest* heard this, he was very angry. He tore his clothes and said, "This man has said things that are against God! We don't need any more witnesses. You all heard him say these things against God. "What do you think?"

The Jews answered, "He is guilty, and he must die."

"Then the people there spit in Jesus' face. And they hit him with their fists. Other people slapped Jesus. "They said, "Show us that you are a prophet,* Christ! Tell us who hit you!"

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

"At that time, Peter was sitting in the yard. A servant girl came to Peter. The girl said, "You were with Jesus, that man from Galilee."

"But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said this to all the people there. Peter said, "I don't know what you are talking about."

Judas Literally, "the one that betrayed him (gave him to his enemies)."

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

prophet Person who spoke for God. Prophets could say things that most people could not know.

"Then Peter left the yard. At the gate, another girl saw him. The girl said to the people there, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

"Again, Peter said that he was never with Jesus. Peter said, "I promise to God that I don't know this man Jesus!"

"A short time later, some people standing there went to Peter and said, "We know you are one of those men that followed Jesus. We know this because of the way you talk."

"Then Peter began to curse. He said strongly, "I promise to God that I don't know this man Jesus!" After Peter said this, a rooster crowed. "Then Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me." Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

Jesus Is Taken to Governor Pilate

27 Early the next morning, all the leading priests and older leaders of the people decided to kill Jesus. "They tied Jesus with chains. Then they led him to Pilate the governor. They gave Jesus to Pilate.

Judas Kills Himself

"Judas saw that they had decided to kill Jesus. Judas was the one that gave Jesus to his enemies. When Judas saw what happened, he was very sorry for what he did. So he took the 30 silver coins back to the priests and the leaders. "Judas said, "I sinned. I gave you an innocent man to be killed."

The Jewish leaders answered, "We don't care! That's a problem for you, not us."

"So Judas threw the money into the temple. Then Judas left that place and hanged himself.

"The leading priests picked up the silver coins in the temple. They said, "Our law does not allow us to keep this money with the temple money, because this money has paid for a man's death." "So they decided to use the money to buy a field called Potter's Field. This field would be a place to bury people that died while visiting in Jerusalem. "That is why that field is still called the Field of Blood. "So the

thing happened that Jeremiah the prophet* said:

"They took 30 silver coins. That was how much the Jewish people decided to pay for his life. "They used those 30 silver coins to buy the potter's field, like the Lord commanded me."*

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

"Jesus stood before Pilate the governor. Pilate asked him questions. He said, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, I am."

"When the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders accused Jesus, he said nothing.

"So Pilate said to Jesus, "You hear these people accusing you of all these things. Why don't you answer?"

"But Jesus said nothing to answer Pilate. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus

"Every year at the Passover* time the governor would free one person from the prison. This was always a person that the people wanted to be made free. "At that time there was a man in prison who was known to be very bad. His name was Barabbas. "All the people gathered at Pilate's house. Pilate asked the people, "I will free one man for you. Which man do you want me to free: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Christ?" "Pilate knew that the people gave Jesus to him because the people were jealous.

"Pilate said these things while he was sitting in the place for judging. While he was sitting there, his wife sent a message to him. The message said, "Don't do anything with that man (Jesus). He is not guilty. And today I had a dream about him, and it troubled me very much."

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

"They ... me" See Zech. 11:12-13 and Jer. 32:6-9.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

²⁰But the leading priests and older Jewish leaders told the people to ask for Barabbas to be made free and for Jesus to be killed.

²¹Pilate said, "I have Barabbas and Jesus. Which do you want me to make free for you?"

The people answered, "Barabbas!"

²²Pilate asked, "So what should I do with Jesus, the one called the Christ?"

All the people answered, "Kill him on a cross!"

²³Pilate asked, "Why do you want me to kill him? What wrong has he done?"

But all the people shouted louder, "Kill him on a cross!"

²⁴Pilate saw that he could do nothing to make the people change. And he saw that the people were becoming upset. So Pilate took some water and washed his hands* so that all the people could see. Then Pilate said, "I am not guilty of this man's death. You are the ones that are doing it!"

²⁵All the people answered, "We will be responsible for his death. We accept for ourselves and for our children any punishment for his death."

²⁶Then Pilate freed Barabbas. Pilate told some soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

Pilate's Soldiers Tease Jesus

²⁷Then Pilate's soldiers brought Jesus into the governor's palace. All the soldiers gathered around Jesus. ²⁸The soldiers took off Jesus' clothes and put a red robe on him. ²⁹Then the soldiers used thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus' head, and they put a stick in his right hand. Then the soldiers bowed before Jesus and teased him. They said, "Hello, king of the Jews!" ³⁰The soldiers spit on Jesus. Then they took his stick and hit him on the head many times. ³¹After they finished teasing Jesus, the soldiers took off the robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus away to be killed on a cross.

washed his hands Pilate did this as a sign to show that he wanted no part in what the people did.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

³²The soldiers were going out of the city with Jesus. The soldiers forced another man there to carry the cross for Jesus. This man's name was Simon from Cyrene. ³³They came to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means "The Place of the Skull.") ³⁴At Golgotha, the soldiers gave Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with gall.* Jesus tasted the wine but refused to drink it. ³⁵The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then the soldiers gambled with dice to decide who would get Jesus' clothes. ³⁶The soldiers sat there and continued watching Jesus. ³⁷The soldiers put a sign above Jesus' head with the charge against him written on it. The sign said: "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." ³⁸Two robbers were nailed to crosses beside Jesus. One robber was put beside Jesus on the right and the other was put on the left. ³⁹People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. People shook their heads ⁴⁰and said, "You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross, if you are really the Son of God!"

⁴¹The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders were also there. These men teased Jesus the same as the other people. ⁴²They said, "He saved other people. But he can't save himself! People say he is the king of Israel (*the Jews*). If he is the king, then he should come down now from the cross. Then we will believe in him." ⁴³He trusted God. So let God save him now, if God really wants him. He himself said, "I am the Son of God." ⁴⁴And in the same way, the robbers that were being killed on crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

Jesus Dies

⁴⁵At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued for three hours. ⁴⁶At about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" This means, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

gall Probably a drink of wine mixed with drugs to help a person feel less pain.

"Some of the people standing there heard this. The people said, "He is calling Elijah."

"Quickly one of the people ran and got a sponge. That person filled the sponge with vinegar and tied the sponge to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. "But the other people said, "Don't bother him (*Jesus*). We want to see if Elijah will come to save him."

Again Jesus cried with a loud voice. Then he died.

"When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple* was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. Also, the earth shook and rocks were broken. "All the graves opened, and many of God's people that had died were raised from death. "Those people came out of the graves. After Jesus was raised from death, those people went into the holy city (*Jerusalem*), and many people saw them.

The army officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw this earthquake and everything that happened. They were very afraid and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

"Many women were standing away from the cross, watching. These were the women that followed Jesus from Galilee to care for him. *Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of James and John* were there.

Jesus Is Buried

"That evening a rich man named Joseph came to Jerusalem. Joseph was a follower of Jesus from the town of Arimathea. "Joseph went to Pilate and asked to have Jesus' body. Pilate gave orders for the soldiers to give Jesus' body to Joseph. "Then Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a new linen cloth. "Joseph

put Jesus' body in a new tomb (*grave*) that Joseph had dug in a wall of rock. Then he closed the tomb by rolling a very large stone to cover the entrance. After he did these things, Joseph went away. "Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary were sitting near the tomb.

The Tomb of Jesus Is Guarded

"That day was the day called Preparation day.* The next day, the leading priests and the Pharisees* went to Pilate. "They said, "Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise from death.' "So give the order for the tomb to be guarded well until after three days. His followers might come and try to steal the body. Then they could tell the people that he has risen from death. That lie will be even worse than what they said about him before."

"Pilate said, "Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know." "So they all went to the tomb and made it safe from thieves. They did this by sealing the stone in the entrance and then putting soldiers there to guard it.

News That Jesus Has Risen from Death

28 The day after the Sabbath day* was the first day of the week. At dawn on the first day, Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary went to look at the tomb.*

*At that time there was a very strong earthquake. An angel of the Lord came from the sky. The angel went to the tomb and rolled the stone away from the entrance. Then the angel sat on the stone. "The angel was shining very bright like lightning. His clothes were white like snow. "The soldiers guarding the tomb were very afraid of the angel. They shook with fear and became like dead men.

died Literally, "he let his spirit leave."

curtain ... temple A curtain divided the "most holy place" from the other part of the temple, the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer that had authority over 100 soldiers.

James and John Literally, "the sons of Zebedee."

Preparation day Friday, day before the Sabbath day.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

¹The angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus, the one that was killed on the cross. ²But Jesus is not here. He has risen from death, like he said he would. Come and see the place where his body was. ³And go quickly and tell his followers. Tell them: 'Jesus has risen from death. He is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there.'" Then the angel said, "Now I have told you."

⁴So the women left the tomb quickly. They were afraid, but they were also very happy. They ran to tell his followers what happened. ⁵While the women were running to tell the followers, Jesus was standing there before them. Jesus said, "Hello!" The women went to Jesus. They held him at his feet and worshiped him. ⁶Then Jesus said to the women, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers (*followers*) to go to Galilee. They will see me there."

Report to the Jewish Leaders

⁷The women went to tell the followers. At the same time, some of the soldiers that were guarding the tomb* went into the city. They went to tell the leading priests everything that

happened. ⁸Then the priests met with the older Jewish leaders and made a plan. They paid the soldiers much money to tell a lie. ⁹They said to the soldiers, "Tell the people that Jesus' followers came during the night and stole the body while you were sleeping. ¹⁰If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and save you from trouble." ¹¹So the soldiers kept the money and obeyed the priests. And that story is still spread among the Jews even today.

Jesus Talks to His Followers

¹²The eleven followers went to Galilee. They went to the mountain where Jesus told them to go. ¹³On the mountain the followers saw Jesus. They worshiped him. But some of the followers did not believe that it was really Jesus. ¹⁴So Jesus came to them and said, "All authority (*power*) in heaven and on earth is given to me. ¹⁵So go and make followers of all people in the world. Baptize* them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁶Teach those people to obey everything that I have told you. You can be sure that I will be with you always. I will continue with you until the end of the world."

Baptize A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

Mark

The Coming of Jesus

1 The Good News* about Jesus Christ, the Son of God,* begins ²with what the prophet* Isaiah said would happen. Isaiah wrote:

"Listen! I (God) will send my helper*
ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.

Malachi 3:1

- ³ There is a person shouting in the desert:
'Prepare the way for the Lord.
Make his paths straight.'"

Isaiah 40:3

⁴So John the Baptizer came and was baptizing people in the desert area. He told the people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. Then their sins would be forgiven. ⁵All the people from Judea and Jerusalem went out to John. These people told the sins they had done, and then they were baptized by John in the Jordan River. ⁶John wore clothes made from camel's hair. John had a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts* and wild honey. ⁷This is what John preached to the people: "There is a person coming later who is greater than I am. I am not good enough to kneel down and untie his shoes. ⁸I baptize

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

the ... God Some Greek copies omit these words.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

helper Literally, "messenger."

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

locusts Insects like grasshoppers (See Lev. 11:21,22).

you with water. But that person who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.*"

Jesus Is Baptized

⁹At that time Jesus came from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the place where John was. John baptized* Jesus in the Jordan River. ¹⁰While Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw the sky open. The Holy Spirit* came down to Jesus like a dove. ¹¹A voice came from heaven and said: "You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

Jesus Goes Away to Be Tempted

¹²Then the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert alone. ¹³Jesus was in the desert 40 days. He was there with the wild animals. While Jesus was in the desert, he was tempted by Satan (*the devil*). Then angels came and helped Jesus.

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

¹⁴After this, John was put into prison. Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵Jesus said, "The right time is now here. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News!"

¹⁶Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. Jesus saw Simon* and Simon's brother, Andrew. These two men were fishermen, and they were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the God's work among people in the world.

Simon Simon's other name was Peter.

¹⁷Jesus said to them, "Come and follow me. I will make you a different kind of, fishermen. You will work to gather people, not fish."
¹⁸So Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed Jesus.

¹⁹Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, preparing their nets to catch fish. ²⁰Their father Zebedee and the men that worked for him were in the boat with the brothers. When Jesus saw the brothers he told them to come. They left their father and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Man That Had an Evil Spirit

²¹Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. On the Sabbath day* Jesus went into the synagogue* and taught the people. ²²The people there were amazed at Jesus' teaching. Jesus did not teach like their teachers of the law. Jesus taught like a person that had authority (*power*). ²³While Jesus was in the synagogue, a man was there that had an evil spirit from the devil, inside him. The man shouted, ²⁴"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One!"

²⁵Jesus said strongly, "Be quiet! Come out of the man!" ²⁶The evil spirit made the man shake. Then the spirit made a loud noise and came out of the man.

²⁷The people were amazed. They asked each other, "What is happening here? This man is teaching something new. And he teaches with authority (*power*)! He even gives commands to evil spirits, and the spirits obey him." ²⁸So the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the area of Galilee.

Jesus Heals Many People

²⁹Jesus and the followers left the synagogue.* They all went with James and

John to the home of Simon* and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was very sick. She was in bed and had fever. The people there told Jesus about her. ³¹So Jesus went to her bed. Jesus held her hand and helped her stand up. The fever left her, and she was healed. Then she began serving them.

³²That night, after the sun went down, the people brought many sick people to Jesus. They also brought people that had demons* inside them. ³³All the people in the town gathered at the door of that house. ³⁴Jesus healed many people that had different kinds of sicknesses. Jesus also forced many demons to leave people. But Jesus would not allow the demons to speak, because the demons knew who he was.*

Jesus Prepares to Preach the Good News

³⁵The next morning, Jesus woke up very early. Jesus left the house while it was still dark. He went to a place to be alone and pray. ³⁶Later, Simon* and his friends went to look for Jesus. ³⁷They found Jesus and said, "All the people are looking for you!"

³⁸Jesus answered, "We should go to another place. We can go to other towns around here. Then I can preach in those places also. That is why I came." ³⁹So Jesus traveled everywhere in Galilee. He preached in the synagogues.* And he forced demons* to leave people.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

⁴⁰A man that had leprosy* came to Jesus. The man bowed on his knees and begged Jesus, "You have the power to heal me if you want."

⁴¹Jesus felt sorry for the man. So Jesus touched the man and said, "I want to heal you. Be healed!" ⁴²Then the sickness left the man, and he was healed.

Simon Simon's other name was Peter.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

who he was The demons knew that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God.

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

⁹Jesus told the man to go. But Jesus warned him strongly. Jesus said, ¹⁰“Don’t tell any person about what I did for you. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer a gift to God because you have been healed. Offer the gift that Moses commanded.* This will show the people that you are healed.” ¹¹The man left there and told all the people he saw that Jesus had healed him. So the news about Jesus spread. And that is why Jesus could not enter a town if people saw him. Jesus stayed in places where people did not live. But people came from all the towns to the places where Jesus was.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

2 A few days later, Jesus came back to Capernaum. The news spread that Jesus was back home. ²Many, many people gathered to hear Jesus preach. The house was full. There was no place to stand, not even outside the door. Jesus was teaching these people. ³Some people brought a paralyzed (*crippled*) man to Jesus. Four men were carrying the paralyzed man. ⁴But they could not bring the man to Jesus because the house was full of people. So the men went to the roof above Jesus and made a hole in the roof. Then they lowered the bed with the paralyzed man on it. ⁵Jesus saw that these men had much faith. So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, “Young man, your sins are forgiven.”

⁶Some of the teachers of the law were sitting there. They saw what Jesus did, and they said to themselves, ⁷“Why does this man say things like that? He is saying things that are against God. Only God can forgive sins.”

⁸Jesus knew that these teachers of the law were thinking those things about him. So Jesus said to them, “Why are you thinking these things? ⁹Which is easier: to tell this crippled man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to tell him, ‘Stand up. Take your bed and walk’? ¹⁰But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.” So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ¹¹“I tell you, stand up.

Take your bed and go home.” ¹²The paralyzed man stood up. He took his bed and walked out of the room. All the people could see him. The people were amazed and praised God. They said, ¹³“This is the most amazing thing we have ever seen!”

¹⁴Jesus went to the lake again. Many people followed him there. So Jesus taught them. ¹⁵Jesus was walking beside the lake, and he saw a tax collector* named Levi, son of Alphaeus. Levi was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, ¹⁶“Follow me.” Then Levi stood up and followed Jesus.

¹⁷Later that day, Jesus ate at Levi’s house. There were many tax collectors* and other bad people eating there with Jesus and his followers. There were many of these people that followed Jesus. ¹⁸The teachers of the law (they were Pharisees*) saw Jesus eating with these tax collectors and other bad people. They asked Jesus’ followers, ¹⁹“Why does he (*Jesus*) eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

²⁰Jesus heard this, and he said to them, ²¹“Healthy people don’t need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners.”

Jesus Not Like Other Religious Leaders

¹The followers of John* and the Pharisees* were fasting.* Some people came to Jesus and said, ²“John’s followers fast,* and the followers of the Pharisees fast. But your followers don’t fast. Why?”

³Jesus answered, ⁴“When there is a wedding,, the friends of the bridegroom* are not sad while he is with them. They cannot fast* (*be sad*) while the bridegroom is still there. ⁵But the time will come when the bridegroom will leave them. The friends are

tax collector(s) A Jew hired by the Romans to collect taxes. Tax collectors often cheated people.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

John John the Baptizer, who preached to the Jews about Christ’s coming (See Mk. 1:4-8).

fasting, fast To fast is to live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

bridegroom A man ready to be married.

sad when the bridegroom leaves. Then they will fast.

²¹"When a person sews a patch over a hole on an old coat, that person never uses a piece of cloth that is not yet shrunk. If he does, the patch will shrink and pull away from the coat. Then the hole will be worse. ²²Also, people never pour new wine into old wine bags.* Why? Because the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will be ruined with the wine bags. People always put new wine into new wine bags."

Some Jews Criticize Jesus

²³On the Sabbath day,* Jesus was walking through some grain fields. Jesus' followers were walking with him. The followers picked some grain to eat. ²⁴The Pharisees* saw this and said to Jesus, "Why are your followers doing that? It is against the Jewish law to do that on the Sabbath day."

²⁵Jesus answered, "You have read what David* did when he and the people with him were hungry and needed food. ²⁶It was during the time of Abiathar the high priest. David went into God's house and ate the bread that was offered to God. And the law of Moses, says that only priests can eat that bread. David also gave some of the bread to those people with him."

²⁷Then Jesus said to the Pharisees,* "The Sabbath day* was made to help people. People were not made to be ruled by the Sabbath day. ²⁸So the Son of Man* is Lord (master) of every day, even the Sabbath."

Jesus Heals a Man's Crippled Hand

3 Another time Jesus went into the synagogue.* In the synagogue, there was a

wine bags Animal skins used for holding wine.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

man with a crippled hand. ²Some Jews there wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him. So those people watched him closely. They wanted to see if Jesus would heal the man on a Sabbath day.* ³Jesus said to the man with the crippled hand, "Stand up here so that all the people can see you."

⁴Then Jesus asked the people, "Which thing is right to do on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" The people said nothing to answer Jesus.

⁵Jesus was angry and he looked at the people. But he felt very sad because they were stubborn. Jesus said to the man, "Let me see your hand." The man put his hand out for Jesus. His hand was healed. ⁶Then the Pharisees* left and made plans with the Herodians* about a way to kill Jesus.

Many People Follow Jesus

⁷Jesus went away with his followers to the lake. Many people from Galilee followed him. ⁸Many, many people also came from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, from the area across the Jordan River, and from the area around Tyre and Sidon. These people came because they heard about all the things Jesus was doing. ⁹Jesus saw the many people. So he told his followers to get a small boat and make it ready for him. Jesus wanted the boat so that the many, many people would not push against him. ¹⁰Jesus had healed many people. So all the sick people were pushing toward him to touch him. ¹¹Some people had evil spirits from the devil, inside them. When the evil spirits saw Jesus, they bowed before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" ¹²But Jesus commanded the spirits strongly not to tell people who he was.

Jesus Chooses His Twelve Apostles

¹³Then Jesus went up on a hill. Jesus told some men to come to him. These were the men

Herodians A Jewish political group.

Jesus wanted. These men went up to Jesus. "Jesus chose twelve men and called them apostles.* Jesus wanted these twelve men to be with him, and he wanted to send them to other places to preach. "And Jesus wanted these men to have the power to force demons* out of people. "These are the names of the twelve men Jesus chose: Simon (Jesus gave him the name Peter); "James and John, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges. This name means "Sons of Thunder"); "Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot,* "and Judas Iscariot. Judas is the one that gave Jesus to his enemies.,"

Some Say Jesus Has a Devil In Him

"Then Jesus went home. But again many people gathered there. There were so many people that Jesus and his followers could not eat. "Jesus' family heard about all these things. They went to get him because people said that Jesus was crazy.

"And the teachers of the law from Jerusalem said, "Beelzebul (*the devil*) is living inside him (*Jesus*)! He uses power from the ruler of demons* to force demons out of people."

"So Jesus called the people together and used stories to teach the people. Jesus said, "Satan will not force his own demons* out of people. "A kingdom that fights against itself cannot continue. "And a family that is divided cannot succeed. "And if Satan is against himself and fights against his own people, then he cannot continue. That would be the end of Satan. "If a person wants to enter a strong man's house and steal his things, first the person must tie the strong man. Then the person can steal the things from the strong man's house. "I tell you the truth. All sins that people do can be forgiven. And all the bad things people say against God can be forgiven.

"But any person that says bad things against (*refuses to accept*) the Holy Spirit* will never be forgiven. He is guilty of a sin that continues forever."

"Jesus said this because the teachers of the law said that Jesus had an evil spirit (*devil*) inside him.

Jesus' Followers Are His True Family

"Then Jesus' mother and brothers came there. They stood outside and sent a person in to tell Jesus to come out. "Many people were sitting around Jesus. They said to Jesus, "Your mother and brothers are waiting for you outside."

"Jesus asked, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" "Then Jesus looked at those people sitting around him. He said, "These people are my mother and my brothers! "My true brother and sister and mother are those people that do the things God wants."

Story About a Farmer Planting Seed

4 Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. Many, many people gathered around Jesus. So Jesus got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore next to the water. "Jesus taught the people from the boat. Jesus used many stories to teach them. He said, "Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. "While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. "Some seed fell on rocky ground. The ground there did not have enough dirt. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. "But the sun rose and the plants were burned. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. "Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. So those plants did not make grain. "Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground, the seed began to grow. It grew and made grain. Some plants had 30 grains, other plants had 60 grains, and some

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Zealot Zealots were a Jewish Political group.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ. He does the work of God among people in the world.

had 100 grains.”

“Then Jesus said, “You people that hear me, listen!”

Jesus Tells Why He Used Stories

“Later, Jesus was away from the people. The twelve apostles* and Jesus’ other followers asked him about the stories.

“Jesus said, “Only you can know the secret truth about the kingdom of God. But to those other people I tell everything by using stories.
 “I do this so that:

“They will look and look, but never really see;

they will listen and listen, but never understand.

If they saw and understood,
 they might change and be forgiven.”

Isaiah 6:9-10

Jesus Explains the Story About the Seed

“Then Jesus said to the followers, “Do you understand this story? If you don’t, then how will you understand any story? “The farmer is like a person that plants God’s teaching in people. “Sometimes the teaching falls on the path. This is like some people. Those people hear the teaching of God. But Satan (*the devil*) comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. “Other people are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy. “But those people don’t allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They keep that teaching only a short time. When trouble or persecution* comes because of the teaching they accepted, they quickly quit. “Other people are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. These people hear the teaching. “But then these things come into their lives: the worries of this life, the love of money, and wanting all kinds of other things. These things stop the teaching from growing. So that teaching does not make

fruit* in the lives of those people. “Other people are like the seed planted on the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and make fruit—sometimes 30 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 100 times more.”

You Must Use What You Have

“Then Jesus said to them, “Do you take a lamp and hide it under a bowl or under a bed? No! You put the lamp on a lamp table. “Everything that is hidden will be made clear. Every secret thing will be made known. “You people that hear me, listen!

“Think carefully about the things you hear. The way you give is the way God will give to you. But God will give you more than you give. “The person that has something will receive more. But the person that does not have much will lose even the little amount he has.”

Jesus Uses a Story About Seed

“Then Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is like a man that plants seed in the ground. “The seed begins to grow. It grows night and day. It is not important if the man is sleeping or awake; the seed still grows. The man does not know how the seed grows. “Without any help, the ground grows grain. First the plant grows, then the head, and then all the grain in the head. “When the grain is ready, the man cuts it. This is the harvest time.”

The Kingdom Is Like a Mustard Seed

“Then Jesus said, “What can I use to show you what the kingdom of God is like? What story can I use to explain it? “The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is the smallest seed that you plant in the ground. “But when you plant this seed, it grows and becomes the largest of all the plants in your garden. It has branches that are very big. The wild birds can come and make nests there and be protected from the sun.”

“Jesus used many stories like these to teach them. He taught them all that they could understand. “Jesus always used stories to teach

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by Christ’s enemies.

fruit The good things God wants his people to do.

the people. But when Jesus and his followers were alone together, Jesus explained everything to them.

Jesus Stops a Storm

"That day, at evening, Jesus said to his followers, "Come with me across the lake."

"Jesus and the followers left the people there. They went in the same boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them. "A very bad wind came on the lake. The waves were coming over the sides and into the boat. The boat was almost full of water. "Jesus was inside the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, "Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!"

"Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. Jesus said, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

"Jesus said to his followers, "Why are you afraid? You still have no faith?"

"The followers were very afraid and asked each other, "What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the water obey him!"

Jesus Frees a Man from Evil Spirits

S Jesus and his followers went across the lake to the area where the Gerasene people lived. "When Jesus got out of the boat, a man came to him from the caves where dead people are buried. This man had an evil spirit from the devil, living inside of him. "This man lived in the burial caves. No person could tie him. Even chains could not keep this man tied. "Many times people had used chains to tie the man's hands and feet. But the man broke the chains on his hands and feet. No person was strong enough to control him. "Day and night the man walked around the burial caves and on the hills. The man would scream and cut himself with rocks.

"While Jesus was far away, the man saw him. The man ran to Jesus and bowed down before him. "Jesus said to the man, "You evil spirit, come out of that man." So the man

shouted with a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you to promise to God that you will not punish me!"

"Then Jesus asked the man, "What is your name?"

The man answered, "My name is Legion,* because there are many spirits inside me."

"The spirits inside the man begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of that area.

"A large herd of pigs was eating on a hill near there. "The evil spirits begged Jesus, "Send us to the pigs. Let us go into them." "So Jesus allowed them to do this. The evil spirits left the man and went into the pigs. Then the herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs were drowned. There were about 2,000 pigs in that herd.

"The men that had the work of caring for the pigs ran away. The men ran to the town and to the farms. They told all the people what happened. The people went out to see what happened. "The people came to Jesus. They saw the man that had the many evil spirits. The man was sitting and was wearing clothes. His mind was right again. The people were afraid. "Some people were there and saw what Jesus did. These people told the other people what happened to the man that had the demons* living in him. And they also told about the pigs. "Then the people began to beg Jesus to leave their area.

"Jesus was preparing to leave in the boat. The man that was freed from the demons begged to go with Jesus.

"But Jesus did not allow the man to go. Jesus said, "Go home to your family and friends. Tell them about all the things the Lord did for you. Tell them that the Lord was good to you." "So the man left and told the people in the Ten Towns* about the great things Jesus did for him. All the people were amazed.

Legion Means very many. A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Ten Towns Greek, "Decapolis," an area east of Lake Galilee. It once had ten main towns.

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

¹Jesus went in the boat back across to the other side of the lake. There, many people gathered around him by the lake. ²A ruler from the synagogue* came to that place. His name was Jairus. Jairus saw Jesus and bowed down before him. ³The ruler begged and begged Jesus. He said, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her. Then she will be healed and will live."

⁴So Jesus went with the ruler. Many people followed Jesus. They were pushing very close around him.

⁵A woman was there among the people. This woman had been bleeding for the past twelve years. ⁶The woman suffered very much. Many doctors tried to help her. All the money she had was spent. But she was not improving. Her sickness was becoming worse. ⁷The woman heard about Jesus. So she followed Jesus with the people and touched his coat. ⁸The woman thought, "If I can touch his clothes, that will be enough to heal me." ⁹When the woman touched his coat, her bleeding stopped. The woman felt that her body was healed from the suffering. ¹⁰And Jesus felt power go out from him. So he stopped and turned around. Then he asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

¹¹The followers said to Jesus, "There are many people pushing against you. But you ask, 'Who touched me?'"

¹²But Jesus continued looking for the person that touched him. ¹³The woman knew that she was healed. So she came and bowed at Jesus' feet. The woman was shaking with fear. She told Jesus the whole story. ¹⁴Jesus said to the woman, "Dear woman, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace. You will have no more suffering."

¹⁵Jesus was still there speaking. Some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue* ruler. The men said, "Your daughter is dead. There is now no need to bother the teacher (Jesus)."

synagogue Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

¹⁶But Jesus did not care what the men said. Jesus said to the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid; only believe."

¹⁷Jesus let only Peter, James, and John the brother of James go with him to Jairus' house. ¹⁸Jesus and these followers went to the house of Jairus, the synagogue* ruler. Jesus saw many people there crying loudly. There was much confusion. ¹⁹Jesus entered the house and said to the people, "Why are you people crying and making so much noise? This child is not dead. She is only sleeping." ²⁰But all the people laughed at Jesus. Jesus told the people to leave the house. Then Jesus went into the room where the child was. He brought the child's father and mother and his three followers into the room with him. ²¹Then Jesus held the girl's hand and said to her, "Talitha, koum!" (This means, "Little girl, I tell you to stand up!") ²²The girl stood up and began walking. (The girl was twelve years old.) The father and mother and the followers were amazed. ²³Jesus gave the father and mother very strict orders not to tell people about this. Then Jesus told them to give the girl some food to eat.

Jesus Goes to His Home Town

6 Jesus left there and went back to his home town. His followers went with him. ²On the Sabbath day* Jesus taught in the synagogue.* Many people heard him teach and were amazed. These people said, "Where did this man get this teaching? How did he get this wisdom? Who gave it to him? And where did he get the power to do miracles* ³He is only the carpenter. And his mother is Mary. He is the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. And his sisters are here with us." The people did not accept Jesus.

⁴Jesus said to the people, "Other people give honor to a prophet.* But in his own town with his own people and in his own home, a prophet does not get honor." ⁵Jesus was not able to do

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

miracles Amazing works done by God's power.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

many miracles* in that town. The only miracles he did were to heal some sick people by putting his hands on them. "Jesus was very surprised because those people did not have faith.

Then Jesus went to other villages in that area and taught. "Jesus called the twelve followers together. Jesus sent them out in groups of two. Jesus gave them power over evil spirits. "This is what Jesus told his followers: "Take nothing for your trip. Take only a stick for walking. Take no bread, no bag, and no money in your pockets. "Wear shoes, and take only the clothes you are wearing. "When you enter a house, stay in that house until you leave that town. "If any town refuses to accept you or refuses to listen to you, then leave that town. Shake their dust off your feet.* This will be a warning to them."

"The followers left there and went to other places. They preached to the people and told them to change their hearts and lives. "The followers forced many demons* out of people. And the followers put olive oil on* sick people and healed them.

Herod Thinks Jesus Is John the Baptizer

"King Herod* heard about Jesus, because Jesus was now famous. Some people said, "He (Jesus) is, John the Baptizer. He is risen from death. That is why he can do these miracles.*"

"Other people said, "He is Elijah.*

Other people said, "Jesus is a prophet.* He is like the prophets that lived long ago."

"Herod heard these things about Jesus. He said, "I killed John by cutting off his head. Now John has been raised from death!"

How John the Baptizer Was Killed

"Herod* himself had ordered his soldiers to arrest John. So John was put into prison. Herod did this to please his wife, Herodias. Herodias was the wife of Philip, Herod's brother. But then Herod married Herodias. "John told Herod that it was not right for him to be married to his brother's wife. "So Herodias hated John. She wanted to kill him. But Herodias was not able to persuade Herod to kill John. "Herod was afraid to kill John. Herod knew that all the people thought John was a good and holy man. So Herod protected John. Herod enjoyed listening to John preach. But John's preaching always bothered Herod.

"Then the right time came for Herodias to cause John's death. It happened on Herod's birthday. Herod gave a dinner party for the most important government leaders, the commanders of his army, and the most important people in Galilee. "The daughter of Herodias came to the party and danced. When she danced, Herod and the people eating with him were very pleased.

So King Herod said to the girl, "I will give you anything you want." "Herod promised her, "Anything you ask for I will give to you. I will even give you half of my kingdom."

"The girl went to her mother and asked, "What should I ask King Herod to give me?" Her mother answered, "Ask for the head of John the Baptizer."

"Quickly the girl went back in to the king. The girl said to the king, "Please give me the head of John the Baptizer. Bring it to me now on a plate."

"King Herod was very sad. But he had promised to give the girl anything she wanted. And the people eating there with Herod heard his promise. So Herod did not want to refuse the thing she asked for. "So the king sent a soldier to cut off John's head and bring it. So the soldier went and cut off John's head in the prison. "Then the soldier brought John's head back on a plate. He gave the head to the girl. Then the girl gave the head to her mother. "John's followers heard about what happened. So they came and got John's body. They put it

miracles Miracles are amazing works done by the power of God.

Shake ... feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

put ... on Oil was used like a medicine, so that is probably how the followers used it.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

Elijah A man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

in a tomb (grave).

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

³⁰The apostles* that Jesus sent to preach, came back to Jesus. They gathered around Jesus and told him about all the things they did and taught. ³¹Jesus and his followers were in a very busy place. There were many, many people. Jesus and his followers did not even have time to eat. Jesus said to his followers, "Come with me. We will go to a quiet place to be alone. There we will get some rest."

³²So Jesus and his followers went away alone. They went in a boat to a place where there were no people. ³³But many people saw them leave. The people knew it was Jesus. So people from all the towns ran to the place where Jesus was going. The people were there before Jesus arrived. ³⁴When Jesus arrived there, he saw many people waiting. Jesus felt sorry for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, to care for them. So Jesus taught the people many things.

³⁵It was now late in the day. So Jesus' followers came to him. They said, "No people live in this place. And it is already very late. ³⁶So send the people away. They need to go to the farms and towns around here to buy some food to eat."

³⁷But Jesus answered, "You give them some food to eat."

The followers said to Jesus, "We can't buy enough bread to feed all these people! We would have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!"

³⁸Jesus asked the followers, "How many loaves of bread do you have now? Go and see."

The followers counted their loaves of bread. They came to Jesus and said, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish."

³⁹Then Jesus said to the followers, "Tell all the people to sit in groups on the green grass." ⁴⁰So all the people sat in groups. There were about 50 or 100 people in each group. ⁴¹Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to the sky and thanked God for the bread. Then

Jesus divided the bread and gave it to his followers. Jesus told his followers to give the bread to the people. Then Jesus divided the two fish and gave the fish to the people. ⁴²All the people ate and were full. ⁴³After the people finished eating, the followers filled twelve baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were not eaten. ⁴⁴There were about 5,000 men there that ate.

Jesus Walks on the Water

⁴⁵Then Jesus told the followers to get into the boat. Jesus told them to go to the other side of the lake to Bethsaida. Jesus said that he would come later. Jesus stayed there to tell the people they could go home. ⁴⁶After Jesus said good-bye to the people, he went into the hills to pray.

⁴⁷That night, the boat was still in the middle of the lake. Jesus was alone on the land. ⁴⁸Jesus saw the boat far away on the lake. He saw the followers working hard to row the boat. The wind was blowing against them. Sometime between three and six o'clock in the morning, Jesus went to the boat. Jesus was walking on the water. Jesus continued walking until he was almost past the boat. ⁴⁹But the followers saw Jesus walking on the water. They thought he was a ghost. The followers shouted with fear. ⁵⁰All the followers saw Jesus and were very afraid. But Jesus spoke to the followers and said, "Don't worry! It's me! Don't be afraid." ⁵¹Then Jesus got into the boat with the followers. And the wind became calm. The followers were completely amazed. ⁵²They had seen Jesus make more bread from the five loaves. But they did not understand what it meant. They were not able to understand it.

⁵³The followers of Jesus crossed the lake. They came to shore at Gennesaret. They tied the boat there. ⁵⁴When they were out of the boat, the people saw Jesus. They knew who he was. ⁵⁵The people ran to tell other people, everywhere in that area that Jesus was there. The people brought sick people on beds to every place Jesus went. ⁵⁶Jesus went into towns and cities and farms around that area. And every place Jesus went, the people brought sick

people to the market places. They begged Jesus to let them touch any part of his coat. And all the people that touched him were healed.

God's Law and Rules that People Make

7 Some Pharisees* and some teachers of the law came from Jerusalem. They gathered around Jesus. "The Pharisees and teachers of the law saw that some of Jesus' followers ate food with hands that were not clean. ("Not clean" means that they did not wash their hands in the way the Pharisees* said people must.) "The Pharisees and all the Jews never eat before washing their hands in this special way. They do this to follow the teaching given to them by their great people that lived before them. "And when the Jews buy something in the market, they never eat it until they wash it in a special way. They also follow other rules from their people that lived before them. They follow rules like the washing of cups, pitchers, and pots.

"The Pharisees* and teachers of the law said to Jesus, "Your followers don't follow the rules given to us by our great people that lived before us. Your followers eat their food with hands that are not clean. Why do they do this?"

"Jesus answered, "You are all hypocrites.* Isaiah was right when he spoke about you. Isaiah wrote,

"These people say they honor me,
but they don't really make me an
important part of their lives.

⁷ Their worship of me is for nothing.
The things they teach are only rules
that people have made."

Isaiah 29:13

"You have stopped following the commands of God. Now you follow the teachings of men."

"Then Jesus said to them: "You think you are smart! You ignore the commands of God so that you can follow your own teachings!"

¹⁰Moses said, "You must honor (*respect*) your

father and mother.*" Then Moses also said, "Any person that says bad things to his father or mother must be killed.*" "But you teach that a person can say to his father or mother, 'I have something I could use to help you. But I will not use it to help you. I will give it to God.' "You are telling that person that he does not have to do anything for his father or mother. "So you are teaching that it is not important to do what God said. You think that it is more important to follow those rules you teach people. And you do many things like that."

"Jesus called the people to him again. He said, "Every person should listen to me and understand what I am saying. "There is nothing a person puts into his body that makes him wrong. A person is made wrong by the things that come from him." ¹⁶

"Then Jesus left the people and went into the house. The followers asked Jesus about this story. "Jesus said, "You still have trouble understanding? Surely you know that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him wrong. "Food does not go into a person's mind. Food goes into his stomach. Then that food goes out of his body." (When Jesus said this, he meant that there is no food that is wrong for people to eat.)

"And Jesus said, "The things that come from a man are the things that make him wrong. "All these bad things begin inside a person, in his mind: bad thoughts, sexual sins, stealing, murder, "adultery,* selfishness, doing bad things to people, lying, doing sinful things, jealousy, saying bad things about people, proud boasting, and foolish living. "All these evil things come from inside a person. These things make a person wrong."

Jesus Helps a Non-Jewish Woman

"Jesus left that place and went to the area around Tyre. Jesus went into a house there.

'You must ... mother' Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

'Any person ... killed' Quote from Ex. 21:17.

Verse 16 Some Greek copies add verse 16: "You people that hear me, listen!"

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

Jesus did not want the people in that area to know he was there. But Jesus could not stay hidden. ²⁵A woman heard that Jesus was there. Her little daughter had an evil spirit, from the devil, inside her. So the woman came to Jesus and bowed down near his feet. ²⁶The woman was not a Jew. She was Greek, born in Phoenicia, an area in Syria. The woman begged Jesus to force the demon* out of her daughter.

²⁷Jesus told the woman: "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs. First let the children eat all they want."

²⁸The woman answered, "That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don't eat."

²⁹Then Jesus told the woman, "That is a very good answer. You may go. The demon* has left your daughter."

³⁰The woman went home and found her daughter lying on the bed. The demon was gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

¹Then Jesus left the area around Tyre and went through Sidon. Jesus went to Lake Galilee. Jesus went through the area of the Ten Towns.* ²While he was there, some people brought a man to him. This man was deaf and could not talk. The people begged Jesus to put his hand on the man to heal him.

³Jesus led the man away from the people to be alone with him. Jesus put his fingers in the man's ears. Then Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue. ⁴Jesus looked up to the sky and made a breathing sound. Jesus said to the man, "Ephphatha!" (This means, "Open!") ⁵When Jesus did this, the man was able to hear. The man was able to use his tongue and spoke clearly.

⁶Jesus commanded the people not to tell any person about what happened. Jesus always commanded people not to tell other people about him. But this only caused the people to tell about him more and more. ⁷The people

were really amazed. The people said, "Jesus does everything in a good way. Jesus makes deaf people able to hear. And people that can't talk—Jesus makes them able to talk."

Jesus Feeds More than 4,000 People

8 Another time there were many people with Jesus. The people had nothing to eat. So Jesus called his followers to him. Jesus said, ²"I feel sorry for these people. They have been with me for three days. And now they have nothing to eat. ³I should not send them home hungry. If they leave without eating, they will faint while going home. Some of these people live a long way from here."

⁴Jesus' followers answered, "But we are far away from any towns. Where can we get enough bread to feed all these people?"

⁵Then Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have?"

The followers answered, "We have seven loaves of bread."

⁶Jesus told the people to sit on the ground. Then Jesus took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God. Jesus divided the bread and gave the pieces to his followers. Jesus told the followers to give the bread to the people. The followers obeyed him. ⁷The followers also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for the fish and told the followers to give the fish to the people. ⁸All the people ate and were full. Then the followers filled seven baskets with the pieces of food that were not eaten. ⁹There were about 4,000 men that ate. After they ate, Jesus told them to go home. ¹⁰Then Jesus went in a boat with his followers to the area of Dalmanutha.

The Pharisees Try to Test Jesus

¹The Pharisees* came to Jesus and asked him questions. They wanted to test Jesus. So they asked Jesus to do a miracle* to show that he was from God. ²Jesus made a sad sound like he was troubled. He said, "Why do you people

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

Ten Towns Greek, "Decapolis," an area east of Lake Galilee. It once had ten main towns.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

miracle Amazing work done by God's power.

ask to see a miracle as proof? I tell you the truth. No proof like that will be given to you."
 "Then Jesus left the Pharisees. Jesus went in the boat to the other side of the lake.

Jesus Warns Against the Jewish Leaders

"The followers had only one loaf of bread with them in the boat. They forgot to bring more bread. "Jesus warned them, "Be careful! Guard against the yeast* of the Pharisees* and the yeast of Herod."

"The followers discussed the meaning of this. They said, "He said this because we have no bread."

"Jesus knew that the followers were talking about this. So Jesus asked them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? You still don't see or understand? Are you not able to understand? "Do you have eyes that can't see? Do you have ears that can't hear? Remember what I did before, when we did not have enough bread? "I divided five loaves of bread for 5,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?"

The followers answered, "We filled twelve baskets."

"And remember that I divided seven loaves of bread for 4,000 people. Remember how many baskets you filled with pieces of food that were not eaten?"

The followers answered, "We filled seven baskets."

"Then Jesus said to them, "You remember these things I did, but you still don't understand?"

Jesus Heals a Blind Man In Bethsaida

"Jesus and his followers came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus. They begged Jesus to touch the man. "So Jesus held the blind man's hand and led him out of the village. Then Jesus spit on the man's eyes. Jesus put his hands on the blind man and asked

him, "Can you see now?"

"The blind man looked up and said, "Yes, I see people. They look like trees walking around."

"Again Jesus put his hands on the blind man's eyes. Then the man opened his eyes wide. His eyes were healed, and he was able to see everything clearly. "Jesus told him to go home. Jesus said, "Don't go into the town."

Peter Says that Jesus Is the Christ

"Jesus and his followers went to the towns in the area of Caesarea Philippi. While they were traveling, Jesus asked the followers, "Who do people say I am?"

"The followers answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptizer. Other people say you are Elijah.* And other people say that you are one of the prophets.*"

"Then Jesus asked, "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ.*"

"Jesus told the followers, "Don't tell any person who I am."

"Then Jesus began to teach his followers that the Son of Man* must suffer many things. Jesus taught that the Son of Man would not be accepted by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law. Jesus taught that the Son of Man must be killed and then rise from death after three days. "Jesus told them everything that would happen. He did not keep anything secret. Peter spoke to Jesus alone. Peter criticized Jesus for saying those things. "But Jesus turned and looked at his followers. Then he criticized Peter. Jesus said to Peter, "Go away from me, Satan*! You don't care about the things of God. You care only about things that people think are important."

Elijah Man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Satan Name for the devil meaning "the enemy." Jesus means that Peter was talking like Satan.

yeast Used here as a symbol of bad influence.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

¹⁰Then Jesus called the people to him. His followers were also there. Then Jesus said, "If any person wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. That person must accept the cross (*suffering*) that is given to him, and he must follow me. ¹¹The person that wants to save his life will lose it. And every person that gives his life for me and for the Good News* will save his life forever. ¹²It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he loses his soul in hell. ¹³A person could never pay enough to buy back his soul. ¹⁴The people that live now are living in a sinful and evil time. If any person is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I* will be ashamed of that person. I will be ashamed of that person at the time I come with the glory of my Father and the holy angels."

9 Then Jesus said to the people, "I tell you the truth. Some of you people standing here will see the kingdom of God come before you die. The kingdom of God will come with power."

Jesus with Moses and Elijah

¹Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went up on a high mountain. They were all alone there. While these followers watched him, Jesus was changed. ²Jesus' clothes became shining white. The clothes were whiter than any person could make them. ³Then two men were there, talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.*

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Teacher, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵Peter did not know what to say, because he and the other two followers were very afraid.

⁶Then a cloud came and covered them. A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, "This (*Jesus*) is my Son and I love him. Obey him!"

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

I Literally, "the Son of Man."

Moses and Elijah Two of the most important Jewish leaders in the past.

⁷Then Peter, James, and John looked, but they saw only Jesus there alone with them.

⁸Jesus and the followers were walking back down the mountain. Jesus commanded the followers, "Don't tell any person about the things you saw on the mountain. Wait until after the Son of Man* rises from death. Then you can tell people what you saw."

⁹So the followers obeyed Jesus and said nothing about what they saw. But they discussed what Jesus meant about rising from death. ¹⁰The followers asked Jesus, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah* must come first?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "They are right to say that Elijah must come first. Elijah makes all things the way they should be. But why does the Scripture* say that the Son of Man* will suffer much and that people will think he is worth nothing? ¹²I tell you that Elijah has already come. And people did to him all the bad things they wanted to do. The Scriptures said this would happen to him."

Jesus Heals a Sick Boy

¹Then Jesus, Peter, James, and John went to the other followers. They saw many people around them. The teachers of the law were arguing with the followers. ²When the people saw Jesus, they were very surprised. They ran to him to welcome him.

³Jesus asked, "What are you arguing with the teachers of the law about?"

⁴A man answered, "Teacher, I brought my son to you. My son has a spirit, from the devil, inside him. This spirit stops my son from talking. ⁵The spirit attacks my son and throws him on the ground. My son foams from his mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes very stiff. I asked your followers to force the evil spirit out, but they could not."

⁶Jesus answered, "You people don't believe! How long must I stay with you? How

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Elijah Man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

long must I continue to be patient with you? Bring the boy to me!"

²So the followers brought the boy to Jesus. When the evil spirit saw Jesus, the spirit attacked the boy. The boy fell down and rolled on the ground. The boy was foaming from his mouth.

³Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has this been happening to the boy?"

The father answered, "Since he was very young. ⁴The spirit often throws him into a fire or into water to kill him. If you can do anything for him, please have pity on us and help us."

⁵Jesus said to the father, "You said, 'Help him if you can.' All things are possible for the person that believes."

⁶The father became very excited. He said, "I do believe. Help me to believe more!"

⁷Jesus saw that all the people were running there to see what was happening. So Jesus spoke to the evil spirit. Jesus said, "You evil spirit that makes this boy deaf and stops him from talking—I command you to come out of this boy and never enter him again!"

⁸The evil spirit screamed. The spirit caused the boy to fall on the ground again, and then the spirit came out. The boy looked like he was dead. Many people said, "He is dead!"

⁹But Jesus held the boy's hand and helped the boy stand.

¹⁰Jesus went into the house. His followers were alone with him there. They said, "We could not force that evil spirit out. Why?"

¹¹Jesus answered, "That kind of spirit can only be forced out by using prayer."

Jesus Talks About His Death

¹²Then Jesus and his followers left that place. They went through Galilee. Jesus did not want the people to know where they were. ¹³Jesus wanted to teach his followers alone. Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man* will be given to people that will kill him. After three days, he will rise from death." ¹⁴But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant.

And they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

Jesus Tells Who Is the Greatest

¹⁵Jesus and his followers went to Capernaum. They went into a house. Then Jesus said to his followers, "I heard you arguing on the road today. What were you arguing about?" ¹⁶But the followers did not answer, because their argument on the road was about which one of them was the greatest.

¹⁷Jesus sat down and called the twelve apostles* to him. Jesus said, "If any person wants to be the most important, then he must make all other people more important than himself. That person must serve all other people."

¹⁸Then Jesus took a small child. Jesus stood the child before the followers. Jesus held the child in his arms and said, ¹⁹"If a person accepts children like these in my name, then that person is also accepting me. And if a person accepts me, then that person is also accepting the One (God) that sent me."

Any Person Not Against Us Is for Us

²⁰Then John said, "Teacher, we saw a man using your name to force demons* out of a person. He is not one of us. So we told him to stop, because he does not belong to our group."

²¹Jesus said, "Don't stop him. Any person that uses my name to do powerful things will not say bad things about me. ²²The person that is not against us is with us. ²³I tell you the truth. If a person helps you by giving you a drink of water because you belong to the Christ,* then that person will truly get his reward."

²⁴"If one of these little children believes in me, and another person causes that child to sin, then it will be very bad for that person. It would be better for that person to have a large rock tied around his neck and be drowned in the sea. ²⁵If your hand makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

have life forever. That is much better than to have two hands and go to hell. In that place the fire never stops. ⁴⁴“If your foot makes you sin, cut it off. It is better for you to lose part of your body but have life forever. That is much better than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. ⁴⁵“If your eye makes you sin, take it out. It is better for you to have only one eye but have life forever. That is much better than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell. “The worms that eat the people in hell never die. In hell the fire is never stopped. “Every person will be punished* with fire.

⁴⁶“Salt is good. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then you can’t make it salty again. So, be full of goodness. And have peace with each other.”

Jesus Teaches About Divorce

10 Then Jesus left that place. He went into the area of Judea and across the Jordan River. Again, many people came to him. And Jesus taught the people like he always did.

¹Some Pharisees* came to Jesus. They tried to make Jesus say something wrong. They asked Jesus, “Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?”

²Jesus answered, “What did Moses command you to do?”

³The Pharisees said, “Moses allowed a man to divorce his wife by writing a certificate of divorce.”

⁴Jesus answered, “Moses wrote that command for you because you refused to accept God’s teaching. “But when God made the world, ‘he made people male and female.’ ⁵“That is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. “And the two people will become one.”* So the people are

not two, but one. ⁶God has joined those two people together. So no person should separate them.”

⁷Later, the followers and Jesus were in the house. The followers asked Jesus again about the question of divorce. ⁸Jesus answered, “Any person that divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of sin against his wife. He is guilty of the sin of adultery.* ⁹“And the woman that divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery.”

Jesus Accepts Children

¹⁰People brought their small children to Jesus, so that Jesus could touch them. But the followers told the people to stop bringing their children to Jesus. ¹¹Jesus saw what happened. He did not like his followers telling the children not to come. Jesus said to them, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people that are like these little children. ¹²“I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God like a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it.” ¹³Then Jesus held the children in his arms. Jesus put his hands on them and blessed them.

A Rich Man Refuses to Follow

¹⁴Jesus started to leave, but a man ran to him and bowed on his knees before Jesus. The man asked, “Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that never ends?”

¹⁵Jesus answered, “Why do you call me good? No person is good. Only God is good. ¹⁶But I will answer your question. You know the commands: ‘You must not murder anyone, you must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not steal, you must not lie, you must not cheat, you must honor (respect) your father and mother....’*¹⁷”

¹⁸The man said, “Teacher, I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

Verse 44 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 44, which is the same as verse 48.

Verse 46 Some Greek copies of Mark add verse 46, which is the same as verse 48.

punished Literally, “salted.”

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

‘he made ... female’ Quote from Gen. 1:27.

‘That ... one’ Quote from Gen. 2:24.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

‘You must ... mother’ Quote from Ex. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20.

¹¹Jesus looked at the man. Jesus felt love for him. Jesus said, "There is still one more thing you need to do. Go and sell everything you have. Give the money to the poor people. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me."

¹²The man was very sorry to hear Jesus say this, and he left. The man was sad because he was very rich and wanted to keep his money.

¹³Then Jesus looked at his followers and said to them, "It will be very hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!"

¹⁴The followers were amazed at what Jesus said. But Jesus said again, "My children, it is very hard to enter the kingdom of God! ¹⁵And it will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God! It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle!"

¹⁶The followers were more amazed and said to each other, "Then who can be saved?"

¹⁷Jesus looked at the followers and said, "This is something that people cannot do themselves. It must come from God. God can do all things."

¹⁸Peter said to Jesus, "We left everything to follow you!"

¹⁹Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Every person that has left his home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or farm for me and for the Good News* ²⁰will get a hundred times more than he left. Here in this world that person will get more homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and farms. And with those things, that person will have persecutions.* But he will also have a reward in the world that is coming. That reward is life forever. ²¹Many people that have the highest place now will have the lowest place in the future. And the people that have the lowest place now will have the highest place in the future."

Jesus Talks Again About His Death

²²Jesus and the people with him were going to Jerusalem. Jesus was leading the people.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

persecutions Being hurt or bothered by Christ's enemies.

Jesus' followers were amazed. But those people that followed behind them were afraid. Jesus gathered the twelve apostles* again and talked with them alone. Jesus told them what would happen in Jerusalem. ²³Jesus said, "We are going to Jerusalem. The Son of Man* will be given to the leading priests and teachers of the law. The priests and the teachers of the law will say that the Son of Man must die. They will give the Son of Man to the non-Jewish people. ²⁴Those people will laugh at him and spit on him. They will beat him with whips and kill him. But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again."

James and John Ask a Favor

²⁵Then James and John, sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus. They said, "Teacher, we want to ask you to do something for us."

²⁶Jesus asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

²⁷The sons answered, "You will have glory in your kingdom. Let one of us sit at your right, and let one of us sit at your left."

²⁸Jesus said, "You don't understand what you are asking. Can you accept the kind of suffering that I must have*? And can you be baptized with the same kind of baptism* that I must have?"

²⁹The sons answered, "Yes, we can!"

Jesus said to the sons, "You will suffer the same things that I will suffer. And you will be baptized with the same baptism that I must have. ³⁰But I cannot choose the person that will sit at my right or my left. There are some people that will have those places. Those places are prepared for them."

³¹The other ten followers heard this. They became angry with James and John. ³²Jesus called all the followers together. Jesus said, "The non-Jewish people have men they call

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

accept ... have Literally, "drink the cup that I must drink."

baptized ... baptism Has a special meaning here—being "baptized" or "buried" in troubles.

rulers. You know that those rulers love to show their power over the people. And their important leaders love to use all their authority over the people. "But it should not be that way with you. If one of you wants to become great, then he must serve you like a servant. "If one of you wants to become the most important, then he must serve all of you like a slave. "In the same way, the Son of Man* did not come for other people to serve him. But the Son of Man came to serve other people. The Son of Man came to give his life to save many people."

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

"Then they came to the town of Jericho. Jesus was leaving that town with his followers and many other people. A blind man named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting by the road. This man was always begging for money. "The blind man heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. The blind man shouted, "Jesus, Son of David,* please help me!"

"Many people criticized the blind man. They told him not to speak. But the blind man shouted more and more, "Son of David, please help me!"

"Jesus stopped and said, "Tell the man to come here."

So they called the blind man. They said, "Be happy! Stand up! Jesus is calling you."

*The blind man stood quickly. He left his coat there and went to Jesus.

"Jesus asked the man, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man answered, "Teacher, I want to see again."

"Jesus said, "Go. You are healed because you believed." Then the man was able to see again. He followed Jesus on the road.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem like a King

11 Jesus and his followers were coming closer to Jerusalem. They came to the towns of Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives.* There Jesus sent two of his followers to do something. "Jesus said to the followers, "Go to the town you can see there. When you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there. No person has ever ridden this donkey. Untie the donkey and bring it here to me. "If any person asks you why you are taking the donkey, tell that person, "The Master needs this donkey. He will send it back soon.'"

"The followers went into the town. They found a young donkey tied in the street near the door of a house. The followers untied the donkey. "Some people were standing there and saw this. The people asked, "What are you doing? Why are you untying that donkey?" "The followers answered the way Jesus told them to answer. The people let the followers take the donkey. "The followers brought the donkey to Jesus. The followers put their coats on the donkey, and Jesus sat on it. "Many people spread their coats on the road for Jesus. Other people cut branches in the fields and spread the branches on the road. "Some of the people were walking ahead of Jesus. Other people were walking behind him. All the people shouted,

"Praise* Him!

God bless the one that comes
in the name of the Lord!

Psalms 118:26

" God bless the kingdom of our father
David*

That kingdom is coming!
Praise* to God in heaven!"

"Jesus went into Jerusalem and went to the temple.* Jesus looked at everything in the

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

Praise Literally, "Hosanna," a Hebrew word used in praying to God for help. At this time it was probably a shout of joy used in praising God or His Messiah.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Son of David Name for the Christ, who was from the family of David, king of Israel.

temple. But it was already late. So Jesus went to Bethany with the twelve apostles.*

¹²The next day, Jesus was leaving Bethany. He was hungry. ¹³Jesus saw a fig tree with leaves. So Jesus went to the tree to see if it had any figs growing on it. But Jesus found no figs on the tree. There were only leaves. It was not the right time for figs to grow. ¹⁴So Jesus said to the tree, "People will never eat fruit from you again." Jesus' followers heard him say this.

Jesus Goes to the Temple

¹⁵Jesus went to Jerusalem. He went into the temple.* Jesus began to throw out the people that were selling and buying things there. Jesus turned over the tables that belonged to the people that were exchanging different kinds of money. And Jesus turned over the benches of those people that were selling doves. ¹⁶Jesus refused to allow any person to carry things through the temple. ¹⁷Then Jesus taught the people. He said, "It is written in the Scriptures,* 'My house will be called a house for prayer for all people.'* But you are changing God's house into a 'hiding place for thieves.'"

¹⁸The leading priests and the teachers of the law heard these things. They began trying to find a way to kill Jesus. They were afraid of Jesus because all the people were amazed at his teaching. ¹⁹That night, Jesus and his followers left the city.

Jesus Shows the Power of Faith

²⁰The next morning, Jesus was walking with his followers. They saw the fig tree that Jesus spoke to the day before. The fig tree was dry and dead, even the roots. ²¹Peter remembered the tree and said to Jesus, "Teacher, look! Yesterday, you told that fig tree to die. Now it is dry and dead!"

²²Jesus answered, "Have faith in God. ²³I tell you the truth. You can say to this mountain, 'Go, mountain, fall into the sea.' And if you have no doubts in your mind and believe that the thing you say will happen, then God will do it for you. ²⁴So I tell you to ask for things in prayer. And if you believe that you have received those things, then they will be yours. ²⁵When you are praying, and you remember that you are angry with another person about something, then forgive that person. If you do this, then your Father in heaven will also forgive your sins." **

Jewish Leaders Doubt Jesus' Authority

²⁶Jesus and his followers went again to Jerusalem. Jesus was walking in the temple.* The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders came to Jesus. ²⁷They said to Jesus, "Tell us! What authority (*power*) do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁸Jesus answered, "I will ask you a question. You answer my question. Then I will tell you whose authority I use to do these things. ²⁹Tell me: When John baptized* people, did that come from God or from man? Answer me!"

³⁰These Jewish leaders talked about Jesus' question. They said to each other, "If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then Jesus will say, 'Then why didn't you believe John?' ³¹But if we say, 'John's baptism was from man,' then the people will be angry with us." (The leaders were afraid of the people. All the people believed that John was a prophet.)*

³²So the leaders answered Jesus, "We don't know the answer."

Jesus said, "Then I will not tell you what authority I use to do these things."

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

'My ... people' Quote from Isaiah 56:7.

'hiding ... thieves' Quote from Jer. 7:11.

Verse 26 Some early Greek copies add verse 26: "But if you don't forgive other people, then your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins."

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

God Sends His Son

12 Jesus used stories to teach the people. Jesus said, "A man planted a field with grapes. The man put a wall around the field and dug a hole for a wine press.* Then the man built a tower. The man leased the field to some farmers. Then the man left for a trip. ²Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent a servant to the farmers to get his share of the grapes. ³But the farmers grabbed the servant and beat him. They sent the servant away with nothing. ⁴Then the man sent another servant to the farmers. The farmers hit this servant on the head. They showed no respect for him. ⁵So the man sent another servant. The farmers killed this servant. The man sent many other servants to the farmers. The farmers beat some of the servants and killed the others.

⁶"The man had one person left to send to the farmers. This person was the man's son. The man loved his son. But the man decided to send the son to the farmers. The son was the last person he could send. The man said, 'The farmers will respect my son.'

⁷"But the farmers said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours.' ⁸So the farmers took the son, killed him, and threw him out of the field.

⁹"So what will the man that owns the field do? He will go to the field and kill those farmers. Then he will give the field to other farmers. ¹⁰Surely you have read this Scripture*:

'The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone.*

¹¹ The Lord did this, and it is wonderful to us."

Psalms 118:22-23

¹²These Jewish leaders heard this story that Jesus told. They knew that this story was about them. So they wanted to find a way to arrest Jesus. But they were afraid of the people. So the Jewish leaders left Jesus and went away.

wine press Place dug in rock used to mash grapes and collect the juice for making wine.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

¹³Later, the Jewish leaders sent some Pharisees* and some men from the group called Herodians* to Jesus. They wanted to catch Jesus saying something wrong. "The Pharisees and Herodians went to Jesus and said, 'Teacher, we know that you are an honest man.. You are not afraid of what other people think about you. All men are the same to you. And you teach the truth about God's way. Tell us: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar* Yes or no? Should we pay taxes, or should we not pay taxes?'

¹⁴But Jesus knew that these men were really trying to trick him. Jesus said, "Why are you trying to catch me saying something wrong? Bring me a silver coin. Let me see it." They gave Jesus a coin and Jesus asked, "Whose picture is on the coin? And whose name is written on it?" They answered, "It is Caesar's picture and Caesar's name."

¹⁵Then Jesus said to them, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And give to God the things that are God's." The men were amazed at what Jesus said.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

¹⁶Then some Sadducees* came to Jesus.. (Sadducees believe that no person will rise from death.) The Sadducees asked Jesus a question. "They said, 'Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and he had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ²There were seven brothers. The first brother married but died. He had no children. ³So the second brother married the woman. But he also died and had no children.. The same thing happened with the third brother. ⁴All seven brothers married the

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Herodians A Jewish political group.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

woman and died. None of the brothers had any children with the woman. The woman was last to die. ²³But all seven brothers had married her. So at the time when people rise from death, whose wife will the woman be?"

²⁴Jesus answered, "Why did you make this mistake? Is it because you don't know what the Scriptures* say? Or because you don't know about the power of God? ²⁵When people rise from death, there will be no marriage. People will not be married to each other. All people will be like angels in heaven. ²⁶Surely you have read what God said about people rising from death. In the book where Moses wrote about the burning bush,* it says that God told Moses this: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'²⁷ ²⁸If God said he is their God, then, these men are not really dead. He is the God only of living people. You Sadducees* are wrong!"

Which Command Is Most Important?

²⁹One of the teachers of the law came to Jesus. He heard Jesus arguing with the Sadducees* and the Pharisees.* He saw that Jesus gave good answers to their questions. So he asked Jesus, "Which of the commands is most important?"

³⁰Jesus answered, "The most important command is this: 'People of Israel, listen! The Lord our God is the only Lord. ³¹You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.'³² ³³The second most important command is this: 'You must love other people the same as you love yourself.'³⁴ These two commands are the most important."

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

burning bush Read Ex. 3:1-12.

Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob Three of the most important leaders in the Old Testament.

'I ... Jacob' Quote from Ex. 3:6.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

'People ... strength' Quote from Deut. 6:4-5.

'You must ... yourself' Quote from Lev. 19:18.

³⁵The man answered, "That was a good answer, Teacher. You were right when you said these things. God is the only Lord, and there is no other God. ³⁶And a person must love God with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength. And a person must love other people the same as he loves himself. These commands are more important than all the animals and sacrifices we offer to God."

³⁷Jesus saw that the man answered him wisely. So Jesus said to the man, "You are close to the kingdom of God." And after that time, no person was brave enough to ask Jesus any more questions.

³⁸Jesus was teaching in the temple.* Jesus asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Christ* is the son of David? ³⁹With the help of the Holy Spirit* David himself says:

'The Lord (God) said to my Lord
(Christ):

Sit by me at my right side.
until I put your enemies under your
control.*

Psalm 110:1

⁴⁰David himself calls the Christ 'Lord.' So how can the Christ be David's son?" Many people listened to Jesus and were very pleased.

⁴¹Jesus continued teaching. Jesus said, "Be careful of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the market places. ⁴²They love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* And they love to get the most important seats at the feasts. ⁴³They are mean to widows* and steal their homes. Then they try to make themselves look good by saying long

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Christ The "anointed one" (the Messiah) or chosen one of God.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

control Literally, "feet."

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

widow(s) A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

prayers. God will punish these people very much."

A Widow Shows the Meaning of Giving

"Jesus sat near the temple money box* where people put their gifts. He watched the people put money in the box. Many rich people gave much money. "Then a poor widow* came and gave two very small copper coins. These coins were not even worth a penny.

"Jesus called his followers to him. Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all those rich people. "The rich people have plenty; they gave only what they did not need. This woman is very poor. But she gave all she had. And she needed that money to help her live."

Future Destruction of the Temple

13 Jesus was leaving the temple.* One of his followers said to him, "Look, Teacher! This temple has very beautiful buildings with very big stones."

"Jesus said, "You see these great buildings? All these buildings will be destroyed. Every stone will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another."

"Later, Jesus was sitting at a place on the Mount of Olives.* He was alone with Peter, James, John, and Andrew. They could all see the temple. Those followers asked Jesus, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will show us that it is time for these things to happen?"

"Jesus said to the followers: "Be careful! Don't let any person fool you. "Many people will come and use my name. They will say, 'I am the One.' And they will fool many people. "You will hear about wars and stories about wars that are being fought. But don't be afraid. These things must happen before the end

comes. "Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. There will be times when there is no food for people to eat. And there will be earthquakes in different places. These things are like the first pains when something new is born.

"You must be careful. People will arrest you and take you to be judged. They will beat you in their synagogues.* You will be forced to stand before kings and governors. You will tell them about me. This will happen to you because you follow me. "Before these things happen, the Good News* must be told to all people. "You will be arrested and judged. But don't worry about what you should say. Say the things God gives you to say at that time. It will not really be you speaking. It will be the Holy Spirit* speaking.

"Brothers will turn against their own brothers and give them to be killed. Fathers will turn against their own children and give them to be killed. Children will fight against their own parents and find ways for their parents to be killed. "All people will hate you because you follow me. But the person that continues strong until the end will be saved.

"You will see 'the terrible thing that causes destruction.* You will see this thing standing in the place where it should not be." (You that read this should understand what it means.) "At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. "People should run away without wasting time to stop for anything. If a person is on the roof of his house, he must not go down to take things out of his house. "If a person is in the field, he must not go back to get his coat. "At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies. "Pray that these things will

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

'the ... destruction' See Dan. 9:27; 12:11 (cf. Dan. 11:31).

money box Special box in the Jewish place for worship where people put their gifts to God.

widow(s) A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

not happen in winter. ¹⁹Why? Because those days will be full of much trouble. There will be more trouble than has ever happened since the beginning, when God made the world. And nothing as bad as that will ever happen again. ²⁰God has decided to make that terrible time short. If that time were not made short, then no person could continue living. But God will make that time short to help his special people that he has chosen. ²¹At that time, some person might say to you, 'Look, there is the Christ*!' Or another person might say, 'There he is!' But don't believe them. ²²False Christs and false prophets will come and do great things and miracles. They will do these things to the people God has chosen. They will do these things to try to fool his people, if that is possible. ²³So be careful. Now I have warned you about all this before it happens.

²⁴"During the days after this trouble happens,

'The sun will become dark,
and the moon will not give light.

²⁵ The stars will fall from the sky,
and everything in the sky will be
changed.'

Isaiah 13:10; 34:4

²⁶"Then people will see the Son of Man* coming in the clouds with power and great glory. ²⁷The Son of Man will send his angels all around the earth. The angels will gather his chosen people from every part of the earth.

²⁸"The fig tree teaches us a lesson: When the fig tree's branches become green and soft, and new leaves begin to grow, then you know that summer is near. ²⁹It is the same with these things that I told you would happen. When you see all these things happening, then you will know that the time* is near, ready to come. ³⁰I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time are still living.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

time The time that Jesus has been talking about when something important will happen. See Lk. 21:31, where Jesus says that this is the time for God's kingdom to come.

³¹The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed. But the words I have said will never be destroyed.

³²"No person knows when that day or time will be. The Son and the angels in heaven don't know when that day or time will be. Only the Father knows. ³³Be careful! Always be ready! You don't know when that time will be. ³⁴This is like a man that goes on a trip and leaves his house. The man lets his servants take care of the house. He gives each servant a special job to do. One servant has the work of guarding the door. The man tells this servant to always be ready. This is the same as I am now telling you. ³⁵So you must always be ready. You don't know when the owner of the house will come back. He might come in the afternoon, or at midnight, or in the early morning, or when the sun rises. ³⁶The owner might come back quickly. If you are always ready, then he will not find you sleeping. ³⁷I tell you this, and I say this to every person: 'Be ready!'

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

14 It was now only two days before the Passover* and the Festival of Unleavened Bread.* The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to use some lie to arrest Jesus. Then they could kill him. ²They said, "But we cannot arrest Jesus during the festival. We don't want the people to become angry and cause a riot."

A Woman Does Something Special

¹Jesus was in Bethany. He was eating in the house of Simon the leper.* While Jesus was there a woman came to him. The woman had an alabaster* jar filled with very expensive perfume. This perfume was made of pure

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Festival ... Bread Important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

leper A person who had leprosy, a very bad skin disease.

alabaster A beautiful kind of stone that can be carved.

nard Very expensive oil from the root of the nard plant.

nard.* The woman opened the jar and poured the perfume on Jesus' head.

"Some of the followers there saw this. They became upset and complained to each other. They said, "Why waste that perfume? 'That perfume was worth a full year's work. It could be sold and the money could be given to poor people.'" And they criticized the woman strongly.

"Jesus said, "Don't bother the woman. Why are you troubling her? She did a very good thing for me. 'You will always have poor people with you. You can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. 'This woman did the only thing she could do for me. She poured perfume on my body. She did this before I die to prepare me for burial. 'I tell you the truth. The Good News* will be told to people in all the world. And in every place where the Good News is told, the story of what this woman did will also be told. The thing she has done will be told and people will remember her."

¹⁰Then one of the twelve apostles* went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. Judas wanted to give Jesus to them. ¹¹The leading priests were very happy about this. They promised to pay Judas for doing this. So Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to them.

¹²It was now the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread.* This was a time when the Jews always sacrificed (killed) the Passover* lambs.* Jesus' followers came to him. They said, "We will go and prepare everything for you to eat the Passover meal. Where do you want us to have the meal?"

nard Very expensive oil from the root of the nard plant.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Festival ... Bread Important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Passover lambs Part of the celebration of Passover was the sacrifice of a lamb. See Ex. 12:3-9.

¹³Jesus sent two of his followers into the city. Jesus said to them, "Go into the city. You will see a man carrying a jar of water. The man will come to you. Follow that man. ¹⁴That man will walk into a house. Tell the person who owns the house, 'The Teacher asks that you show us the room where he and his followers can eat the Passover* meal.' ¹⁵The owner will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready for you. Prepare the food for us there."

¹⁶So the followers left and went into the city. Everything happened the way Jesus said. So the followers prepared the Passover* meal.

¹⁷In the evening, Jesus went to that house with the twelve apostles.* ¹⁸While they were all eating, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. One of you twelve will be against me—one of you eating with me now."

¹⁹The followers were very sad to hear this. Each follower said to Jesus, "Surely I will not be against you!"

²⁰Jesus answered, "The man who is against me is one of you twelve. He is the one who dips his bread into the same bowl with me.

²¹The Son of Man* will go and die. The Scriptures* say this will happen. But it will be very bad for the person who gives the Son of Man to be killed. It would be better for that person if he were never born."

The Lord's Supper

²²While they were eating, Jesus took some bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave the bread to his followers. Jesus said, "Take this bread and eat it. This bread is my body."

²³Then Jesus took a cup of wine. He thanked God for it and gave it to the followers. All the followers drank from the cup.

²⁴Then Jesus said, "This wine is my blood. My blood (death) begins the new agreement from God to his people. This blood is given for many people. ²⁵I tell you the truth. I will not drink this wine again until that day when I

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

drink it in the kingdom of God and the wine is new.”

All the followers sang a song. Then they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Says His Followers Will All Leave Him

Then Jesus told the followers, “You will all lose your faith. It is written in the Scriptures,

‘I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away.’

Zechariah 13:7

*But after I die, I will rise from death. Then I will go into Galilee. I will be there before you go there.”

*Peter answered, “All the other followers may lose their faith. But I will never lose my faith.”

*Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don’t know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows twice.”

*But Peter answered strongly, “I will never say that I don’t know you! I will even die with you!” And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone

*Jesus and his followers went to a place named Gethsemane. Jesus said to his followers, “Sit here while I pray.” *Jesus told Peter, James, and John to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very troubled and full of sorrow. *Jesus said to Peter, James, and John, “My soul is full of sorrow. My heart is breaking with sadness. Wait here and stay awake.”

*Jesus walked a little more away from them. Then Jesus fell on the ground and prayed. Jesus prayed that, if possible, he would not have this time of suffering. *Jesus prayed, “Abba,* Father! You can do all things. Let me

not have this cup* of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want.”

*Then Jesus went back to his followers. He found his followers sleeping. Jesus said to Peter, “Simon, why are you sleeping? You could not stay awake with me for one hour? *Stay awake and pray that you will not be tempted. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak.”

*Again Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. *Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again Jesus found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. The followers did not know what they should say to Jesus.

After Jesus prayed a third time, he went back to his followers. Jesus said to them, “You are still sleeping and resting? That’s enough! The time has come for the Son of Man to be given to sinful people. *Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man who is giving me to those people.”

Jesus Is Arrested

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came there. Judas was one of the twelve apostles. Judas had many people with him. These people were sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders. These people with Judas had swords and clubs.

Judas planned to do something to show the people which man was Jesus. Judas said, “The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him and guard him while you lead him away.” *So Judas went to Jesus and said, “Teacher!” Then Judas kissed Jesus. *Then the men grabbed Jesus and arrested him. *One of the followers standing near Jesus grabbed his sword and pulled it out. This follower hit the servant of the high priest* with the sword and cut off his ear.

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be very hard, like drinking a cup full of something that tastes very bad.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Judas Literally, “the one who betrayed him.”

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Abba Name that a child called his father. It was used like the English word “daddy.”

"Then Jesus said, "You came to get me with swords and clubs like I am a criminal. "Every day I was with you teaching in the temple.* You did not arrest me there. But all these things have happened so that it will be like the Scriptures* said." "Then all of Jesus' followers left him and ran away.

"There was a young man following Jesus. He was wearing only a linen cloth. The people also grabbed this man. "The cloth he was wearing came off, and he ran away wearing nothing.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

"The people who arrested Jesus led him to the house of the high priest.* All the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law were gathered there. "Peter followed Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. Peter followed Jesus to the yard of the high priest's house. Peter went into the yard. Peter was sitting there with the guards. He was warming himself by their fire.

"The leading priests and all the Jewish council tried to find something that Jesus had done wrong so they could kill him. But the council could find no proof that would allow them to kill Jesus. "Many people came and told false things against Jesus. But the people all said different things—none of them agreed.

"Then some people stood and said something false against Jesus. They said, "We heard this man (Jesus) say, 'I will destroy this temple* that men made. And three days later, I will build another temple—a temple not made by men.'" "But also the things these people said did not agree.

"Then the high priest* stood before all the people and said to Jesus, "These people said things against you. Do you have something to say about these charges against you? Are these people telling the truth?" "But Jesus said nothing. He did not answer.

The high priest* asked Jesus another question: "Are you the Christ,* the Son of the blessed God?"

"Jesus answered, "Yes, I am the Son of God. And in the future you will see the Son of Man* sitting at the right side of the Great One (God). And you will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven."

"When the high priest* heard this, he was very angry. He tore his clothes and said, "We don't need any more witnesses! "You all heard him say these things against God. What do you think?"

All the people said that Jesus was wrong. They said he was guilty and must be killed. "Some of the people there spit at Jesus. They covered Jesus' eyes and hit him with their fists. They said, "Show us that you are a prophet!" Then the guards led Jesus away and beat him.

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

"At that time, Peter was still in the yard. A servant girl of the high priest* came to Peter. "The girl saw Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked closely at Peter.

Then the girl said, "You were with Jesus, that man from Nazareth."

"But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said, "I don't know or understand what you are talking about." Then Peter left and went to the entrance of the yard.*

"The servant girl saw Peter there. Again the girl said to the people who were standing there: "This man is one of those people (that followed Jesus)." "Again Peter said that it was not true.

A short time later, some people were standing near Peter. The people said, "We know you are one of those people (that followed Jesus). You are from Galilee, (the same as Jesus)."

"Then Peter began to curse. He said strongly, "I promise to God that I don't know this man you are talking about!"

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.
Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

prophet A person who spoke for God. He often said things that most people could not know.

Verse 68 Many Greek copies add: "and the rooster crowed."

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

high priest The most important Jewish priest and leader.

²²After Peter said this, the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus told him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will say three times that you don't know me." Then Peter was very sad and began to cry.

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

15 Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, the teachers of the law, and all the Jewish council decided what to do with Jesus. They tied Jesus and led him to Pilate, the governor. They gave Jesus to Pilate.

¹Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that is right."

²The leading priests accused Jesus of many things. ³So Pilate asked Jesus another question. Pilate said, "You can see that these people are accusing you of many things. Why don't you answer?"

⁴But Jesus still did not answer. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus

⁵Every year at the Passover* time the governor would free one person from the prison. He would free any person the people wanted him to free. ⁶At that time, there was a man named Barabbas in prison. He was in prison with the rebels. These rebels were guilty of murder during a riot. ⁷The people came to Pilate and asked him to free a prisoner like he always did.

⁸Pilate asked the people, "Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?" ⁹Pilate knew that the leading priests had given Jesus to him because they were jealous of Jesus. ¹⁰But the leading priests persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus.

¹¹Pilate asked the people again, "So what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?"

¹²The people shouted, "Kill him on a cross!"

¹³Pilate asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?"

But the people shouted louder and louder, "Kill him on a cross!"

¹⁴Pilate wanted to please the people. So Pilate freed Barabbas for them. And Pilate told the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross.

¹⁵Pilate's soldiers brought Jesus into the governor's palace (called the Praetorium). They called all the other soldiers together. ¹⁶The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they used thorny weeds to make a crown. They put the crown of thorns on Jesus' head. ¹⁷Then they called to Jesus. They said, "Hello, king of the Jews!" ¹⁸The soldiers hit Jesus on the head many times with a stick. They also spit on him. Then they teased Jesus by bowing on their knees and worshipping him. ¹⁹After they finished teasing Jesus, the soldiers took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus out of the palace to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

²⁰There was a man from Cyrene walking into the city. The man was Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Simon was walking into the city from the fields. The soldiers forced Simon to carry the cross for Jesus. ²¹They led Jesus to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means "The Place of the Skull.") ²²At Golgotha the soldiers tried to give Jesus wine to drink. This wine was mixed with myrrh.* But Jesus refused to drink it. The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then the soldiers divided Jesus' clothes among themselves. They gambled with dice to decide which clothes each soldier would get. ²³The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then the soldiers divided Jesus' clothes among themselves. They gambled with dice to decide which clothes each soldier would get.

Passover Important Jewish holy day. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

myrrh Myrrh was mixed with wine and this was used as a drug to help a person feel less pain.

²¹It was nine o'clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. ²²There was a sign with the charge against Jesus written on it. The sign said: "THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²³They also put two robbers on crosses beside Jesus. They put one robber beside Jesus on the right, and they put the other robber beside Jesus on the left. ²⁴People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. People shook their heads and said, "You said you could destroy the temple* and build it again in three days. ²⁵So save yourself! Come down from that cross!"

²⁶The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also there. These men teased Jesus the same as the other people did. They said to themselves, "He saved other people. But he can't save himself. ²⁷If he is really the Christ,* the king of Israel (*the Jews*), then he should save himself by coming down from the cross now. We will see this, and then we will believe in him." The robbers that were being killed on the crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

Jesus Dies

²⁸At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued until three o'clock. ²⁹At three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." This means, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

³⁰Some of the people standing there heard this. The people said, "Listen! He is calling Elijah."

³¹One man there ran and got a sponge. The man filled the sponge with vinegar and tied the sponge to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to drink from it. The man said, "We should wait now and see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross."

³²Then Jesus cried with a loud voice and died.

³³When Jesus died, the curtain* in the temple* was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. ³⁴The army officer* that was standing there before the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, "This man really was the Son of God!"

³⁵Some women were standing away from the cross, watching. Some of these women were Mary from the town of Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Josés. (James was her youngest son.) ³⁶These were the women that followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for him. Many other women were also there. These women had come with Jesus to Jerusalem.

Jesus Is Buried

³⁷This day was called Preparation day. (That means the day before the Sabbath day.* It was becoming dark. ³⁸A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. Joseph was an important member of the Jewish council. He was one of the people that wanted the kingdom of God to come. ³⁹Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. Pilate called the army officer* that guarded Jesus. Pilate asked the officer if Jesus was already dead. ⁴⁰The officer told Pilate that Jesus was dead. So Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. ⁴¹Joseph bought some linen cloth. Joseph took the body from the cross, and wrapped the body in the linen. Then Joseph put the body in a tomb (*grave*) that was dug in a wall of rock. Then Joseph closed the tomb by rolling a very large stone to cover the entrance. ⁴²Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Josés saw the place where Jesus was put.

curtain A curtain divided the "most holy place" from the other part of the temple.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Verse 28 Some Greek copies add verse 28: "And the Scripture happened that says, 'They put him with criminals.'"

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

News that Jesus Has Risen from Death

16 The next day after the Sabbath day,* Mary from Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James bought some sweet-smelling spices. They wanted to put the spices on Jesus' body. ¹Very early on that day, the first day of the week, the women were going to the tomb. It was very early after sunrise. ²The women said to each other, "There is a large stone covering the entrance of the tomb. Who will move the stone for us?"

³Then the women looked and saw that the stone was moved. The stone was very large, but it was moved away from the entrance. ⁴The women walked into the tomb. They saw a young man there wearing a white robe. The man was sitting on the right side of the tomb. The women were afraid.

⁵But the man said, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one that was killed on a cross. He has risen from death! He is not here. Look, here is the place they put him when he was dead. ⁶Now go and tell his followers. And be sure to tell Peter. Tell them, 'Jesus is going into Galilee. He will be there before you. You will see him there like he told you before.'"

⁷The women were very afraid and confused. They left the tomb and ran away. The women did not tell about what happened, because they were afraid.*

Some Followers See Jesus

⁸Jesus rose from death early on the first day of the week. Jesus showed himself first to Mary from Magdala. One time in the past, Jesus had forced seven demons* to leave Mary. ⁹After Mary saw Jesus, she went and told his followers. His followers were very sad and were crying. ¹⁰But Mary told them that Jesus was alive. Mary said that she had seen Jesus. But the followers did not believe her.

¹¹Later, Jesus showed himself to two followers while they were walking in the country. But Jesus did not look the same as before he was killed. ¹²These followers went back to the other followers and told them what happened. Again, the followers did not believe them.

Jesus Talks to the Apostles

¹³Later Jesus showed himself to the eleven followers while they were eating. Jesus criticized the followers because they had little faith. They were stubborn and refused to believe the people that said Jesus had risen from death.

¹⁴Jesus said to the followers, "Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News* to every person. ¹⁵Any person that believes and is baptized* will be saved. But the person that does not believe will be judged guilty. ¹⁶And the people that believe will be able to do these things as proof: They will use my name to force demons* out of people. They will speak in languages they never learned. ¹⁷Those people will hold snakes without being hurt. And those people will drink poison without being hurt. Those people will touch sick people, and the sick people will be healed."

¹⁸After the Lord Jesus said these things to the followers, he was carried up into heaven. There, Jesus sat at the right side of God. ¹⁹The followers went everywhere in the world and told the Good News* to people. And the Lord helped them. The Lord proved that the Good News they told people was true. He proved this by giving the followers power to do miracles.*

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Verse 8 Some early Greek copies end the book here.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Luke

Luke Writes About the Life of Jesus

1 Dear Theophilus,
Many people have tried to give a history of the things that happened among us. ²They have written the same things that we learned from some other people—the people that saw those things from the beginning and served God by telling people his message. ³I myself studied everything carefully from the beginning, your Excellency.* Then I thought I should write it for you. So I put it in order in a book. ⁴I write these things so that you can know that what you have been taught is true.

Zechariah and Elizabeth

¹During the time when Herod* ruled Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah. Zechariah belonged to Abijah's group.* Zechariah's wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. ²Zechariah and Elizabeth were truly good people before God. They did everything the Lord (God) commanded and told people to do. They were without fault. ³But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby; and both of them were very old.

⁴Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his group. It was his group's time to serve. ⁵The priests always chose one priest to

offer the incense.* Zechariah was chosen to do this. So Zechariah went into the temple* of the Lord (God) to offer the incense. ¹²There were many, many people outside. They were praying at the time the incense was offered. ¹³Then, on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord (God) came and stood before Zechariah. ¹⁴When he saw the angel, Zechariah was confused and very afraid. ¹⁵But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a baby boy. You will name him John. ¹⁶You will be very, very happy. Many people will be happy because of his birth. ¹⁷John will be a great man for the Lord (God). He will never drink wine or liquor. Even at the time when John is being born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁸John will help many Jews return to the Lord their God. ¹⁹John himself will go first before the Lord. John will be powerful like Elijah.* He will have the same spirit Elijah had. He will make peace between fathers and their children. Many people are not obeying God. John will bring those people back to the right way that people should think. He will make people ready for the coming of, the Lord."

²⁰Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is also old."

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

Elijah A prophet who lived about 850 B.C.

Excellency This word was used to show respect to an important person like a king or ruler.

Herod Herod I (the Great), of Judea, 40–4 B.C.

Abijah's group The Jewish priests were divided into 24 groups. See 1 Chron. 24.

"The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰Now, listen! You will not be able to talk until the day when these things happen. You will lose your speech. Why? Because you did not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen."

²¹Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was staying so long in the temple.* ²²Then Zechariah came outside, but he could not speak to them. So the people knew that Zechariah had seen a vision* inside the temple. Zechariah could not speak. He could only make signs to the people. ²³When Zechariah's time of service was finished, he went home.

²⁴Later, Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant. So she did not go out of her house for five months. Elizabeth said, ²⁵"Look what the Lord (God) has done for me! My people were ashamed* of me, but now the Lord has taken away that shame."

The Virgin Mary

²⁶During Elizabeth's sixth month of pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin* girl that lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. The girl was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David.* Her name was Mary. ²⁷The angel came to her and said, "Greetings! The Lord (God) is with you. He wants to bless you."

²⁸But Mary was very confused about what the angel said. Mary wondered, "What does this mean?"

²⁹The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary, because God is very pleased with you. ³⁰Listen! You will become pregnant. You will give birth to a baby boy. And you will name him Jesus. ³¹He will be great (important). People will call him the Son of the Most High

(God). The Lord God will give him the authority of David,* his ancestor. ³²Jesus will rule over the people of Jacob forever. Jesus' kingdom will never end."

³³Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen? I am not married!"

³⁴The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit* will come to you and the power of the Most High (God) will cover you. The baby will be holy. He will be called the Son of God. ³⁵Also, your relative Elizabeth is pregnant. She is very old, but she is going to have a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant now for six months! ³⁶God can do anything!"

³⁷Mary said, "I am the servant girl of the Lord (God). Let this thing you have said happen to me!" Then the angel went away.

Mary Visits Zechariah and Elizabeth

³⁸Mary got up and went quickly to a town in the hill country of Judea. ³⁹She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴⁰When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the unborn baby inside Elizabeth jumped. Then Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* ⁴¹Elizabeth said with a loud voice, "God has blessed you (Mary) more than any other woman. And God has blessed the baby which you will give birth to. ⁴²You are the mother of my Lord, and you have come to me! Why has something so good happened to me? ⁴³When I heard your voice, the baby inside me jumped with joy. ⁴⁴You are blessed because you believed what the Lord (God) said to you. You believed this would happen."

Mary Praises God

⁴⁵Then Mary said,

⁴⁶ "My soul praises the Lord (God);
my heart is happy because God
is my Savior.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

ashamed The Jews thought it was a shame for women not to have children.

virgin A pure girl who is not married.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

- 48 I am not important.
But God has shown his care for me,
his servant girl.
From now on, all people will say
that I am blessed,
- 49 because the Powerful One (*God*)
has done great things for me.
His name is very holy.
- 50 God will always give mercy
to those people that worship him.
- 51 God's arm is strong.
He scatters those people that are proud
and think great things about
themselves.
- 52 God brings down rulers
from their thrones,
and he raises up the humble people.
- 53 God fills hungry people
with good things,
but he sends rich, selfish people
away with nothing.
- 54 God has helped his people
that serve him.
He gave them his mercy.
- 55 God has done what he promised
to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his children
forever."

*Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months. Then Mary went home.

The Birth of John

"When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a boy. *Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord (*God*) was very good to her. They were happy for her.

When the baby was eight days old, they came to circumcise him. They wanted to name him Zechariah because this was his father's name. *But his mother said, "No! He will be named John."

*The people said to Elizabeth, "But no one in your family has this name (*John*)!" "Then they made signs to his father, "What would you

like to name him?"

*Zechariah asked for something to write on. Then Zechariah wrote, "His name is John." All the people were surprised. "Then Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God. "And all their neighbors became afraid. In all the hill country of Judea people continued talking about all these things. "All the people that heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, "What will this child (*John*) be?" They said this because the Lord (*God*) was with this child.

Zechariah Praises God

Then Zechariah, John's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit. He told the people what would happen:

- 48 "Let us thank the Lord God of Israel (*the Jews*).
God has come to help his people
and has given them freedom.
- 49 God has given us a powerful Savior
from the family of God's servant,
David.
- 50 God said that he would do this.
He said it through his holy prophets*
that lived long ago.
- 51 God will save us from our enemies
and from the power of all those
that hate us.
- 52 God said he would give mercy
to our fathers.
And he remembered his holy promise.
- 53 God promised Abraham,
our father (*ancestor*),
that he would free us from the
power of our enemies,
so that we could serve him
without fear.
- 55 We will be righteous and holy before
God as long as we live.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.
prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

circumcise To cut off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

- ¹⁶ "Now you, little boy, will be called a prophet* of the Most High (*God*). You will go first before the Lord to make the people ready for the Lord's coming.
- ¹⁷ You will make his people know that they will be saved. They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.
- ¹⁸ With the loving mercy of our God, a new Day from heaven will shine upon us.
- ¹⁹ God will help the people that live in darkness, in the fear of death. He will lead us in the way that goes toward peace."

²⁰ And so the little boy (*John*) was growing up and becoming stronger in spirit. John lived in a place away from other people, until the time when he came out to preach, to Israel (*the Jews*).

The Birth of Jesus

2 At that time, Augustus Caesar* sent out an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that all people must write their name in a book (*register*). ²This was the first registration.* It happened while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All people traveled to their own towns to be registered.

⁴So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. ⁵Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him. (Mary was now pregnant.) ⁶While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby. ⁷She gave birth to her first son (*Jesus*). There were no rooms left in the hotel.

So Mary wrapped the baby with cloths and laid the baby in a box where cattle are fed.

Some Shepherds Hear About Jesus

⁸That night, some shepherds were in the fields there watching their sheep. ⁹An angel of the Lord (*God*) stood before the shepherds. The glory of the Lord was shining around them. The shepherds became very afraid. ¹⁰The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, because I am telling you some good news. It will make all the people very happy. ¹¹Today your Savior was born in David's town. He is Christ,* the Lord. ¹²This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding box."

¹³Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel. All the angels were praising God, saying:

- ¹⁴ "Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people that please God."

¹⁵The angels left the shepherds and went back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "We will go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened. We will see this thing the Lord (*God*) told us about."

¹⁶So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph. The baby was lying in the feeding box. ¹⁷The shepherds saw the baby. Then they told what the angels said about this child. ¹⁸Everyone was surprised when they heard what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹Mary hid these things in her heart; she continued to think about them. ²⁰The shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking him for everything that they had seen and heard. It was just as the angel had told them.

²¹When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised,* and he was named Jesus. This name was given by the angel before the baby began to grow inside Mary.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

registration Census. A counting of all the people and the things they own.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

²²The time came for Mary and Joseph to do the things the law of Moses taught about being made pure.* Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem so they could present him to the Lord (God). ²³It is written in the law of the Lord (God): "When the first boy in every family is born, he shall be called 'special for the Lord.'" ²⁴The law of the Lord also says that the people must give a sacrifice*: "You must sacrifice two doves or two young pigeons."* So Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to do this.

Simeon Sees Jesus

²⁵A man named Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was a good man and very religious. Simeon was waiting for the time when God would help Israel (the Jews). The Holy Spirit* was in him. ²⁶The Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would not die before he saw the Christ* from the Lord (God). ²⁷The Spirit led Simeon to the temple.* Mary and Joseph went to the temple to do what the Jewish law said they must do. They brought the baby Jesus to the temple. ²⁸Simeon held the baby in his arms and thanked God:

²⁹ "Now, Lord (God), you can let me,
your servant, die in peace
like you said.

³⁰ I have seen your Salvation*
with my own eyes.

³¹ You prepared him (Jesus)
before all people.

³² He (Jesus) is a light to show your way to
the non-Jewish people.
He will bring honor to your people,
Israel (the Jews)."

pure The law of Moses said that 40 days after a Jewish woman gave birth to a baby, she must be cleansed by a ceremony at the temple. Read Lev. 12:2-8.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

"You ... pigeons" Quote from Lev. 12:8.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Salvation The name Jesus means "salvation."

³³Jesus' father and mother were amazed at what Simeon said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "Many Jews will fall and many will rise because of this boy. He will be a sign (proof) from God that some people will not accept. ³⁵The things that people think in secret will be made known. The things that will happen will make your heart very sad."

Anna Sees Jesus

³⁶Anna, a prophetess,* was there at the temple.* She was from the family of Phanuel in the Asher family group. Anna was very old. She had been married for seven years. ³⁷Then her husband died and she lived alone. She was now 84 years old. Anna was always at the temple; she never left. She worshiped God by fasting* and praying day and night. ³⁸Anna was standing there at that same time, thanking God. She talked about Jesus to all people who were waiting for God to free Jerusalem.

Joseph and Mary Return Home

³⁹Joseph and Mary finished doing everything that the law of the Lord commanded. Then they went home to Nazareth, their own town in Galilee. ⁴⁰The little boy (Jesus) was growing. He became stronger and wiser. God's blessings were with him.

Jesus As a Boy

⁴¹"Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.* ⁴²When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the feast like they always did. ⁴³When the feast days were finished, they went home. But the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know about it. ⁴⁴Joseph and Mary traveled for a whole day. They thought that Jesus was with them in the group. They began to look for him among their family and close friends. ⁴⁵But

prophetess A woman who spoke for God.

fasting Living without food for a special time of prayer.

Passover Festival Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Joseph and Mary did not find Jesus in the group. So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him there. "After three days they found him. Jesus was sitting in the temple* with the religious teachers, listening and asking them questions. "Everyone heard him. They were amazed at his understanding and wise answers. "When Jesus' parents saw him, they were amazed. His mother said to him, "Son, why did you do this to us? Your father and I were very worried about you. We have been looking for you."

"Jesus said to them, "Why did you have to look for me? You should have known that I must be where my Father's (God's) work is!" "But they did not understand the meaning of what he said to them.

"Jesus went with them to Nazareth. He obeyed everything his parents said. His mother was still thinking about all these things. "Jesus continued to learn more and more. He grew taller. People liked Jesus, and he pleased God.

The Preaching of John

3 It was the 15th year of the rule of Tiberius Caesar.* These men were under Caesar:

Pontius Pilate, the ruler of Judea;

Herod,* the ruler of Galilee;

Philip, Herod's brother, the ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis;

Lysanias, the ruler of Abilene.

"Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests.* At that time, a command from God came to John, the son of Zechariah. John was living in the desert. "John went through the whole area around the Jordan River. He preached to the people. John told the people to change their hearts and lives and to be baptized* so that their sins would be forgiven. "This is like the

words written in the book of Isaiah the prophet*:

"There is a person shouting in the desert:

"Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make his paths straight.

5 Every valley will be filled.

And every mountain and hill
will be made flat.

Roads with turns will be made straight.

And rough roads will be made smooth.

6 Every person will know about
the salvation of God!"

Isaiah 40:3-5

"People came to be baptized* by John. John said to them, "You are like poisonous snakes! Who warned you to run away from God's anger that is coming? "You must do the things that will show that you have really changed your hearts. Don't boast and say, 'Abraham is our father.' I tell you that God can make children for Abraham from these rocks here. "The ax is now ready to cut down the trees.* Every tree that does not make good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

"The people asked John, "What should we do?"

"John answered, "If you have two coats, share with the person who does not have one. If you have food, share that too."

"Even the tax collectors* came to John. They wanted to be baptized.* They said to John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

"John said to them, "Don't take more taxes from people than you have been ordered to take."

"The soldiers asked John, "What about us? What should we do?"

John said to them, "Don't make people give you money. Don't tell lies about anyone. Be happy with the pay you get."

temple The special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

high priests Most important Jewish priests.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

trees The people who do not accept Jesus. They are like "trees" that will be cut down.

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

¹⁵All the people were hoping for the Christ* to come, and they wondered about John. They thought, "Maybe he is the Christ."

¹⁶John answered everyone, "I baptize* you in water, but there is a person coming later who can do more than I can. I am not good enough to untie his shoes for him. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit* and with fire. ¹⁷He will come ready to clean the grain.* He will separate the good grain from the straw. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn. Then he will burn the part that is not good. He will burn it with a fire that cannot be stopped."

¹⁸And John continued to preach the Good News, saying many other things to help the people.

How John's Work Later Ended

¹⁹(John criticized Governor Herod.* John criticized Herod for the bad thing he did with Herodias, the wife of Herod's brother. John also criticized Herod for the many other bad things Herod did. ²⁰So Herod did another bad thing: He put John in jail. This was added to all the other bad things Herod did.)

Jesus Is Baptized by John

²¹Before John was put into prison, all the people were being baptized* by him. Then Jesus came and was baptized too. While Jesus was praying, the sky opened. ²²The Holy Spirit* came down on him. The Spirit looked like a real dove. Then a voice came from heaven and said, "You are my Son and I love you. I am very pleased with you."

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.
baptized(d) A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

clean the grain John means that Jesus will separate the good people from the bad people.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Pera, son of Herod the Great.

The Family History of Joseph

²³When Jesus began to teach, he was about 30 years old. People thought that Jesus was Joseph's son.

Joseph was the son of Eli.

²⁴ Eli was the son of Matthat.

Matthat was the son of Levi.

Levi was the son of Melchi.

Melchi was the son of Jannai.

Jannai was the son of Joseph.

²⁵ Joseph was the son of Mattathias.

Mattathias was the son of Amos.

Amos was the son of Nahum.

Nahum was the son of Esli.

Esli was the son of Naggai.

²⁶ Naggai was the son of Maath.

Maath was the son of Mattathias.

Mattathias was the son of Semein.

Semein was the son of Josech.

Josech was the son of Joda.

²⁷ Joda was the son of Joanan.

Joanan was the son of Rhesa.

Rhesa was the son of Zerubbabel.

Zerubbabel was the son of Shealtiel.

Shealtiel was the son of Neri.

²⁸ Neri was the son of Melchi.

Melchi was the son of Addi.

Addi was the son of Cosam.

Cosam was the son of Elmadam.

Elmadam was the son of Er.

²⁹ Er was the son of Joshua.

Joshua was the son of Eliezer.

Eliezer was the son of Jorim.

Jorim was the son of Matthat.

Matthat was the son of Levi.

³⁰ Levi was the son of Simeon.

Simeon was the son of Judah.

Judah was the son of Joseph.

Joseph was the son of Jonam.

Jonam was the son of Eliakim.

³¹ Eliakim was the son of Melea.

Melea was the son of Menna.

Menna was the son of Mattatha.

Mattatha was the son of Nathan.

Nathan was the son of David.

³² David was the son of Jesse.

Jesse was the son of Obed.
 Obed was the son of Boaz.
 Boaz was the son of Salmon.
 Salmon was the son of Nahshon.

³³ Nahshon was the son of Amminadab.
 Amminadab was the son of Admin.

Admin was the son of Arni.
 Arni was the son of Hezron.
 Hezron was the son of Perez.
 Perez was the son of Judah.

³⁴ Judah was the son of Jacob.
 Jacob was the son of Isaac.
 Isaac was the son of Abraham.
 Abraham was the son of Terah.
 Terah was the son of Nahor.

³⁵ Nahor was the son of Serug.
 Serug was the son of Reu.
 Reu was the son of Peleg.
 Peleg was the son of Eber.
 Eber was the son of Shelah.

³⁶ Shelah was the son of Cainan.
 Cainan was the son of Arphaxad.
 Arphaxad was the son of Shem.
 Shem was the son of Noah.

Noah was the son of Lamech.
³⁷ Lamech was the son of Methuselah.
 Methuselah was the son of Enoch.
 Enoch was the son of Jared.
 Jared was the son of Mahalaleel.

Mahalaleel was the son of Cainan.
³⁸ Cainan was the son of Enos.
 Enos was the son of Seth.
 Seth was the son of Adam.
 Adam was the son of God.

Jesus Is Tempted by the Devil

4 Jesus returned from the Jordan River. He was full of the Holy Spirit.* The Spirit led Jesus into the desert. ²There the devil tempted Jesus for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during that time. When those days were finished, Jesus was very hungry.

³The devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, tell this rock to become bread."

⁴Jesus answered, "It is written in the Scriptures,*"

"It is not just bread that keeps people alive."

Deuteronomy 8:3

⁵Then the devil took Jesus and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶The devil said to Jesus, "I will give you all these kingdoms and all the power and glory that is in them. It has all been given to me. I can give it to any person I want. I will give it all to you, if you will only worship me."

⁷Jesus answered, "It is written in the Scriptures,*"

"You must worship the Lord your God.
 Serve only him!"

Deuteronomy 6:13

⁸Then the devil led Jesus to Jerusalem. The devil put Jesus on a very high place of the temple.* He said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! ⁹It is written in the Scriptures:—

"God will command his angels
 to take care of you."

Psalms 91:11

¹⁰It is also written:

"Their hands will catch you
 so that you will not hit your foot
 on a rock."

Psalms 91:12

¹¹Jesus answered, "But it also says in the Scriptures:—

"You must not test (doubt)
 the Lord your God."

Deuteronomy 6:16

¹²The devil finished tempting Jesus in every way and went away to wait until a better time.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

Scriptures Holy Writings; the Old Testament.
temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Jesus Teaches the People

¹⁴Jesus went back to Galilee with the power of the Holy Spirit.* Stories about Jesus spread all over the area around Galilee. ¹⁵Jesus began to teach in the synagogues.* All the people praised him.

¹⁶Jesus traveled to Nazareth, the town where he grew up. On the Sabbath day* he went to the synagogue* like he always did. Jesus stood up to read. ¹⁷The book of Isaiah the prophet* was given to him. Jesus opened the book and found the place where this is written:

- ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord (God) is in me.
 God chose me to tell good news
 to people that have nothing.
 God sent me to tell people that are
 prisoners, to sin,
 that they are free,
 and to tell the blind
 that they can see again.
 God sent me to free the weak people
 from their suffering,
¹⁹ and to announce the year for the Lord
 (God)
 to show kindness to people."

Isaiah 61:1-2

²⁰Jesus closed the book. He gave the book back and sat down. Every person in the synagogue watched Jesus closely. ²¹Jesus began to speak to them. He said, "While you heard me reading these words just now, the words were coming true!"

²²All the people said good things about Jesus. They were amazed at the beautiful words that Jesus spoke. The people said, "How can he speak like this? He is only Joseph's son, isn't he?"

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

synagogue(s) Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

²³Jesus said to them, "I know that you will tell me the old saying: 'Doctor, heal yourself. You want to say, 'We heard about some things that you did in Capernaum. Do those same things here in your own home town!'" ²⁴Then Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. A prophet* is not accepted in his own home town. ²⁵What I say is true. During the time of Elijah* it did not rain in Israel for three and a half years. There was no food anywhere in the whole country. There were many widows* in Israel during that time. ²⁶But Elijah was sent to none of those widows in Israel. Elijah was sent only to a widow in Zarephath, a town in Sidon. ²⁷And there were many people with leprosy* living in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha.* But none of those people were healed; the only one was Naaman. And Naaman was from the country of Syria, not from Israel."

²⁸All the people in the synagogue* heard these things. The people became very, very angry. ²⁹The people got up and forced Jesus to go out of town. Their town was built on a hill. They brought Jesus to the edge of the hill. The people wanted to throw him off. ³⁰But Jesus walked through the middle of them and went away.

Jesus Heals a Man That Has an Evil Spirit

³¹Jesus went to Capernaum, a city in Galilee. On the Sabbath day* Jesus taught the people. ³²They were amazed at Jesus' teaching, because he spoke with authority (power). ³³In the synagogue* there was a man that had an evil spirit from the devil inside him. The man shouted with a loud voice, ³⁴"Jesus of Nazareth! What do you want with us? Did you come here to destroy us? I know who you are—God's Holy One!" ³⁵But Jesus warned the evil spirit to stop. Jesus said, "Be quiet! Come out of the man!" The evil spirit threw the man down on the ground before all the people. Then the evil spirit left the man and did not hurt him.

Elijah A prophet who lived about 850 B.C.

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

Elisha A prophet who lived after Elijah's time.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

³The people were amazed. They said to each other, "What does this mean? With authority and power he (*Jesus*) commands evil spirits and they come out." ⁷And so the news about Jesus spread to every place in the whole area.

Jesus Heals a Woman

¹Jesus left the synagogue.* He went to Simon's* house. Simon's mother-in-law was very sick. She had a high fever. They asked Jesus to do something to help her. ²Jesus stood very close to her and commanded the sickness to leave her. The sickness left her. Then she got up and began serving them.

Jesus Heals Many Other People

⁴When the sun went down, the people brought their sick friends to Jesus. They had many different kinds of sickness. Jesus put his hands on each sick person and healed them. ⁵"Demons* came out of many people. The demons shouted, "You are the Son of God." But Jesus gave a strong command for the demons not to speak. The demons knew Jesus was the Christ.*

Jesus Goes to Other Towns

⁶The next day Jesus went to a place to be alone. The people looked for Jesus. When the people found Jesus, they tried to stop him from leaving. ⁷"But Jesus said to them, "I must tell the Good News about God's kingdom to other towns, too. This is why I was sent."

⁸Then Jesus preached in the synagogues* in Judea.

Peter, James, and John Follow Jesus

5 Jesus stood beside Lake Gennesaret (*Galilee*). Many people pushed to get all around him. They wanted to hear the teachings

synagogue(s) Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Simon Simon's other name was Peter.

Demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

of God. ²Jesus saw two boats at the shore of the lake. The fishermen were washing their nets. ³Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon.* Jesus asked Simon to push off a little from the shore.

⁴Jesus finished speaking. He said to Simon, "Take the boat into the deep water. If all of you will put your nets into the water, you will catch some fish."

⁵Simon answered, "Master, we worked hard all night trying to catch fish, but we caught nothing. But you say I should put the nets into the water; so I will." ⁶The fishermen put their nets into the water. Their nets became so full of fish that the nets began to break. ⁷They called to their friends in the other boat to come and help them. The friends came, and both boats were filled so full of fish that they were almost sinking.

⁸The fishermen were all amazed at the many fish they caught. When Simon Peter saw this, he bowed down before Jesus and said, "Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!" ⁹James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were amazed too. (James and John worked together with Simon.)

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid. From now on you will work to gather people, not fish!"

¹⁰The men brought their boats to the shore. They left everything and followed Jesus.

Jesus Heals a Sick Man

¹²One time Jesus was in a town where a very sick man lived. This man was covered with leprosy.* When the man saw Jesus, he bowed before Jesus and begged him, "Lord, heal me. I know you can if you want to."

¹³Jesus said, "I want to heal you. Be healed!" Then Jesus touched the man. Immediately the leprosy* disappeared. ¹⁴Then Jesus said, "Don't tell anyone about what happened. But go show yourself to the priest.* And offer a gift to God, for your healing like

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

show ... priest The law of Moses said a priest must say when a Jew with leprosy was well.

Moses commanded. This will show people that you are healed."

¹⁵But the news about Jesus spread more and more. Many people came to hear Jesus and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶Jesus often went away to other places to be alone so that he could pray.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

¹⁷One day Jesus was teaching the people. The Pharisees* and teachers of the law were sitting there too. They had come from every town in Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. The Lord (God) was giving Jesus the power to heal people. ¹⁸There was a man that was paralyzed (*crippled*). Some men carried him on a small bed. The men tried to bring him and put him down before Jesus. ¹⁹But there were so many people that the men could not find a way to Jesus. So the men went up on the roof and lowered the crippled man down through a hole in the ceiling. They lowered the bed into the room, so that the crippled man was lying before Jesus. ²⁰Jesus saw that these men believed. Jesus said to the sick man, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

²¹The Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees* thought to themselves, "Who is this man (Jesus)? He is saying things that are against God! Only God can forgive sins."

²²But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Why do you have thoughts like that in your hearts? ²³Which is easier: to tell this crippled man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to tell him, 'Stand up and walk'? ²⁴But I will prove to you that the Son of Man* has power on earth to forgive sins." So Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, stand up! Take your bed and go home!"

²⁵Then the man stood up before the people there. He picked up his bed and walked home, praising God. ²⁶All the people were fully amazed. They began to praise God. The people

were filled with much respect for God's power. They said, "Today we saw amazing things!"

Levi Follows Jesus

²⁷After this Jesus went out and saw a tax collector* sitting in the tax office. His name was Levi. Jesus said to him, "Follow me!" ²⁸Levi got up, left everything, and followed Jesus.

²⁹Then Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. The dinner was at Levi's house. At the table there were many tax collectors* and some other people too. ³⁰But the Pharisees* and those men that taught the law for the Pharisees began to complain to the followers of Jesus, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and other bad people?"

³¹Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. It is the sick people that need a doctor. ³²I have not come to ask good people to change. I have come to ask bad people to change their hearts and lives!"

Jesus Answers a Question About Fasting

³³They said to Jesus, "John's followers often fast* and pray, the same as the Pharisees.* But your followers eat and drink all the time."

³⁴Jesus said to them, "When there is a wedding, you cannot make the friends of the bridegroom* fast (*be sad*) while the bridegroom is still with them. ³⁵But the time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. Then his friends will fast."

³⁶Jesus told them this story: "No person takes cloth off a new coat to cover a hole on an old coat. Why? Because he ruins the new coat, and the cloth from the new coat will not be the same as the old cloth. ³⁷People never pour new wine into old wine bags.* Why? Because the new wine will break the bags, and the wine will spill out and the wine bags will be ruined.

tax collector(s) Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer.

bridegroom A man ready to be married.

wine bags Animal skins used for holding wine.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

⁸People always put new wine into new wine bags. ⁹No person that drinks old wine wants new wine. Why? Because he says, 'The old wine is fine.'

Jesus Is Lord over the Sabbath Day

6 One time on a Sabbath day,* Jesus was walking through some grain fields. His followers picked the grain, rubbed it in their hands, and ate it. ²Some Pharisees* said, "Why are you doing that? It is against the law of Moses, to do that on the Sabbath day."

³Jesus answered, "You have read about what David did when he and the people with him were hungry. 'David went into God's house. David took the bread that was offered to God and ate it. And David gave some of the bread to the people with him. This was against the law of Moses.' The law says that only the priests can eat that bread." ⁴Then Jesus said to the Pharisees,* "The Son of Man* is Lord (Master) over the Sabbath day."

Jesus Heals a Man on the Sabbath Day

¹On another Sabbath day* Jesus went into the synagogue.* Jesus taught the people. A man with a crippled right hand was there. ²The teachers of the law and the Pharisees* were waiting to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath day. They wanted to see Jesus do something wrong so that they could accuse him. ³But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said to the man with the crippled hand, "Get up and stand before these people." The man got up and stood there. ⁴Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which thing is right to do on the Sabbath day: to do good, or to do evil? Is it right to save a life or to destroy one?" ⁵Jesus looked around at all of them. Jesus said to the man, "Let me see your hand." The man put his

hand out. His hand was healed. ¹¹The Pharisees and the teachers of the law became very, very angry. They said to each other, "What can we do to Jesus?"

Jesus Chooses His Twelve Apostles

¹²At that time Jesus went out to a mountain to pray. He stayed there all night praying to God. ¹³The next morning, Jesus called his followers. He chose twelve of them. Jesus named these twelve men "apostles."* They were: ¹⁴Simon (Jesus named him Peter) and Andrew, Peter's brother; James and John, Philip and Bartholomew; ¹⁵Matthew, Thomas, James (the son of Alphaeus), and Simon (called the Zealot*), ¹⁶Judas (the son of James) and Judas Iscariot. This Judas was the one that gave Jesus to his enemies.

Jesus Teaches and Heals the People

¹⁷Jesus and the apostles* came down from the mountain. Jesus stood on a flat place. A large group of his followers were there. Also, there were many people from all around Judea, Jerusalem, and the seacoast cities of Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁸They all came to hear Jesus teach and to be healed of their sicknesses. Jesus healed those people that were troubled by evil spirits (from the devil). ¹⁹All the people were trying to touch Jesus, because power was coming out from him. Jesus healed them all!

²⁰Jesus looked at his followers and said,

"Poor people, you are blessed (*happy*), because God's kingdom belongs to you.

²¹ You people that are hungry now, you are blessed, because you will be filled.

You people that are crying now, you are blessed, because you will laugh with joy.

²²"You are blessed when people hate you and are mean to you. They will say that you are

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Zealot The Zealots were a Jewish political group.

bad because you belong to the Son of Man.* When they say this, you are blessed. ²²At that time be full of joy, because you have a great reward in heaven. Their fathers (*ancestors*) were mean to the prophets* in the same way that these people are mean to you.

- ²⁴ "But it will be bad for you,
you rich people,
because you had your easy life.
²⁵ It will be bad for you people
that are full now,
because you will be hungry.
It will be bad for you people
that are laughing now,
because you will be sad and cry.

²⁶"It is bad when all people say good things about you. Their fathers (*ancestors*) always said good things about the false prophets.*

Love Your Enemies

²⁷"I say to you people that are listening to me, love your enemies. Do good to those people that hate you. ²⁸Ask God to bless those people that say bad things to you. Pray for those people that are mean to you. ²⁹If a person hits you on the side of your face, let him hit the other side too. ³⁰Give to every person that asks you. When a person takes something that is yours, don't ask for it back. ³¹Do for other people what you want them to do for you. ³²If you love only those people that love you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners love the people that love them! ³³If you do good only to those people that do good to you, should you get some special praise for doing that? No! Even sinners do that! ³⁴If you loan things to people, always hoping to get something back, should you get some special praise for that? No! Even sinners lend to other sinners so that they can get back the same amount! ³⁵So love your enemies.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

Do good to them, and lend to them without hoping to get anything back. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be sons of the Most High (*God*). Yes, because God is good even to the people that are full of sin and not thankful. ³⁶Give love and mercy the same as your Father gives love and mercy.

Look at Yourselves

³⁷"Don't judge other people, and you will not be judged. Don't condemn (*find guilty*) other people, and you will not be condemned. Forgive other people, and you will be forgiven. ³⁸Give to other people, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to other people is the way God will give to you."

³⁹Jesus told them this story: "Can a blind man lead another blind man? No! Both of them will fall into a hole. ⁴⁰A student is not better than his teacher. But when the student has fully learned, then he will be like his teacher.

⁴¹"Why do you notice the small piece of dust that is in your brother's eye, but you don't see the big piece of wood that is in your own eye? ⁴²You say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take that little piece of dust out of your eye.' Why do you say this? You can't see that big piece of wood in your own eye! You are a hypocrite.* First, take the piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you will see clearly to take the dust out of your brother's eye.

Two Kinds of Fruit

⁴³"A good tree does not give bad fruit. Also, a bad tree does not give good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is known by the fruit it gives. People don't gather figs from thorny weeds. And they don't get grapes from bushes! ⁴⁵A good person has good things saved in his heart. And so he brings good things out of his heart. But an evil person has evil things saved in his heart. So he brings out bad things. A person speaks the things that are in his heart.

hypocrite A bad person that acts like he is good.

Two Kinds of People

““Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but you are not doing what I say? “Every person that comes to me and listens to my words and obeys “is like a man building a house. He digs deep and builds his house on strong rock. The floods come, and the water tries to wash the house away. But the flood cannot move the house, because the house was built well (*strong*). “But the person that hears my words and does not obey is like a man that does not build his house on strong rock. When the floods come, the house falls down easily. And the house is completely destroyed.”

Jesus Heals a Servant

7 Jesus finished saying all these things to the people. Then Jesus went into Capernaum. ¹In Capernaum there was an army officer.* The officer had a servant that was very sick; he was near death. The officer loved the servant very much. ²When the officer heard about Jesus, he sent some older Jewish leaders to him. The officer wanted the men to ask Jesus to come and save the life of his servant. “The men went to Jesus. They begged Jesus to help the officer. They said, “This officer is worthy to have your help. ‘He loves our people and he built the synagogue* for us.”

³So Jesus went with the men. Jesus was coming near the officer’s house when the officer sent friends to say, “Lord, you don’t need to come into my house. I am not good enough to be with you. ⁴That is why I did not come to you myself. You only need to give the order and my servant will be healed. ⁵‘I understand your authority. I am a man under the authority (*power*) of other men. And I have soldiers under my authority. I tell one soldier, ‘Go,’ and he goes. And I tell another soldier, ‘Come,’ and he comes. And I say to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and my servant obeys me.”

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

⁶When Jesus heard this, he was amazed. Jesus turned to the people that were following him. Jesus said, “I tell you, this is the most faith I have seen anywhere, even in Israel. *”

⁷The group that was sent to Jesus went back to the house. There they found that the servant was healed.

Jesus Brings a Man Back to Life

¹The next day Jesus went to a town called Nain. Jesus’ followers and a large group of people were traveling with him. ²When Jesus came near the town gates, he saw a funeral. A mother, who was a widow,* had lost her only son. Many people from the town were there with the mother while her son was being carried out. ³When the Lord (*Jesus*) saw her, he felt very sorry for her in his heart. Jesus said to her, “Don’t cry.” ⁴Jesus walked to the coffin* and touched it. The men that were carrying the coffin stopped. Jesus said to the dead son, “Young man, I tell you, get up!” ⁵Then the son sat up and began to talk. Jesus gave him to his mother.

⁶All the people were amazed. They were praising God. They said, “A great prophet has come to us!” And they said, “God is taking care of his people.”

⁷This news about Jesus spread into all Judea and into all the places around there.

John Asks a Question

¹John’s followers told John about all these things. John called for two of his followers. ²John sent them to the Lord (*Jesus*) to ask, “Are you the One that is coming, or should we wait for another person?”

³So the men came to Jesus. They said, “John the Baptizer sent us to you with this question: ‘Are you the One that is coming, or should we wait for another person?’”

⁴At that time, Jesus healed many people of their sicknesses, diseases, and evil spirits (from the devil). Jesus healed many blind people so

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

widow A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

coffin A wooden box used for burying dead bodies.

that they could see again. ²²Then Jesus said to John's followers, "Go tell John the things that you saw and heard here. Blind people are healed and can see. Crippled people are healed and can walk. People with leprosy* are healed. Deaf people are healed and can hear. Dead people are given life. And the Good News about God's kingdom is given to the poor people. ²³The person that can accept* me is blessed!"

²⁴When John's followers left, Jesus began to tell the people about John: "What did you people go out into the desert to see? A weed* blown by the wind? ²⁵What did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No. Those people that have fine, nice clothes live in kings' houses. ²⁶Really, what did you go out to see? A prophet*? Yes, and I tell you, John is more than a prophet. ²⁷This was written about John:

'Listen! I (God) will send my helper*
ahead of you.
He will prepare the way for you.'

Malachi 3:1

²⁸I tell you, John is greater than any man ever born. But even the least important person in the kingdom of God is greater than John."

²⁹(When the people heard this, they all agreed that God's teaching was good. Even the tax collectors* agreed. These were the people that were already baptized* by John. ³⁰But the Pharisees* and teachers of the law refused to accept God's plan for themselves; they did not let John baptize them.)

³¹Then Jesus said, "What shall I say about the people of this time? What can I compare them to? What are they like? ³²The people of

this time are like children sitting in the market place. One group of children calls to the other children and says,

'We played music for you,
but you did not dance.
We sang a sad song,
but you did not cry.'

³³John the Baptizer came and did not eat like other people, or drink wine. And you say, 'He has a demon* inside him.' ³⁴The Son of Man* came eating like other people, and drinking wine. And you say, 'Look at him! He eats too much and drinks too much wine! He is a friend of the tax collectors* and other bad people!' ³⁵But wisdom is shown to be right by the things it does."

Simon the Pharisee

³⁶One of the Pharisees* asked Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went into the Pharisee's house and sat at the table. ³⁷At that time there was a sinful woman in the town. She knew that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's* house. So the woman brought some perfume in an alabaster jar. ³⁸She stood at Jesus' feet, crying. Then she began to wash his feet with her tears. She dried Jesus' feet with her hair. She kissed his feet many times and rubbed them with perfume. ³⁹The Pharisee that asked Jesus to come to his house saw this. He thought to himself, "If Jesus were a prophet,* he would know that the woman who is touching him is a sinner!"

⁴⁰Jesus said to the Pharisee,* "Simon, I have something to say to you."

Simon said, "Teacher, you can speak. I am listening."

⁴¹Jesus said, "There were two men. Both men owed money to the same banker. One man owed the banker 500 silver coins.* The other man owed the banker 50 silver coins. ⁴²The men had no money, so they could not pay their debt. But the banker told the men that they did

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

can accept Literally, "is not offended by."

weed Literally, "reed." It means that John was not weak like a reed blown by the wind.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

helper Literally, "messenger."

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated their people.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Pharisee(s) Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow all Jewish laws and customs very carefully.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14, this is the name for the Messiah (Christ), the person God chose to save his people.

silver coins One coin, a Roman denarius, was the average pay for one day's work.

not have to pay him. Which one of those two men will love the banker more?"

"Simon, the Pharisee, answered, "I think it would be the one that owed him the most money."

Jesus said to Simon, "You are right." "Then Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? When I came into your house, you gave me no water for my feet. But she washed my feet with her tears and dried my feet with her hair. "You did not kiss me, but she has been kissing my feet since I came in! "You did not rub my head with oil, but she rubbed my feet with perfume. "I tell you that her many sins are forgiven. This is clear, because she showed great love. But the person that feels only a little need to be forgiven will feel only a little love when he is forgiven."

"Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

"The people sitting at the table began to think to themselves, "Who does this man (Jesus) think he is? How can he forgive sins?"

"Jesus said to the woman, "Because you believed, you are saved from your sins. Go in peace."

The Group with Jesus

8 The next day, Jesus traveled through some cities and small towns. Jesus preached and told the Good News about God's kingdom. The twelve apostles* were with him. There were also some women with him. Jesus had healed these women of sicknesses and evil spirits from the devil. One of the women was named Mary. She was from a town called Magdala. Seven demons had come out of her. Also with these women were: Joanna, the wife of Chuza (Herod's* helper), Suzanna, and many other women. These women used their own money to help Jesus and his apostles.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Herod Herod Antipas, Tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

Jesus Uses a Story About Planting Seed

"Many people came together. People came to Jesus from every town. Jesus told the people this story:

"A farmer went out to plant his seed. While the farmer was planting, some seed fell beside the road. People walked on the seed, and the birds ate all this seed. "Some seed fell on rock. This seed began to grow, but then died because the seed had no water. "Some seed fell among thorny weeds. This seed grew, but later the weeds stopped the good plants from growing. "And some seed fell on good ground. This seed grew and made 100 times more grain."

Jesus finished the story. Then Jesus said, "You people that hear me, listen!"

"Jesus' followers asked him, "What does this story mean?"

"Jesus said, "You have been chosen to know the secrets of the kingdom of God. But I use stories to speak to other people. I do this so that:

"They will look, but they will not see;
and they will listen, but they will not understand."

Isaiah 6:9

Jesus Explains the Story About the Seeds

"This is what the story means: The seed is God's teaching. "What is the seed that fell beside the path? That is like the people that hear God's teaching, but then the devil comes and takes the teaching away from their hearts. So those people cannot believe the teaching and be saved. "What is the seed that fell on rock? That is like the people that hear God's teaching and accept it gladly. But these people don't have deep roots. They believe for a while. But then trouble comes. They stop believing and turn away from God. "What is the seed that fell among the thorny weeds? That is like the people that hear God's teaching, but they let the worries, riches, and pleasures of this life stop them from growing. So they never make good fruit. "And what is the seed that fell on the good ground? That is like the people that hear God's teaching with a good, honest heart. They

obey God's teaching and patiently make good fruit.

Use the Understanding You Have

¹⁶"No person lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. Instead, that person puts the lamp on a lamp table so that the people that come in will have enough light to see. ¹⁷Everything that is hidden will become clear. Every secret thing will be made known. ¹⁸So be careful how you listen. The person that has some understanding, will receive more. But the person that does not have understanding, will lose even the understanding, that he thinks he has."

Jesus' Followers Are His True Family

¹⁹Jesus' mother and brothers came to visit him. There were so many people that Jesus' mother and brothers could not get close to him. ²⁰Someone said to Jesus, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside. They want to see you."

²¹Jesus answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those people that listen to God's teaching and obey it!"

The Followers See Jesus' Power

²²One day Jesus and his followers got into a boat. Jesus said to them, "Come with me across the lake." And so they started across. ²³While they were sailing, Jesus slept. A big storm blew down on the lake. The boat began to fill with water. They were in danger. ²⁴The followers went to Jesus and woke him. They said, "Master! Master! We will drown!"

Jesus got up. He gave a command to the wind and the waves. The wind stopped, and the lake became calm. ²⁵Jesus said to his followers, "Where is your faith?"

The followers were afraid and amazed. They said to each other, "What kind of man is this? He commands the wind and the water, and they obey him!"

A Man with Demons Inside Him

²⁶Jesus and his followers sailed across the lake from Galilee. They sailed to the area where the Gergesene people live. ²⁷When Jesus got out of the boat, a man from that town came to Jesus. This man had demons* inside him. For a long time he had worn no clothes. He lived in the caves where dead people are buried, not in a house. ²⁸The demon had often seized him. The man had been put in jail, and his hands and feet had been tied with chains. But the man would always break the chains, and the demon inside him would force him to go out to the places where no people lived. Then Jesus commanded the evil spirit (*the demon*) to come out of this man. The man fell down before Jesus and shouted with a loud voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Please, don't punish me!"

²⁹Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

The man answered, "Legion."³⁰ (He said his name was "Legion" because many demons* had gone into him.) ³¹The demons begged Jesus not to send them into eternal darkness.* ³²On that hill there was a big herd of pigs eating. The demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs. So Jesus allowed the demons to do this. ³³Then the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs. The herd of pigs ran down the hill and into the lake. All the pigs drowned.

³⁴The men that were caring for the pigs ran away. The men told the story in the fields and in the town. ³⁵People went out to see what happened. The people came to Jesus and found the man sitting there at the feet of Jesus. The man had clothes on and his mind was right again; the demons* were gone. The people became afraid. ³⁶The men that saw these things happen told the other people all about how Jesus made the man well. ³⁷All the people asked Jesus to go away. The people were all

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Legion The name Legion means very many. A legion was about 5,000 men in the Roman army.

eternal darkness Literally, "the abyss," something like a pit or a hole that has no end.

very afraid. So Jesus got into the boat and went back to Galilee. ³The man that Jesus healed begged to go with Jesus.

But Jesus sent the man away, saying, ⁴“Go back home and tell people what God did for you.”

So the man went all over town telling what Jesus had done for him.

Jesus Gives Life to a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

“When Jesus went back to Galilee, the people welcomed him. Everyone was waiting for him. ¹A man named Jairus came to Jesus. Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue. ²Jairus bowed down at the feet of Jesus and begged him to come to his house. ³Jairus had only one daughter. She was twelve years old, and she was dying.

While Jesus was going to Jairus’ house, the people came all around him. ⁴A woman was there who had been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors, but no doctor was able to heal her. ⁵The woman came behind Jesus and touched the bottom of his coat. At that moment, her bleeding stopped. ⁶Then Jesus said, “Who touched me?”

All the people said they had not touched Jesus. Peter said, “Master, the people are all around you and are pushing against you.”

“But Jesus said, “Someone touched me! I felt power go out from me.” ⁸When the woman saw that she could not hide, she came forward, shaking. She bowed down before Jesus. While all the people listened, she told why she touched Jesus. Then she said that she was healed immediately when she touched him. ⁹Jesus said to her, “My daughter, you are made well because you believed. Go in peace.”

“While Jesus was still speaking, a person came from the house of the synagogue* ruler (Jairus) and said, “Your daughter has died! Don’t bother the teacher (Jesus) now.”

¹⁰Jesus heard this. He said to Jairus, “Don’t be afraid! Just believe and your daughter will be well.”

¹¹Jesus went to the house. Jesus let only Peter, John, James, and the girl’s father and mother go inside with him. Jesus did not let any other person go inside. ¹²All the people were crying and feeling sad because the girl was dead. But Jesus said, “Don’t cry. She is not dead; she is only sleeping.”

¹³The people laughed at Jesus, because they knew that the girl was dead. ¹⁴But Jesus held her hand and called to her, “Little girl, stand up!” ¹⁵Her spirit came back into her and she stood up immediately. Jesus said, “Give her something to eat.” ¹⁶The girl’s parents were amazed. Jesus told them not to tell any person about what happened.

Jesus Sends the Twelve Apostles

9 Jesus called the twelve apostles* together. He gave the apostles power to heal sicknesses and power over all demons.* ²Jesus sent the apostles to tell about God’s kingdom and to heal the sick. ³He said to the apostles, “When you travel, don’t take a walking stick. Also, don’t carry a bag, food, or money. Take for your trip only the clothes you are wearing. ⁴When you go into a house, stay there until it is time to leave. ⁵If the people in the town will not welcome you, go outside the town and shake their dust off of your feet.* This will be a warning to them.”

⁶So the apostles went out. They traveled through all the towns. They told the Good News* and healed people everywhere.

Herod Is Confused About Jesus

¹Governor Herod* heard about all these things that were happening. He was confused

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

shake ... feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

because some people said, "John the Baptizer is risen from death." ¹⁰Other people said, "Elijah* has come to us." And some other people said, "One of the prophets* from long ago has risen from death." ¹¹Herod said, "I cut off John's head. So who is this man I hear these things about?" Herod continued trying to see Jesus.

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

¹²When the apostles* came back, they told Jesus the things they had done on their trip. Then Jesus took them away to a town called Bethsaida. There, Jesus and his apostles could be alone together. ¹³But the people learned where Jesus went. They followed him. Jesus welcomed them and talked with them about God's kingdom. He healed the people that were sick.

¹⁴Late in the afternoon, the twelve apostles* came to Jesus and said, "No people live in this place. Send the people away. They need to find food and places to sleep in the farms and towns around here."

¹⁵But Jesus said to the apostles,* "You give them something to eat."

The apostles said, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish. Do you want us to go buy some food for all these people?" ¹⁶(There were about 5,000 men there.)

Jesus said to his followers, "Tell the people to sit in groups of about 50 people."

¹⁷So the followers did this and all the people sat down. ¹⁸Then Jesus took the five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus looked up into the sky and thanked God for the food. Then Jesus divided the food and gave it to the followers. Jesus told the followers to give the food to the people. ¹⁹All the people ate and were filled. And there was much food left. Twelve baskets were filled with the pieces of food that were not eaten.

Jesus Is the Christ

²⁰One time Jesus was praying alone. His followers came together there. Jesus asked them, "Who do the people say I am?"

²¹The followers answered, "Some people say you are John, the Baptizer. Other people say you are Elijah.* And some people say you are one of the prophets* from long ago that has come back to life."

²²Then Jesus said to his followers, "And who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Christ* from God."

²³Jesus warned them not to tell anyone. Then Jesus said, ²⁴"The Son of Man* must suffer many things. He will be rejected by the older Jewish leaders, the leading priests, and teachers of the law. The Son of Man will be killed. But after three days he will be raised from death."

²⁵Jesus continued to say to all of them, "If any person wants to follow me, he must say 'No' to the things he wants. That person must accept the cross (*suffering*) that is given to him every day, and he must follow me. ²⁶The person that wants to save his life will lose it. And every person that gives his life for me will save it. ²⁷It is worth nothing for a person to have the whole world, if he himself is destroyed or lost. ²⁸If any person is ashamed of me and my teaching, then I* will be ashamed of that person. I will be ashamed of that person at the time I come with my glory and with the glory of the Father and the holy angels. ²⁹I tell you the truth. Some of you people standing here will see the kingdom of God before you die."

Moses, Elijah, and Jesus

³⁰About eight days after Jesus said these things, he took Peter, James, and John and went up on a mountain to pray. ³¹While Jesus was praying, his face began to change. His clothes became shining white. ³²Then two men were

Elijah A prophet that lived about 850 B.C.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

I Literally, "the Son of Man" (Jesus).

talking with Jesus. The men were Moses and Elijah.* ³¹Moses and Elijah were shining bright too. They were talking with Jesus about his death that would happen in Jerusalem. ³²Peter and the others were asleep. But they woke up and saw the glory of Jesus. They also saw the two men that were standing with Jesus. ³³When Moses and Elijah were leaving, Peter said, "Master, it is good that we are here. We will put three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Peter did not know what he was saying.)

³⁴While Peter was saying these things, a cloud came all around them. Peter, James, and John became afraid when the cloud covered them. ³⁵A voice came from the cloud. The voice said, "This is my Son. He is the One I have chosen. Obey him."

³⁶When the voice finished, only Jesus was there. Peter, James, and John said nothing. At that time they told no person about what they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy That Has an Evil Spirit

¹The next day, Jesus, Peter, James, and John came down from the mountain. A large group of people met Jesus. ²A man in the group shouted to Jesus, "Teacher, please come and look at my son. He is the only child I have. ³An evil spirit (from the devil) comes into my son, and then he shouts. He loses control of himself and he foams from the mouth. The evil spirit continues to hurt him and almost never leaves him. ⁴I begged your followers to make the evil spirit leave my son, but they could not do it."

⁵Jesus answered, "You people that live now have no faith. Your lives are all wrong. How long must I be with you and be patient with you?" Then Jesus said to the man, "Bring your son here."

⁶While the boy was coming, the demon* threw the boy to the ground. The boy lost control of himself. But Jesus gave a strong

command to the evil spirit. Then the boy was healed. And Jesus gave the boy back to his father. ⁷All the people were amazed at the great power of God.

Jesus Talks About His Death

The people were still amazed about all the things Jesus did. Jesus said to his followers, ⁸"Don't forget the things I will tell you now: The Son of Man* will be given into the control of some men." ⁹But the followers did not understand what Jesus meant. The meaning was hidden from them so that they could not understand it. But the followers were afraid to ask Jesus about what he said.

The Most Important Person

¹⁰Jesus' followers began to have an argument about which one of them was the greatest (*most important*). ¹¹Jesus knew what they were thinking. So Jesus took a little child and stood the child beside him. ¹²Then Jesus said to the followers, "If a person accepts a little child like this in my name, then that person accepts me. And when a person accepts me, that person accepts the One (*God*) that sent me. The person among you that is the most humble—that person is a great (*important*) person."

Any Person Not Against You Is for You

¹³John answered, "Master, we saw a person using your name to force demons* out of people. We told him to stop because he does not belong to our group."

¹⁴Jesus said to him, "Don't stop him, because if a person is not against you, then he is for you."

A Samaritan Town

¹⁵The time was coming near when Jesus would leave and go back to heaven. He decided to go to Jerusalem. ¹⁶Jesus sent some men

Moses and Elijah Two of the most important Jewish leaders in the past.
demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

ahead of him. The men went into a town in Samaria to make everything ready for Jesus. ²But the people there would not welcome Jesus because he was going toward Jerusalem. ³James and John, the followers of Jesus, saw this. They said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and destroy those people?"*

⁴But Jesus turned and scolded them.* ⁵Then Jesus and his followers went to another town.

Following Jesus

⁶They were all traveling along the road. Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you any place you go."

⁷Jesus answered, "The foxes have holes to live in. The birds have nests to live in. But the Son of Man* has no place where he can rest his head." ⁸Jesus said to another man, "Follow me!"

But the man said, "Lord, let me go and bury my father first."

⁹But Jesus said to him, "Let the people that are dead bury their own dead! You must go and tell about the kingdom of God."

¹⁰Another man said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to my family."

¹¹Jesus said, "If any person begins to plow a field, but looks back, he is not prepared for the kingdom of God."

Jesus Sends the 72 Men

10 After this, the Lord (*Jesus*) chose 72* more men. Jesus sent the men out in groups of two. He sent them ahead of him into every town and place where he planned to go. ²Jesus said to them, "There are many, many people to harvest (*save*). But there are only a

few workers to help harvest them. God owns the harvest (*people*). Pray to God that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest. ³You can go now. But listen! I am sending you, and you will be like sheep among wolves. ⁴Don't carry a purse, a bag, or shoes. Don't stop to talk with people on the road. ⁵Before you go into a house, say, 'Peace be with this home.' ⁶If a peaceful man lives there, your blessing of peace will stay with him. If the man is not peaceful, then your blessing of peace will come back to you. ⁷Stay in the peaceful house. Eat and drink what the people there give you. A worker should be given his pay. Don't leave that house to stay in another house. ⁸If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat the food they give you. ⁹Heal the sick people that live there. Then tell them, 'The kingdom of God is soon coming to you!' ¹⁰But if you go into a town, and the people don't welcome you, then go out into the streets of that town and say, ¹¹'Even the dirt (*dust*) from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you. But remember that the kingdom of God is coming soon.' ¹²I tell you, on the judgment day it will be worse for the people of that town than for the people of Sodom.*"

Jesus Warns People That Don't Believe

¹³"It will be bad for you, Chorazin*! It will be bad for you, Bethsaida*! I did many miracles* in you. If those same miracles had happened in Tyre and Sidon,* then those people in Tyre and Sidon would have changed their lives and stopped sinning a long time ago. Those people would have worn sackcloth* and put ashes on themselves to show that they were sorry for their sins. ¹⁴But on the judgment day it will be worse for you than for Tyre and Sidon. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum,* will you be lifted up

Verse 54 Some Greek copies add: "...like Elijah did?"

Verse 55 Here, some copies add: "And Jesus said, 'You don't know what kind of spirit you belong to. 'The Son of Man did not come to destroy the souls of men but to save them.'"

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

72 Some Greek copies of Luke say 70.

Sodom A town where very bad people lived. God punished them by destroying their city.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum Towns by Lake Galilee where Jesus preached to the people.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Tyre and Sidon Towns where very bad people lived.

sackcloth A rough cloth of animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.

to heaven? No! You will be thrown down to the place of death!

¹⁶“When a person listens to you, that person is really listening to me. But when a person refuses to accept you, that person is really refusing to accept me. And when a person refuses to accept me, he is refusing to accept the One (God) that sent me.”

Satan Fails

¹⁷When the 72* men came back from their trip, they were very happy. They said, “Lord, even the demons* obeyed us when we used your name!” ¹⁸Jesus said to the men, “I saw Satan (the devil) falling like lightning from the sky. ¹⁹Listen! I gave you power to walk on snakes and scorpions.* I gave you more power than the Enemy (the devil) has. Nothing will hurt you. ²⁰The spirits obey you. This is true. And be happy. Why? Not because you have this power, but be happy because your names are written in heaven.”

Jesus Prays to the Father

²¹Then the Holy Spirit* made Jesus feel very happy. Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and smart people. But you have shown these things to people that are like little children. Yes, Father, you did this because this is what you really wanted to do.

²²“My Father has given me all things. No person knows who the Son is—only the Father knows. And only the Son knows who the Father is. The only people that will know about the Father are those people the Son chooses to tell.”

²³Then Jesus turned to his followers. They were there alone with him. Jesus said, “You are blessed to see the things you now see! ²⁴I tell

you, many prophets* and kings wanted to see the things that you now see. But they did not see these things. And many prophets and kings wanted to hear the things that you now hear. But they did not hear these things.”

Story About the Good Samaritan

²⁵Then a teacher of the law stood up. He was trying to test Jesus. He said, “Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?”

²⁶Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?”

²⁷The man answered, “‘You must love the Lord your God. You must love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’* Also, ‘You must love other people the same as you love yourself.’* ”

²⁸Jesus said to him, “Your answer is right. Do this and you will have life forever.”

²⁹But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right. So he said to Jesus, “But who are these other people I must love?”

³⁰To answer this question, Jesus said, “A man was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Some robbers surrounded him. They tore off his clothes and beat him. Then the robbers left the man lying there on the ground. He was almost dead. ³¹It happened that a Jewish priest was going down that road. When the priest saw the man, he did not stop to help him; he walked away. ³²Next, a Levite* came near. The Levite saw the hurt man, but he went around him. He would not stop to help him either; he just walked away. ³³Then a Samaritan* man traveled down that road. He came to the place where the hurt man was lying. The Samaritan saw the man. He felt very sorry for the hurt man. ³⁴The Samaritan went to

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

‘You must ... mind’ Quote from Deut. 6:5.

‘You must ... yourself’ Quote from Lev. 19:18.

Levite Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

Samaritan Samaritans were people from Samaria. Although part Jewish, the Jews did not accept them as true Jews. Samaritans and Jews hated each other.

72 Many Greek copies of Luke say 70.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

scorpions A scorpion is an insect with a poison sting.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

him and poured olive oil and wine* on his wounds. Then he covered the man's wounds with cloth. The Samaritan had a donkey. He put the hurt man on his donkey, and he took him to an inn. At the inn, the Samaritan cared for him. ³⁵The next day, the Samaritan brought out two silver coins* and gave them to the man that worked at the inn. The Samaritan said, "Take care of this hurt man. If you spend more money on him, I will pay it back to you when I come again."

³⁶Then Jesus said, "Which one of these three men (*the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan*) do you think showed love to the man that was hurt by the robbers?"

³⁷The teacher of the law answered, "The one that helped him."

Jesus said to him, "Then you go and do the same for other people!"

Mary and Martha

¹While Jesus and his followers were traveling, Jesus went into a town. A woman named Martha let Jesus stay at her house. ²Martha had a sister named Mary. Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to him teach. But her sister Martha was doing the housework. ³Martha became angry because she had so much work to do. Martha went in and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me alone to do all the housework? Tell her to help me!"

⁴But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are getting worried and upset about too many things. ⁵Only one thing is important. Mary has made the right choice; and it will never be taken away from her."

Jesus Teaches About Prayer

11 One time Jesus was praying in a place. When Jesus finished praying, one of his followers said to him, "John taught his followers how to pray. Lord, please teach us how to pray too."

olive ... wine Oil and wine were used like medicine to soften and clean wounds.

silver coins One coin, a denarius, was the average pay for one day's work.

¹Jesus said to them, "When you pray, pray like this:

'Father, we pray that your name will always be kept holy.

We pray that your kingdom will come.

³ Give us the food we need for each day.

⁴ Forgive us the sins we have done, because we forgive every person that has done wrong to us.

And don't cause us to be tempted (*tested*).'

Continue to Ask

⁵⁶Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose one of you went to your friend's house very late at night and said to him, 'A friend of mine has come into town to visit me. But I have nothing for him to eat. Please give me three loaves of bread.' ⁵⁷Your friend inside the house answers, 'Go away! Don't bother me! The door is already locked. My children and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give you the bread now.' ⁵⁸I tell you, maybe friendship is not enough to make him get up to give you the bread. But he will surely get up to give you what you need if you continue to ask. ⁵⁹So I tell you, continue to ask, and God will give to you. Continue to search, and you will find. Continue to knock, and the door will open for you. ⁶⁰Yes, if a person continues asking, that person will receive. If a person continues looking, that person will find. And if a person continues knocking, the door will open for that person. ⁶¹Does any of you have a son? What would you do if your son asked you for a fish? Would any father give his son a snake? No! You would give him a fish. ⁶²Or, if your son asks for an egg, would you give him a scorpion*? No! ⁶³You are like all other people—you are evil. But you know how to give good gifts to your children. So surely your heavenly Father knows how to give the Holy Spirit* to those people that ask him."

scorpion A scorpion is an insect that has a poison sting.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ. He does the work of God among people in the world.

Jesus' Power Is from God

"One time Jesus was sending a demon* out of a man that could not talk. When the demon came out, the man was able to speak. The people were amazed. ¹³But some of the people said, "Jesus uses the power of Beelzebul (*the devil*) to force demons* out of people. Beelzebul is the ruler of demons."

¹⁴Other people wanted to test Jesus. They asked Jesus to show them a sign (*proof*) from heaven. ¹⁵But Jesus knew the things they were thinking. So Jesus said to the people, "Every kingdom that is divided and fights against itself will be destroyed. And a family that fights against itself will break apart. ¹⁶So if Satan (*the devil*) is fighting against himself, then how will his kingdom continue? You say that I use the power of Beelzebul (*the devil*) to force out demons.* ¹⁷But if I use the power of Beelzebul to force out demons, then what power do your people use when they force out demons? So your own people prove that you are wrong. ¹⁸But I use the power of God to force out demons. This shows that the kingdom of God has come to you!

¹⁹"When a strong man with many weapons guards his own house, then the things in his house are safe. ²⁰But suppose a stronger man comes and defeats him. The stronger man will take away the weapons that the first man trusted to keep his house safe. Then the stronger man will do what he wants with the other man's things.

²¹"If a person is not with me, he is against me. The person that does not work with me is working against me.

The Empty Man

²²"When an evil spirit from the devil, comes out of a person, that spirit travels through dry places, looking for a place to rest. But that spirit finds no place to rest. So the spirit says, 'I will go back to the home (*person*) I left.' ²³When the spirit comes back to that person, the spirit finds that home (*person*)

swept clean and made neat. ²⁴Then the evil spirit goes out and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself. Then all the evil spirits go into that person and live there. And that person has even more trouble than he had before."

The People That Are Truly Happy

²⁵When Jesus said these things, a woman with the people there began to speak. She said to Jesus, "Your mother is blessed (*happy*), because she gave birth to you and fed you."

²⁶But Jesus said, "The people that hear the teaching of God and obey it—they are the people that are truly happy!"

Give Us Proof!

²⁷The group of people grew larger and larger. Jesus said, "The people that live today are evil. They ask for a miracle* as a sign (*proof*) from God. But no miracle will be given as a sign to them. The only sign will be the miracle that happened to Jonah.* ²⁸Jonah was a sign for those people that lived in Nineveh. It is the same with the Son of Man.* ²⁹The Son of Man will be a sign for the people of this time. ³⁰On the judgment day the Queen of the South* will stand up with the men that live now, and she will show that they are wrong (*guilty*). Why? Because that queen came from far, far away to listen to Solomon's wise teaching. And I tell you that I am greater than Solomon! ³¹On the judgment day the men of Nineveh will stand up with the people that live now, and they will show that you are wrong (*guilty*). Why? Because when Jonah preached to those people, they changed their hearts and lives. And I tell you that I am greater than Jonah!

miracle An amazing work done by the power of God.

Jonah A prophet in the Old Testament. After 3 days in a big fish he came out alive, like Jesus would come out from the tomb on the third day.

Son of Man Jesus. In Daniel 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Queen ... South Queen of Sheba. She traveled 1000 miles to learn God's wisdom. Read 1 Kings 10:1-3.

demon(s) Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

Be a Light for the World

³³"No person takes a light and puts it under a bowl or hides it. Instead, a person puts the light on a lamp table so that the people that come in can see. ³⁴Your eye is a light for the body. If your eyes are good, then your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are evil, then your whole body will be full of darkness (*sin*). ³⁵So be careful! Don't let the light in you become dark. ³⁶If your whole body is bright, and none of it is dark, then you will shine bright like lightning."

Jesus Criticizes the Pharisees

³⁷After Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee* asked Jesus to eat with him. So Jesus came and sat at the table. ³⁸But the Pharisee was surprised when he saw that Jesus did not wash his hands,* first before the meal. ³⁹The Lord (*Jesus*) said to him, "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and the dish. But inside you are full of things you got by cheating other people and being evil. ⁴⁰You are foolish! The same One (*God*) that made what is outside also made what is inside. ⁴¹So give the things in your cups and dishes to the people that need it. Then you will be fully clean. ⁴²But it will be bad for you Pharisees! You give God one-tenth of everything you own—even your mint, your rue, and every other little plant in your garden. But you forget to be fair to other people and to love God. These are the things you should do. And you should also continue to do those other things—like giving, one-tenth. ⁴³It will be bad for you Pharisees,* because you love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* And you love for people to show respect to you in the market places. ⁴⁴It will be bad for you, because you are like hidden graves. People walk on them without knowing it."

Pharisee(s) Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
wash his hands Jewish religious custom that the Pharisees thought was very important.
synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Jesus Talks to the Jewish Teachers

⁴⁵One of the teachers of the law said to Jesus, "Teacher, when you say these things about the Pharisees,* you are criticizing our group too."

⁴⁶Jesus answered, "It will be bad for you, you teachers of the law! You make strict rules that are very hard for people to obey.* You try to force other people to obey those rules. But you yourselves don't even try to follow any of those rules. ⁴⁷It will be bad for you, because you build tombs* for the prophets.* But these are the same prophets that your fathers (*ancestors*) killed! ⁴⁸And now you show all people that you agree with what your fathers did. They killed the prophets, and you build tombs for the prophets! ⁴⁹This is why the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send prophets and apostles* to them. Some of my prophets and apostles will be killed by evil men. Others will be treated badly.' ⁵⁰So you people that live now will be punished for the deaths of all the prophets that were killed since the beginning of the world. ⁵¹You will be punished for the killing of Abel.* And you will be punished for the killing of Zechariah.* Zechariah was killed between the altar* and the temple.* Yes, I tell you that you people that live now will be punished for them all.

⁵²"It will be bad for you, you teachers of the law. You have hidden the key to learning about God. You yourselves would not learn, and you stopped others from learning, too."

You ... obey Literally, "You put heavy burdens on people that are hard for them to carry."

tombs Small buildings made to show respect for important persons that had died.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

prophets, apostles People God chose to tell his Good News to the world.

Abel ... Zechariah In the Hebrew Old Testament, the first and last men to be murdered.

altar ... temple This altar was the place where sacrifices were offered to God outside the temple, the building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

³⁰When Jesus was leaving, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees* began to give him much trouble. They tried to make Jesus answer questions about many things. ³¹They were trying to find a way to catch Jesus saying something wrong.

Don't Be Like the Pharisees

12 Many thousands of people came together. There were so many people that they were stepping on each other. Before Jesus spoke to the people, he said to his followers, "Be careful of the yeast (*bad influence*) of the Pharisees.* I mean that they are hypocrites.* ²Everything that is hidden will be shown. Everything that is secret will be made known. ³The things you say in the dark (*secretly*) will be told in the light (*openly*). The things you whisper in a secret room will be shouted from the top of the house."

Fear Only God

"Then Jesus said to the people, "I tell you, my friends, don't be afraid of people. People can kill the body, but after that they can do nothing more to hurt you. ²I will show you the One to fear. You should fear him (*God*) who has the power to kill you and also to throw you into hell. Yes, he is the One you should fear.

³"When birds are sold, five small birds cost only two pennies. But God does not forget any of them. ⁴Yes, God even knows how many hairs you have on your head. Don't be afraid. You are worth much more than many birds.

Don't Be Ashamed of Jesus

¹"I tell you, if any person stands before other people and says that he believes in me, then I* will say that person belongs to me. I will say this before the angels of God. ²But if any person stands before people and says he does not believe in me, then I will say that

person does not belong to me. I will say this before the angels of God.

³"If a person says something against the Son of Man,* he can be forgiven. But a person that says bad things against (*refuses to accept*) the Holy Spirit* will not be forgiven.

⁴"When men bring you into the synagogues* before the leaders and other important men, don't worry about what you will say. ⁵At that time the Holy Spirit* will teach you what you must say."

Jesus Warns Against Selfishness

¹"One of the men in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, our father just died. Tell my brother to share with me the things our father owned."

²"But Jesus said to him, "Who said that I should be your judge or decide how to divide your father's things between you two?" ³Then Jesus said to them, "Be careful and guard against all kinds of selfishness. A person does not get life from the many things he owns."

⁴"Then Jesus used this story: "There was a rich man that had some land. His land grew a very good crop of food. ⁵The rich man thought to himself, 'What will I do? I have no place to keep all my crops.' ⁶Then the rich man said, 'I know what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger barns! I will put all my wheat and good things together in my new barns. ⁷Then I can say to myself, I have many good things stored. I have saved enough for many years. Rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life!' ⁸But God said to that man, 'Foolish man! Tonight you will die. So what about the things you prepared for yourself? Who will get those things now?'"

⁹"This is how it will be for the person that saves things only for himself. To God that person is not rich."

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

I Literally, "the Son of Man" (Jesus).

Putting God's Kingdom First

²¹Jesus said to his followers, "So I tell you, don't worry about the food you need to live. Don't worry about the clothes you need for your body. ²²Life is more important than food. And the body is more important than clothes. ²³Look at the birds. They don't plant or harvest. Birds don't save food in houses or barns. But God takes care of them. And you are worth much more than birds. ²⁴None of you can add any time to your life by worrying about it. ²⁵If you cannot do the little things, then why worry about the big things? ²⁶Look at the wild flowers. See how they grow. They don't work or make clothes for themselves. But I tell you that even Solomon, the great and rich king, was not dressed as beautifully as one of these flowers. ²⁷God clothes the grass in the field like that. That grass is living today, but tomorrow it will be thrown into the fire to be burned. So you know that God will clothe you much more. Don't have so little faith! ²⁸So don't always think about what you will eat or what you will drink. Don't worry about it. ²⁹All the people in the world try to get those things. Your Father (God) knows that you need those things. ³⁰The thing you should want is God's kingdom. Then all these other things you need will be given to you.

Don't Trust In Money

³¹"Don't fear, little flock (*group*). Your Father (God) wants to give you the kingdom. ³²Sell the things you have and give that money to people that need it. The riches of this world don't continue. So get the kind of riches that continue. Get the treasure of heaven. That treasure continues forever. Thieves can't steal your treasure in heaven, and moths can't destroy it. ³³Your heart will be where your treasure is.

Always Be Ready

³⁴"Be ready! Be fully dressed and have your lights shining. ³⁵Be like servants that are waiting for their master to come home from a wedding party. The master comes and knocks.

The servants open the door for the master. ³⁶Those servants will be blessed when their master comes home, because he sees that his servants are ready and waiting for him. I tell you the truth. The master will dress himself for work and tell the servants to sit at the table. Then the master will serve them. ³⁷Those servants might have to wait until midnight or later for their master. But they will be happy when their master comes in and finds them still waiting. ³⁸Remember this: If the owner of the house knew what time a thief was coming, then the owner would not allow the thief to enter his house. ³⁹So you also must be ready! The Son of Man* will come at a time when you don't expect him!"

Who Is the Trusted Servant?

⁴⁰Peter said, "Lord, did you tell this story for us or for all people?"

⁴¹The Lord said, "Who is the wise and trusted servant? The master trusts one servant to give the other servants their food at the right time. Who is the servant that the master trusts to do that work? ⁴²When the master comes and finds that servant doing the work he gave him, that servant will be very happy. ⁴³I tell you the truth. The master will choose that servant to take care of everything the master owns. ⁴⁴But what will happen if that servant is evil and thinks that his master will not come back soon? That servant will begin to beat the other servants, men and women. He will eat and drink and get drunk. ⁴⁵Then the master of that servant will come when that servant is not ready. It will be a time when that servant is not expecting the master. Then the master will punish that servant. The master will send him away to be with the other people that don't obey.

⁴⁶"That servant knew what his master wanted him to do. But that servant did not make himself ready or try to do what his master wanted. So that servant will be punished very much! ⁴⁷But what about the servant that does

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

not know what his master wants? The servant does things that deserve punishment. But he will get less punishment than the servant that knew what he should do. Any person that has been given much will be responsible for much. Much more will be expected from the person that has been given more."

People Will Not Agree About Jesus

"Jesus continued speaking: "I came to bring fire to the world. I wish it were already burning! *I must be baptized with a different kind of baptism.* I feel very troubled until it is finished. "Do you think that I came to give peace to the world? No! I came to divide the world! "From now on, a family with five people will be divided, three against two, and two against three.

- " A father and son will be divided:
 The son will be against his father.
 The father will be against his son.
 A mother and her daughter will be divided:
 The daughter will be against her mother.
 The mother will be against her daughter.
 A mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law will be divided:
 The daughter-in-law will be against her mother-in-law.
 The mother-in-law will be against her daughter-in-law."

Understanding the Times

"Then Jesus said to the people, "When you see clouds growing bigger in the west, you say, 'A rainstorm is coming.' And soon it begins to rain. "When you feel the wind begin to blow from the south, you say, 'It will be a hot day.' And you are right. *Hypocrites*! You can understand the weather. Why don't you understand what is happening now?

Settle Your Problems

"Why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? *When a person is suing you, and you are going with him to court, try hard to settle it on the way. If you don't settle it, he may take you to the judge. The judge will throw you into jail. "You will not get out of there until they have taken everything you have."

Change Your Hearts

13 At that time some people were there with Jesus. These people told Jesus about what happened to some people from Galilee. Pilate* killed those people while they were worshiping. Pilate mixed their blood with the blood of the animals they were sacrificing* to God. Jesus answered, "Do you think this happened to those people because they were more sinful than all other people from Galilee? "No, they were not! But if all of you don't change your hearts and lives, then you will be destroyed like those people were! "What about those 18 people that died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think those people were more sinful than all the people that live in Jerusalem? "They were not! But I tell you if you don't change your hearts and lives, then you will all be destroyed too!"

The Useless Tree

"Jesus told this story: "A man had a fig tree. He planted the tree in his garden. The man came looking for some fruit on the tree, but he found none. "The man had a servant that took care of his garden. So the man said to his servant, 'I have been looking for fruit on this tree for three years, but I never find any. Cut it down! Why should it waste the ground?' "But the servant answered, 'Master, let the tree have one more year to make fruit. Let me dig up the dirt around it and put on some plant food. "Maybe the tree will make fruit next year. If the

baptized ... baptism These words have a special meaning here—being "baptized" or "buried" in troubles.
 Hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

Pilate Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.
 sacrificing Killing an animal as an offering to God.

tree still does not make fruit, then you can cut it down.'"

Jesus Heals a Woman on the Sabbath Day

"Jesus taught in one of the synagogues* on the Sabbath day.* "In that synagogue there was a woman that had a spirit from the devil, inside her. This spirit had made the woman crippled for 18 years. Her back was always bent; she could not stand up straight. "When Jesus saw her, he called to her, "Woman, your sickness has gone away from you!" "Jesus put his hands on her. Then she was able to stand up straight. She praised God.

"The synagogue* leader was angry because Jesus healed on the Sabbath day.* The leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come to be healed on one of those days. Don't come for healing on the Sabbath day."

"The Lord (*Jesus*) answered, "You people are hypocrites! All of you untie your work animals and lead them to drink water every day—even on the Sabbath day! "This woman that I healed is our Jewish sister.* But Satan (*the devil*) has held her for 18 years. Surely it is not wrong for her to be made free from her sickness on a Sabbath day!" "When Jesus said this, all the men that were criticizing him felt ashamed of themselves. And all the people were happy for the wonderful things Jesus was doing.

What Is God's Kingdom Like?

"Then Jesus said, "What is God's kingdom like? What can I compare it with? "God's kingdom is like the seed of the mustard plant.* A person plants this seed in his garden. The seed grows and becomes a tree. The birds build nests on its branches."

synagogue(s) Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

hypocrites Bad people that act like they are good.

Jewish sister Literally, "daughter of Abraham."

mustard plant A plant that grows taller than a man, but has a very, very small seed.

"Jesus said again, "What can I compare God's kingdom with? "It is like yeast* that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour to make bread. The yeast makes all the dough (*bread*) rise."

The Narrow Door

"Jesus was teaching in every town and village. He continued to travel toward Jerusalem. "Someone said to Jesus, "Lord, how many people will be saved? Only a few?"

Jesus said, "Try hard to enter through the narrow door, that opens the way to heaven! Many people will try to enter there, but they will not be able to enter. "If a man locks the door of his house, then you can stand outside and knock on the door, but he won't open it. You can say, 'Sir, open the door for us!' But the man will answer, 'I don't know you! Where did you come from?' "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you. You taught in the streets of our town.' "Then he will say to you, 'I don't know you! Where did you come from? Go away from me! You are all people that do wrong!' "You will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,* and all the prophets* in God's kingdom. But you will be left outside. Then you will scream with fear and anger. "People will come from the east, west, north, and south. They will sit down at the table in the kingdom of God. "People that have the lowest place in life now will have the highest place in God's kingdom. And people that have the highest place now will have the lowest place in God's kingdom."

Jesus Will Die in Jerusalem

"At that time some Pharisees* came to Jesus and said, "Go away from here and hide! Herod* wants to kill you!"

yeast Used here as a symbol of good influence.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob Three of the most important leaders in the Old Testament.

prophets People who spoke for God.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Herod Herod Antipas, Tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

¹²Jesus said to them, "Go tell that fox* (Herod), 'Today and tomorrow I am forcing demons* out of people and finishing my work of healing. Then, the next day, the work will be finished.' ¹³After that, I must go, because all prophets* should die in Jerusalem."

¹⁴"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets.* You kill with rocks those men that God has sent you. Many, many times I wanted to help your people. I wanted to gather your people together like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you did not let me. ¹⁵Now your home will be left completely empty. I tell you, you will not see me again until that time when you will say, 'Blessed is the One that comes in the name of the Lord (God).'"

Is It Right to Heal on the Sabbath Day?

14 On a Sabbath day,* Jesus went to the home of a leading Pharisee* to eat with him. The people there were all watching Jesus very closely. ²A man with a bad disease* was put before Jesus. ³Jesus said to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, "Is it right or wrong to heal on the Sabbath day?" ⁴But they would not answer his question. So Jesus took the man and healed him. Then Jesus sent the man away. ⁵Jesus said to the Pharisees* and teachers of the law, "If your son or work animal falls into a well on the Sabbath day, you know you would pull him out quickly." ⁶The Pharisees and teachers of the law could say nothing against what Jesus said.

Don't Make Yourself Important

⁷Then Jesus noticed that some of the guests were choosing the best places to sit. So Jesus told this story: ⁸"When a person invites you to a wedding, don't sit in the most important seat.

The person may have invited someone more important than you. ⁹And if you are sitting in the most important seat, then the person that invited you will come to you and say, 'Give this man your seat!' Then you will begin to move down to the last place. And you will be very embarrassed. ¹⁰So when a person invites you, go sit in the seat that is not important. Then the person that invited you will come to you and say, 'Friend, move up here to a more important seat!' Then all the other guests will respect you. ¹¹Every person that makes himself important will be made humble. But the person that makes himself humble will be made important."

You Will Be Rewarded

¹²Then Jesus said to the Pharisee* that had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite only your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. At another time they will invite you to eat with them. Then you will have your reward. ¹³Instead, when you give a feast, invite the poor people, the crippled, and the blind. ¹⁴Then you will be blessed, because these people cannot pay you back. They have nothing. But you will be rewarded at the time when good people rise from death."

Story About a Big Dinner Party

¹⁵One of the men sitting at the table with Jesus heard these things. The man said to Jesus, "The people that eat a meal in God's kingdom will be very happy!"

¹⁶Jesus said to him, "A man gave a big dinner. The man invited many people. ¹⁷When it was time to eat, the man sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come! The food is ready!' ¹⁸But all the guests said they could not come. Each man made an excuse. The first man said, 'I have just bought a field, so I must go look at it. Please excuse me.' ¹⁹Another man said, 'I have just bought five pairs of work animals; I must go and try them. Please excuse me.' ²⁰A third man said, 'I just got married; I can't come.' ²¹So the servant returned. He told his master what had happened. Then the master

fox Jesus means Herod is clever and sly like a fox.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

prophets People who spoke for God.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Pharisee(s) Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

disease The man had dropsy, a sickness that causes the body to swell larger and larger.

became angry and said, 'Hurry! Go into the streets and alleys of the town. Bring me the poor people, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' ²²Later the servant said to him, 'Master, I did what you told me to do, but we still have places for more people.' ²³The master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and country roads. Tell the people there to come. I want my house to be full!' ²⁴None of those people that I invited first will ever eat with me!'"

You Must First Plan

²⁵Many people were traveling with Jesus. Jesus said to the people, ²⁶"If a person comes to me, but loves his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, or sisters more than he loves me, then that person cannot be my follower. A person must love me more than he loves himself! ²⁷If a person will not carry the cross (*suffering*) that is given to him when he follows me, then that person cannot be my follower. ²⁸If you wanted to build a building, you would first sit down and decide how much it would cost. You must see if you have enough money to finish the job. ²⁹If you don't do that, you might begin the work, but you would not be able to finish. And if you could not finish it, then all the people watching would laugh at you. ³⁰They would say, 'This man began to build, but was not able to finish!'"

³¹"If a king is going to fight against another king, first he will sit down and plan. If the king has only 10,000 men, he will plan to see if he is able to defeat the other king that has 20,000 men. ³²If he cannot defeat the other king, then he will send some men to speak to the other king and ask for peace. ³³In the same way, all of you must first plan. You must give everything you have to follow me. If you don't, you cannot be my follower!"

Don't Lose Your Influence

³⁴"Salt is a good thing. But if the salt loses its salty taste, then it is worth nothing. You cannot make it salty again. ³⁵You can't even use it for soil or for plant food. People throw it

away.

"You people that hear me, listen!"

Joy in Heaven

15 Many tax collectors* and bad people came to listen to Jesus. ²Then the Pharisees* and the teachers of the law began to complain, "Look! This man (*Jesus*) welcomes bad people and even eats with them!"

³Then Jesus told them this story: "Suppose one of you has 100 sheep, but he loses one of them. Then he will leave the other 99 sheep alone and go out and look for the lost sheep. The man will continue to search for the lost sheep until he finds it. ⁴And when he finds the sheep, the man is very happy. The man carries the sheep to his home. He goes to his friends and neighbors and says to them, 'Be happy with me because I found my lost sheep!' ⁵In the same way, I tell you, there is much joy in heaven when one sinner changes his heart. There is more joy for that one sinner than there is for 99 good people that don't need to change their hearts."

⁶"Suppose a woman has ten silver coins,* but she loses one of them. The woman will take a light and clean the house. She will look carefully for the coin until she finds it. ⁷And when she finds the lost coin, she will call her friends and neighbors and say to them, 'Be happy with me because I have found the coin that I lost!' ⁸In the same way, there is joy before the angels of God when one sinner changes his heart."

The Son That Left Home

⁹Then Jesus said, "A man had two sons. ¹⁰The younger son said to his father, 'Give me my part of all the things we own!' So the father divided the wealth with his two sons. ¹¹Then the younger son gathered up all that he had and

tax collectors Jews hired by the Romans to collect taxes. They often cheated, and the Jews hated them.

Pharisees Jews were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

silver coins One coin, a denarius, was the average pay for one day's work.

left. He traveled far away to another country. There the son wasted his money like a fool. ¹⁴He spent everything that he had. Soon after that, the land became very dry, and there was no rain. There was not enough food to eat anywhere in that country. The son was hungry and needed money. ¹⁵So he went and got a job with one of the people of that country. The man sent the son into the fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶The son was so hungry that he wanted to eat the food that the pigs were eating. But no person gave him anything. ¹⁷The boy realized that he had been very foolish. He thought, 'All of my father's servants have plenty of food. But I am here, almost dead because I have nothing to eat. ¹⁸I will leave and go to my father. I will say to him: Father, I sinned against God and have done wrong to you. ¹⁹I am not good enough to be called your son. But let me be like one of your servants.' ²⁰So the son left and went to his father.

The Son Returns

¹"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him coming. The father felt sorry for his son. So the father ran to him. He hugged and kissed his son. ²The son said, 'Father, I sinned against God and have done wrong to you. I am not good enough to be called your son.' ³But the father said to his servants, 'Hurry! Bring the best clothes and dress him. Also, put a ring on his finger and good shoes on his feet. ⁴Bring our fat calf. We will kill it and have plenty to eat. Then we can have a party! ⁵My son was dead, but now he is alive again! He was lost, but now he is found!' So they began to have a party.

The Older Son Comes

¹"The older son was in the field. He came closer to the house. He heard the sound of music and dancing. ²So the older son called to one of the servant boys and asked, 'What does all this mean?' ³The servant said, 'Your brother has come back. Your father killed the fat calf to eat. Your father is happy because your brother came home safely!' ⁴The older

son was angry and would not go in to the party. So his father went out to ask him to come in. ⁵The son said to his father, 'I have served you like a slave for many years! I have always obeyed your commands. But you never even killed a goat for me. You never gave a party for me and my friends. ⁶But your other son has wasted all your money on prostitutes.* Then he comes home, and you kill the fat calf for him!' ⁷But the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me. All that I have is yours too. ⁸We must be happy and have a party; because your brother was dead, but now he is alive. He was lost, but now he is found.'"

True Wealth

16 Jesus said to his followers, "Once there was a rich man. This rich man hired a manager to take care of his business. Later, the rich man learned that his manager was cheating him. ²So he called the manager in and said to him, 'I have heard bad things about you. Give me a report of what you have done with my money. You can't be my manager now!' ³Later, the manager thought to himself, 'What will I do? My master is taking my job away from me! I am not strong enough to dig ditches. I am too proud to beg. ⁴I know what I will do! I will do something so that when I lose my job, other people will welcome me into their homes.' ⁵So the manager called in each person that owed the master some money. He said to the first man, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁶The man answered, 'I owe him 8,000 pounds of olive oil.' The manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; sit down quickly and make the bill less. Write 4,000 pounds.' ⁷Then the manager said to another man, 'How much do you owe my master?' ⁸The man answered, 'I owe him 60,000 pounds of wheat.' ⁹Then the manager said to him, 'Here is your bill; you can make it less. Write 50,000 pounds.' ¹⁰Later, the master told the dishonest manager that he had done a smart thing. Yes, worldly people are smarter with their own people than spiritual people are.

prostitutes Women that are paid by men for sexual sin.

⁹"I tell you, use the things you have here in this world to make friends [with God]. Then, when those things are gone, you will be welcomed in that home that continues forever. ¹⁰If a person can be trusted with small things, then he can also be trusted with big things. If a person is dishonest in little things, then he will be dishonest in big things too. ¹¹If you cannot be trusted with worldly riches, then you will not be trusted with the true (heavenly) riches. ¹²And if you cannot be trusted with the things that belong to someone else, then you will not be given things of your own.

¹³"No servant can serve two masters at the same time. The servant will hate one master and love the other. Or he will be loyal to one and not care about the other. You cannot serve God and money at the same time."

God's Law Cannot Be Changed

¹⁴The Pharisees* were listening to all these things. The Pharisees criticized Jesus because they all loved money. ¹⁵Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You make yourselves look good in front of people. But God knows what is really in your hearts. The things that people think are important are worth nothing to God."

¹⁶"God wanted the people to live by the law of Moses, and the writings of the prophets.* But since the time John the Baptizer came, the Good News about the kingdom of God is being told. Many people are trying hard to get into the kingdom of God. ¹⁷Even the smallest part of a letter in the law cannot be changed. It would be easier for heaven and earth to pass away.

Divorce and Remarriage

¹⁸"If a man divorces his wife and marries another woman, he is guilty of the sin of adultery.* And the man that marries a divorced woman is also guilty of adultery."

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹Jesus said, "There was a rich man that always dressed in the finest clothes. He was so rich that he was able to feast and have a party every day. ²⁰There was also a very poor man named Lazarus. Lazarus' body was covered with sores. Lazarus was often put at the rich man's gate. ²¹Lazarus wanted only to eat the small pieces of food left from the rich man's table. And the dogs came and licked his sores! ²²Later, Lazarus died. The angels took Lazarus and placed him in the arms of Abraham.* The rich man also died and was buried. ²³He was sent to the place of death* and had much pain. The rich man saw Abraham far away with Lazarus in his arms. ²⁴He called, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me! Send Lazarus to me so that he can dip his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am suffering in this fire!' ²⁵But Abraham said, 'My child, remember when you lived? You had all the good things in life. But all the bad things happened to Lazarus. Now he is comforted here, and you are suffering. ²⁶Also, there is a big pit (hole) between you and us. No person can cross over to help you. And no person can leave there and come here.' ²⁷The rich man said, 'Then please send Lazarus to my father's house on earth! ²⁸I have five brothers. Lazarus could warn my brothers so that they will not come to this place of pain.' ²⁹But Abraham said, 'They have the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* to read; let them learn from that!' ³⁰But the rich man said, 'No, father Abraham! If someone came to them from the dead, they would believe and change their hearts and lives.' ³¹But Abraham said to him, 'No! If your brothers won't listen to Moses and the prophets, then they won't listen to someone that comes back from death.'"

17 Jesus said to his followers, "Things will surely happen that will make people sin. But it will be very bad for the person that makes this happen. ²It will be very bad for a person if he makes one of these weak

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.
place of death Literally, "Hades."

persons sin. It would be better for him to drown with a big rock around his neck. ³So be careful!

"If your brother sins, tell him he is wrong. But if he is sorry and stops sinning, forgive him. 'If your brother does something wrong to you seven times in one day, but he says that he is sorry each time, then you should forgive him.'"

How Big Is Your Faith?

¹The apostles* said to the Lord (*Jesus*), "Give us more faith!"

²The Lord said, "If your faith is as big as a mustard seed,* then you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Dig yourself up and plant yourself in the ocean!' And the tree will obey you."

Be Good Servants

¹"Suppose one of you has a servant that has been working in the field. The servant has been plowing the ground or caring for the sheep. When the servant comes in from working in the field, what would you say to him? Would you say, 'Come in and sit down to eat'? ²No! You would say to your servant, 'Prepare something for me to eat. Then get dressed and serve me. When I finish eating and drinking, then you can eat.' ³The servant should not get any special thanks for doing his job. He is only doing what his master told him to do. ⁴It is the same with you. When you do all the things you are told to do, you should say, 'We are not worthy of any special thanks. We have only done the work we should do.'"

Be Thankful

¹Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem. He went from Galilee to Samaria. ²He came into a small town. Ten men met him there. These men did not come close to Jesus, because they all had leprosy.* ³But the men yelled to Jesus, "Jesus! Master! Please help us!"

⁴When Jesus saw the men, he said, "Go and show yourselves to the priests.*"

While the ten men were going to the priests, they were healed. ⁵When one of the men saw that he was healed, he went back to Jesus. He thanked God with a loud voice. ⁶He bowed down at Jesus' feet. The man thanked Jesus. (This man was a Samaritan,* not a Jew.) ⁷Jesus answered, "Ten men were healed; where are the other nine? ⁸Is this Samaritan man the only one that came back to thank God?" ⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Stand up! You can go. You were healed because you believed."

God's Kingdom Is Inside You

¹Some of the Pharisees* asked Jesus, "When will the kingdom of God come?"

Jesus answered, "God's kingdom is coming, but not in a way that you will be able to see with your eyes. ²People will not say, 'Look, God's kingdom is here!' Or, 'There it is!' No, God's kingdom is inside you."

³Then Jesus said to his followers, "The time will come when you will want very much to see one of the days of the Son of Man,* but you will not be able. ⁴People will say to you, 'Look, there it is!' or, 'Look, here it is!' Stay where you are; don't go away and search."

When Jesus Comes Again

¹"The Son of Man* will come again. On the day when he comes he will shine like lightning flashes across the sky. ²But first, the Son of Man must suffer many things and be killed by the people of this time. ³It will be the same when the Son of Man comes again as it was when Noah lived. ⁴In the time of Noah, people were eating, drinking, and getting married even on the day when Noah entered the boat. Then

show ... priests The law of Moses said a priest must say when a Jew with leprosy was well.

Samaritan Person from Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but the Jews did not accept them as true Jews.

Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

mustard seed The very small seed of the mustard plant.

leprosy A very bad skin disease.

the flood came and killed all the people. ²¹It will be the same as during the time of Lot when God destroyed Sodom.* Those people were eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building houses for themselves. ²²The people were doing these things even on the day when Lot left town. Then fire rained down from the sky and killed them all. ²³This is exactly how it will be when the Son of Man* comes again.

²⁴"On that day, if a man is on his roof, he will not have time to go inside and get his things. If a man is in the field, he cannot go back home. ²⁵Remember what happened to Lot's wife?²⁶ The person that tries to save his life will lose it. But the person that gives his life away will save it. ²⁷At the time when I come again, there may be two people sleeping in one room. One person will be taken and the other person will be left. ²⁸There may be two women working together. One woman will be taken and the other woman will be left." **

²⁹The followers asked Jesus, "Where will this be, Lord?"

Jesus answered, "People can always find a dead body by looking for the vultures.*"

God Will Answer His People

18 Then Jesus taught the followers that they should always pray and never lose hope. Jesus used this story to teach them: ¹"Once there was a judge in a town. He did not care about God. The judge also did not care what people thought about him. ²In that same town there was a woman. Her husband was dead. The woman came many times to this judge and said, 'There is a man that is doing bad things to me. Give me my rights!' ³But the judge did not want to help the woman. After a

long time, the judge thought to himself, 'I don't care about God. And I don't care about what people think. ⁴But this woman is bothering me. If I give her what she wants, then she will leave me alone. But if I don't give her what she wants, she will bother me until I am sick!'"

⁵"The Lord (*Jesus*) said, "Listen! There is meaning, in what the bad judge said. ⁶God's people shout to him night and day. God will always give his people what is right. God will not be slow to answer his people. ⁷I tell you, God will help his people quickly! But when the Son of Man* comes again, will he find people on earth who believe in him?"

Being Right with God

¹There were some people that thought that they were very good. These people acted like they were better than other people. Jesus used this story to teach them: ²"One time there was a Pharisee* and a tax collector.* ³One day they both went to the temple* to pray. ⁴The Pharisee stood alone, away from the tax collector. When the Pharisee prayed, he said, 'O God, I thank you that I am not as bad as other people. I am not like men that steal, cheat, or do the sin of adultery.* ⁵I thank you that I am better than this tax collector. ⁶I am good; I fast* twice a week, and I give one-tenth of everything I earn!'

⁷"The tax collector* stood alone too. But when he prayed, he would not even look up to heaven. The tax collector felt very humble before God. He said, 'O God, have mercy on me. I am a sinner!' ⁸I tell you, when this man finished his prayer and went home, he was right with God. But the Pharisee,* who felt that he was better than other people, was not right with God. Every person that makes himself important will be made humble. But the person that makes himself humble will be made important."

Pharisee Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

tax collector A Jew hired by the Romans to collect taxes. Tax collectors often cheated their people.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

fast To live without food for a special time of prayer.

Sodom A town where very bad people lived. God punished them by destroying their city.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Lot's wife A story about what happened to Lot's wife is found in Gen. 19:15-17, 26.

Verse 36 A few Greek copies of Luke add verse 36: "Two men will be in the same field. One man will be taken, but the other man will be left behind."

vultures Birds that eat dead animals.

Who Will Enter God's Kingdom?

¹"Some people brought their small children to Jesus so that Jesus could touch them. But when the followers saw this, they told the people not to do this. ²But Jesus called the little children to him and said to his followers, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to people that are like these little children. ³"I tell you the truth. You must accept God's kingdom like a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it!"

A Rich Man Asks Jesus a Question

¹"A Jewish leader asked Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do to get the life that continues forever?"

²Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? Only God is good. ³But I will answer your question. You know God's commands: 'You must not do the sin of adultery,* you must not murder anyone, you must not steal anything, you must not tell lies about other people, you must honor (*respect*) your father and mother....' ⁴"

⁵But the leader said, "I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy!"

⁶When Jesus heard this, he said to the leader, "But there is still one more thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor people. You will have a reward in heaven. Then come and follow me!"

⁷But when the man heard this, he was very sad. The man was very rich and wanted to keep his money.

⁸When Jesus saw that the man was sad, he said, "It will be very hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of God! ⁹It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God!"

Who Can Be Saved?

¹When the people heard this, they said, "Then who can be saved?"

²Jesus answered, "God can do things that are not possible for people to do!"

³Peter said, "Look, we left everything we had and followed you!"

⁴Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Every person that has left his home, wife, brothers, parents, or children for God's kingdom ⁵will get much more than he left. That person will get many times more in this life. And after that person dies, he will live with God forever."

Jesus Will Rise from Death

¹Then Jesus talked to the twelve apostles* alone. Jesus said to them, "Listen! We are going to Jerusalem. Everything that God told the prophets* to write about the Son of Man* will happen! ²His people will turn against him and give him to the non-Jewish people.* They will laugh at him and spit on him. He will be insulted and embarrassed. ³They will beat him with whips and then kill him! But on the third day after his death, he will rise to life again."

⁴The apostles tried to understand this, but they could not; the meaning was hidden from them.

Jesus Heals a Blind Man

¹Jesus came near the city of Jericho. There was a blind man sitting beside the road. The blind man was begging people for money.

²When this man heard the people coming down the road, he asked, "What is happening?"

³The people told him, "Jesus, the one from Nazareth, is coming here."

⁴The blind man was excited and said, "Jesus, Son of David*! Please help me!"

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

non-Jewish people Literally, "nations" (Gentiles).

Son of David Name for the Christ, who was from the family of David, king of Israel.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

'You must ... mother' Quote from Ex. 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20.

"The people that were in front, leading the group, criticized the blind man. They told him not to speak. But the blind man shouted more and more, "Son of David, please help me!"

"Jesus stopped there and said, "Bring that blind man to me!" When the blind man came near, Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man said, "Lord, I want to see again."

"Jesus said to him, "See! You are healed because you believed."

"Then the man was able to see. The man followed Jesus, thanking God. All the people that saw this praised God for what happened.

Zacchaeus

19 Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. ¹In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector.* ²He wanted to see who Jesus was. There were many other people that wanted to see Jesus too. Zacchaeus was too short to see above the people. ³So he ran to a place where he knew Jesus would come. Then Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. ⁴When Jesus came to that place, Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. Jesus said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry! Come down! I must stay at your house today."

"Then Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was happy to have Jesus in his house. ⁵All the people saw this. They began to complain, "Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"

"Zacchaeus said to the Lord (*Jesus*), "I want to do good. I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated any person, I will pay that person back four times more!"

"Jesus said, "This man is a good man—he, truly belongs to the family of Abraham. So today, Zacchaeus has been saved from his sins.!" ⁶The Son of Man* came to find lost people and save them."

Use the Things God Gives You

"Jesus traveled closer to Jerusalem. Some of the people thought that God's kingdom would appear soon. ¹Jesus knew that the people thought this, so he told them this story: "A very important man was preparing to go to a country far away* to be made a king. Then the man planned to return home and rule his people. ²So the man called ten of his servants together. He gave a bag of money* to each servant. The man said, 'Do business with this money until I come back.' ³But the people in the kingdom hated the man. So the people sent a group to follow the man to the other country. In the other country, this group said, 'We don't want that man to be our king!'"

"But the man became king. When he came home, he said, 'Call those servants that have my money. I want to know how much more money they earned with it.' ⁴The first servant came and said, 'Sir, I earned ten bags of money*' with the one bag you gave me!' ⁵The king said to the servant, 'Fine! You are a good servant. I see that I can trust you with small things. So now I will let you rule over ten of my cities!' ⁶The second servant said, 'Sir, with your one bag of money I earned five bags!' ⁷The king said to this servant, 'You can rule over five cities!' ⁸Then another servant came in. The servant said to the king, 'Sir, here is your bag of money. I wrapped it in a piece of cloth and hid it.' ⁹I was afraid of you because you are powerful. I know you are a hard man. You even take money that you didn't earn and gather food that you didn't grow!' ¹⁰Then the king said to the servant, 'You bad servant! I will use your own words to condemn you. You said that I am a hard man. You said that I even take money that I didn't earn and gather food that I didn't grow. ¹¹If that is true, you should have put my money in the bank. Then, when I came back, my money would have earned some interest.' ¹²Then the king said to the men that

tax collector A Jew hired by the Romans to collect taxes. Tax collectors often cheated their people.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

country far away Probably Rome. Kings were appointed by the Roman emperor.

bag(s) of money One bag of money was a Greek "mina," enough to pay a person for working three months.

were watching. "Take the bag of money away from this servant and give it to the servant that earned ten bags of money." ²⁵The men said to the king, "But sir, that servant already has ten bags of money!" ²⁶The king said, "The person that uses what he has will get more. But the person that does not use what he has will have everything taken away from him. ²⁷Now where are my enemies? Where are the people that did not want me to be king? Bring my enemies here and kill them. I will watch them die!"

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

²⁸After Jesus said these things, he continued traveling toward Jerusalem. ²⁹Jesus came near Bethphage and Bethany, towns near the hill called the Mount of Olives.* Jesus sent out two of his followers. ³⁰He said, "Go into the town you can see there. When you enter the town, you will find a young donkey tied there. No person has ever ridden this donkey. Untie the donkey, and bring it here to me. ³¹If any person asks you why you are taking the donkey, you should say, 'The Master needs this donkey.'"

³²The two followers went into town. They found the donkey exactly like Jesus told them. ³³The followers untied the donkey. But the owners of the donkey came out. They said to the followers, "Why are you untying our donkey?"

³⁴The followers answered, "The Master needs it." ³⁵So the followers brought the donkey to Jesus. The followers put their coats on the donkey's back. Then they put Jesus on the donkey. ³⁶Jesus rode along the road toward Jerusalem. The followers spread their coats on the road before Jesus.

³⁷Jesus was coming close to Jerusalem. He was already near the bottom of the Mount of Olives.* The whole group of followers were happy. They were very excited and praised God. They thanked God for all the powerful things they had seen. They said,

³⁸ "God bless the king that comes

in the name of the Lord (God)!"

Psalms 118:26

Peace in heaven and glory to God!"

³⁹Some of the Pharisees* said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell your followers not to say these things!"

⁴⁰But Jesus answered, "I tell you, these things must be said. If my followers don't say these things, then these rocks will say them."

Jesus Cries for Jerusalem

⁴¹Jesus came near Jerusalem. He saw the city and began to cry for it. ⁴²Jesus spoke to Jerusalem. He said, "I wish you knew today what would bring you peace! But you can't know it, because it is hidden from you. ⁴³A time is coming when your enemies will build a wall around you. Your enemies will hold you on all sides. ⁴⁴They will destroy you and all your people. Not one stone of your buildings will stay on top of another. All this will happen because you did not know the time when God came to save you."

Jesus Goes to the Temple

⁴⁵Jesus went into the temple.* He began to throw out the people that were selling things there. ⁴⁶Jesus said, "It is written in the Scriptures,* 'My house will be a house of prayer.*' But you have changed it into a 'hiding place for thieves'."

⁴⁷Jesus taught the people in the temple* every day. The leading priests, the teachers of the law, and some of the leaders of the people wanted to kill Jesus. ⁴⁸But all the people were listening closely to Jesus. They were very interested in the things Jesus said. So the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the leaders did not know how they could kill Jesus.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

'My ... prayer' Quote from Isa. 56:7.

'hiding ... thieves' Quote from Jer. 7:11.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

The Jewish Leaders Ask Jesus a Question

20 One day Jesus was in the temple.* He was teaching the people. Jesus told the people the Good News about the kingdom of God. The leading priests, teachers of the law, and older Jewish leaders came to talk to Jesus. They said, "Tell us! What authority do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

Jesus answered, "I will ask you a question too. Tell me: 'When John baptized* people, did that come from God or from man?'"

"The priests, the teachers of the law, and the Jewish leaders all talked about this. They said to each other, 'If we answer, 'John's baptism was from God,' then he will say, 'Then why did you not believe John?' 'But if we say, 'John's baptism was from man,' then all the people will kill us with rocks. They will kill us because they believe that John was a prophet.*'" So they answered, "We don't know the answer."

"So Jesus said to them, "Then I will not tell you what authority I use to do these things!"

God Sends His Son

"Then Jesus told the people this story: "A man planted a field with grapes. The man leased the land to some farmers. Then he went away for a long time. "Later, it was time for the grapes to be picked. So the man sent a servant to those farmers so that they would give him his share of the grapes. But the farmers beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. "So the man sent another servant. The farmers beat this servant too. They showed no respect for him. The farmers sent the servant away with nothing. "So the man sent a third servant to the farmers. The farmers hurt this servant badly and threw him out. "The owner of the field said, 'What will I do now? I will send my son. I love my son very much. Maybe the farmers will respect my son!' "When the

farmers saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the owner's son. This field will be his. If we kill him, then his field will be ours!' "So the farmers threw the son out of the field and killed him.

"What will the owner of this field do? "He will come and kill those farmers! Then he will give the field to some other farmers."

The people heard this story. They said, "No! Let this never happen!" "But Jesus looked into their eyes and said, "Then what does this verse mean:

"The stone that the builders did not want became the cornerstone*?"

Psalms 118:22

"Every person that falls on that stone will be broken. If that stone falls on you, it will crush you!"

"The Jewish leaders heard this story that Jesus told. They knew this story was about them. So they wanted to arrest Jesus at that time. But they were afraid of what the people would do.

The Jewish Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

"So the teachers of the law and the priests waited for the right time to get Jesus. They sent some men to Jesus. They told these men to act like they were good men. They wanted to find something wrong with the things Jesus said. (If they found something wrong, then they could give Jesus to the governor, who had power and authority over him.) "So the men asked Jesus, "Teacher, we know that what you say and teach is true. You teach the same to all people. You always teach the truth about God's way. "Tell us, is it right that we should pay taxes to Caesar*? Yes or No?"

"But Jesus knew that these men were trying to trick him. Jesus said to them, "Show me a coin. Whose name is on the coin? And whose picture is on it?"

They said, "Caesar's."

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

²Jesus said to them, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. And give to God the things that are God's."

³The men were amazed at his wise answer. They could say nothing. The men were not able to trick Jesus before the people. Jesus said nothing they could use against him.

Some Sadducees Try to Trick Jesus

⁴Some Sadducees* came to Jesus. (Sadducees believe that people will not rise from death.) They asked Jesus, ⁵"Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and had no children, then his brother must marry the woman. Then they will have children for the dead brother. ⁶One time there were seven brothers. The first brother married a woman, but died. He had no children. ⁷Then the second brother married the woman, and he died. ⁸And the third brother married the woman, and he died. The same thing happened with all the other brothers. They all died and had no children. ⁹The woman was the last to die. ¹⁰But all seven brothers married her. So when people rise from death, whose wife will this woman be?"

¹¹Jesus said to the Sadducees,* "On earth, people marry each other. ¹²Some people will be worthy to be raised from death and live again after this life. In that life they will not marry. ¹³In that life people are like angels and cannot die. They are children of God, because they have been raised from death. ¹⁴Moses clearly showed that people are raised from death. When Moses wrote about the burning bush,* he said that the Lord (God) is 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*. ¹⁵If God said he is their God, then, these men are not really dead. He is God only of living people. All people that belong to God are alive."

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament.

burning bush Read Ex. 3:1-12.

Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob Three of the most important leaders of the Old Testament.

'I ... Jacob' Words taken from Ex. 3:6.

¹⁶Some of the teachers of the law said, "Teacher, your answer was very good." ¹⁷"No person was brave enough to ask him another question."

Is the Christ the Son of David?

¹⁸Then Jesus said, "Why do people say that the Christ* is the Son of David*? ¹⁹In the book of Psalms, David himself says:

"The Lord (God) said to my Lord (Christ):

*Sit by me at my right side,
until I put your enemies
under your power.*"*

Psalm 110:1

²⁰"David calls the Christ 'Lord.' But the Christ is also the son of David. How can both these things be true?"

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

²¹All the people listened to Jesus. Jesus said to his followers, ²²"Be careful of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around wearing clothes that look important. And they love for people to show respect to them in the market places. They love to get the most important seats in the synagogues.* And they love to get the most important seats at the feasts. ²³But they are mean to widows* and steal their homes. Then they try to make themselves look good by saying long prayers. God will punish these people very much."

True Giving

21 Jesus saw some rich people putting their gifts for God into the temple

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of David Name for the Christ, who was from the family of David, king of Israel.

until ... power Literally, "until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."

synagogues Synagogues were places where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died.

money box.* ²Then Jesus saw a poor widow.* She put two small copper coins into the box. ³Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. This poor widow gave only two small coins. But she really gave more than all those rich people. ⁴The rich people have plenty; they gave only what they did not need. This woman is very poor. But she gave all she had. And she needed that money to help her live."

The Destruction of the Temple

⁵Some of the followers were talking about the temple.* They said, "This is a beautiful temple, built with the best stones. Look at the many good gifts that have been offered to God!"

⁶But Jesus said, "The time will come when all that you see here will be destroyed. Every stone of these buildings, will be thrown down to the ground. Not one stone will be left on another!"

⁷Some followers asked Jesus, "Teacher, when will these things happen? What will show us that it is time for these things to happen?"

⁸Jesus said, "Be careful! Don't be fooled. Many people will come using my name. They will say, 'I am the Christ,' and, 'The right time has come!' But don't follow them. ⁹When you hear about wars and riots, don't be afraid. These things must happen first. Then the end will come later."

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Nations will fight against other nations. Kingdoms will fight against other kingdoms. ¹¹There will be great earthquakes, sicknesses, and other bad things in many places. In some places there will be no food for the people to eat. Terrible things will happen, and amazing things will come from heaven to warn people."

¹²"But before all these things happen, people will arrest you and do bad things to you. People will judge you in their synagogues* and put

you in jail. You will be forced to stand before kings and governors. People will do all these things to you because you follow me. ¹³But this will give you an opportunity to tell about me. ¹⁴Don't worry about what you will say. ¹⁵I will give you the wisdom to say things that none of your enemies can answer. ¹⁶Even your parents, brothers, relatives and friends will turn against you. They will kill some of you. ¹⁷All people will hate you because you follow me. ¹⁸But none of these things can really harm you. ¹⁹You will save yourselves by continuing strong in your faith through all these things.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

²⁰"You will see armies all around Jerusalem. Then you will know that the time for the destruction of Jerusalem has come. ²¹At that time, the people in Judea should run away to the mountains. The people in Jerusalem must leave quickly. If you are near the city, don't go in! ²²The prophets* wrote many things about the time when God will punish his people. The time I am telling you about is the time when all these things must happen. ²³At that time, it will be bad for women that are pregnant or have small babies. Why? Because very bad times will come to this land. God will be angry with these people (*the Jews*). ²⁴Some of the people will be killed by soldiers. Other people will be made prisoners and taken to every country. The holy city of Jerusalem will be walked on by non-Jewish people until their time is finished.

Don't Fear

²⁵"Amazing things will happen with the sun, moon, and stars. The people on earth will feel trapped. The oceans will be upset, and the people will not know why. ²⁶Men will become afraid. They will be very worried about the things that will happen to the whole world. Everything in the sky will be changed. ²⁷Then people will see the Son of Man* coming on a

money box A special box in the Jewish place for worship where people put their gifts to God.

widow(s) Women whose husbands have died.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

cloud with power and great glory. ²When these things begin to happen, don't fear. Look up and be happy! Don't worry. Be happy, because you know that the time when God will free you is near!"

My Words Will Live Forever

²Then Jesus told this story: "Look at all the trees. The fig tree is a good example. ³When it becomes green (*grows buds*), you know that summer is near. ⁴It is the same with these things I told you would happen. When you see all these things happening, then you will know that God's kingdom is coming very soon.

⁵"I tell you the truth. All these things will happen while the people of this time are still living! ⁶The whole world, earth and sky, will be destroyed; but the words I have said will never be destroyed!

Be Ready All the Time

⁷"Be careful! Don't spend your time drinking and getting drunk. Or don't be too busy with worldly things. If you do that, you will not be able to think right. And then the end might come when you are not ready. ⁸It will come like a surprise to all people on earth. ⁹So be ready all the time. Pray that you will be strong enough to continue safely through all these things that will happen. And pray that you will be able to stand before the Son of Man."

¹⁰During the day, Jesus taught the people in the temple. ¹¹At night he went out of the city and stayed all night on the Mount of Olives. ¹²Every morning all the people got up early to go listen to Jesus in the temple.

The Jewish Leaders Want to Kill Jesus

22 It was almost time for the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread,* called

the Passover.* ²The leading priests and teachers of the law were trying to find a way to kill Jesus. But they were afraid of the people.

Judas Makes Plans Against Jesus

³One of Jesus' twelve apostles* was named Judas Iscariot. Satan (*the devil*) went into Judas and made him do a bad thing. ⁴Judas went and talked with the leading priests and some of the soldiers who guarded the temple. ⁵Judas talked to them about a way to give Jesus to them. ⁶The priests were very happy about this. They promised to give Judas money if he would give Jesus to them. ⁷Judas agreed. Then Judas waited for the best time to give Jesus to them. Judas wanted to do it when there were no people around to see him do it.

Preparation of the Passover Meal

⁸The Day of Unleavened Bread* came. This was the day when the Jews sacrificed* the Passover* lambs. ⁹Jesus said to Peter and John, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat."

¹⁰Peter and John said to Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare the meal?"

Jesus said to them, ¹¹"Listen! After you go into the city (*Jerusalem*), you will see a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him. He will go into a house. You go with him. ¹²Tell the person who owns that house, 'The Teacher asks that you please show us the room where he and his followers can eat the Passover* meal.' ¹³Then the man who owns the house will show you a large room upstairs. This room is ready for you. Prepare the Passover meal there."

¹⁴So Peter and John left. Everything happened the way Jesus said. So they prepared the Passover.*

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

Festival ... Bread Important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Day ... Bread Same as Passover.

sacrificed To kill something as a gift to God.

The Lord's Supper

"The time came for them to eat the Passover* Jesus and the apostles* were sitting at the table. ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "I wanted very much to eat this Passover meal with you before I die. ¹⁶I will never eat another Passover meal until it is given its true meaning in the kingdom of God."

¹⁷Then Jesus took a cup of wine. He gave thanks to God for it. Then he said, "Take this cup and give it to everyone here. ¹⁸I will never drink wine again until God's kingdom comes."

¹⁹Then Jesus took some bread. He thanked God for the bread and divided it. He gave it to the apostles.* Then Jesus said, "This bread is my body that I am giving for you. Do this to remember me." ²⁰In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup of wine and said, "This wine shows the new agreement [from God to his people]. This new agreement begins with my blood (*death*) that I am giving for you.*"

Who Will Turn Against Jesus?

²¹Jesus said, "One of you will soon be against me. His hand is by my hand on the table. ²²The Son of Man* will do what God has planned. But it will be very bad for that person who gives the Son of Man to be killed."

²³Then the apostles* asked each other, "Which one of us would do that to Jesus?"

Be Like a Servant

²⁴Later the apostles* began to argue about which one of them was the most important. ²⁵But Jesus said to them, "The kings of the world rule over their people. Men who have authority over other people are called 'very important.' ²⁶But you must not be like that. The greatest person should become like the

youngest person! Leaders should be like servants. ²⁷Who is more important: the person sitting at the table or the person serving him? You think the person sitting at the table is more important. But I am like a servant among you!

²⁸"You men have stayed with me through many struggles. ²⁹My Father has given me a kingdom. I also give you authority to rule with me. ³⁰You will eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. You will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes (*family groups*) of Israel.*"

Don't Lose Your Faith!

³¹"Satan (*the devil*) has asked to test you like a farmer tests his wheat. O Simon, Simon (*Peter*), ³²I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to me."

³³But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go to jail with you. I will even die with you!"

³⁴But Jesus said, "Peter, before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say you don't know me. You will say this three times!"

Be Ready for Trouble

³⁵Then Jesus said to the apostles,* "I sent you to preach to the people. I sent you without money, a bag, or shoes. But did you need anything?"

The apostles said, "No."

³⁶Jesus said to them, "But now if you have money or a bag, carry that with you. If you don't have a sword, sell your coat and buy one. ³⁷The Scripture* says:

'People said he was a criminal.'

Isaiah 53:12

This Scripture must happen. It was written about me, and it is happening now."

³⁸The followers said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords!"

Jesus said to them, "Two will be enough."

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Verse 20 A few Greek copies do not have the last part of verse 19 and all of verse 20.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Israel First, Israel was the Jewish nation, but the name is also used to mean all of God's people.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings-Old Testament.

Jesus Tells the Apostles to Pray

³⁴“Jesus left the city (*Jerusalem*) and went to the Mount of Olives.* His followers went with him. (Jesus went there often.) Jesus said to his followers, “Pray that you will not be tempted.”

⁴¹“Then Jesus went about 50 yards away from them. He kneeled down and prayed, ⁴²“Father, if it is what you want, then let me not have this cup* of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want.” ⁴³Then an angel from heaven appeared. The angel was sent to help Jesus. ⁴⁴“Jesus was full of pain; he struggled hard in prayer. Sweat dripped from his face like he was bleeding. ⁴⁵“When Jesus finished praying, he went to his followers. They were asleep. (Their sadness had made them very tired.) ⁴⁶“Jesus said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray for strength against temptation.”

Jesus Is Arrested

⁴⁷“While Jesus was speaking, a group of people came. One of the twelve apostles* was leading the group. He was Judas. Judas came close to Jesus so that he could kiss Jesus.

⁴⁸“But Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you using the kiss of friendship, to give the Son of Man* to his enemies?” ⁴⁹“The followers of Jesus were standing there too. They saw what was happening. The followers said to Jesus, “Lord, should we use our swords?” ⁵⁰“And one of the followers did use his sword. He cut off the right ear of the servant of the high priest.*

⁵¹“Jesus said, “Stop!” Then Jesus touched the servant’s ear and healed him.

⁵²“The group that came to arrest Jesus were the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the Jewish soldiers. Jesus said to them, “Why did you come out here with swords and sticks? Do you think I am a criminal?” ⁵³“I was

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be hard, like drinking a cup full of something that tastes very bad.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

with you every day in the temple.* Why didn’t you try to arrest me there? But this is your time—the time when darkness (*sin*) rules.”

Peter Is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

⁵⁴“They arrested Jesus and took him away. They brought Jesus into the house of the high priest.* Peter followed them, but he did not come near Jesus. ⁵⁵“The soldiers started a fire in the middle of the yard and sat together. Peter sat with them. ⁵⁶“A servant girl saw Peter sitting there. She could see because of the light from the fire. The girl looked closely at Peter’s face. Then she said, “This man was also with him (*Jesus*)!”

⁵⁷“But Peter said this was not true. He said, “Lady, I don’t know him.” ⁵⁸“A short time later, another person saw Peter and said, “You are also one of those people, that follow Jesus.”

But Peter said, “Man, I am not one of his followers!”

⁵⁹“About an hour later, another man said, “It is true! This man was with him (*Jesus*). He is from Galilee!” The man said he was sure about this.

⁶⁰“But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you are talking about!”

Immediately, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed. ⁶¹“Then the Lord (*Jesus*) turned and looked into Peter’s eyes. And Peter remembered what the Lord had said: “Before the rooster crows in the morning, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” ⁶²“Then Peter went outside and cried bitterly.

The People Laugh at Jesus

⁶³“Some men were holding (*guarding*) Jesus. They made fun of Jesus like this: They covered his eyes so that he could not see them. Then they hit him and said, “Be a prophet* and tell us who hit you!” ⁶⁴“The men said many very bad things to Jesus.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet A person who spoke for God. He could tell things that most people could not know.

Jesus Before the Jewish Leaders

"The next morning, the older leaders of the people, the leading priests, and the teachers of the law came together. They led Jesus away to their highest court. "They said, "If you are the Christ,* then tell us that you are!"

Jesus said to them, "If I tell you I am the Christ, you will not believe me. "And if I ask you, you will not answer. "But beginning now, the Son of Man* will sit at the right side of God's throne."

"They all said, "Then are you the Son of God?" Jesus said to them, "Yes, you are right when you say that I am."

"They said, "Why do we need witnesses now? We ourselves heard him say this!"

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

23 Then the whole group stood up and led Jesus to Pilate.* "They began to accuse Jesus. They told Pilate, "We caught this man telling things that were confusing our people. He says we should not pay taxes to Caesar.* He calls himself the Christ,* a king."

"Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that is right."

"Pilate said to the leading priests and the people, "I find nothing wrong with this man."

"They said again and again, "But Jesus is making trouble with the people! He teaches all around Judea. He began in Galilee, and now he is here!"

Pilate Sends Jesus to Herod

"Pilate heard this and asked if Jesus was from Galilee. "Pilate learned that Jesus was under Herod's* authority. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time, so Pilate sent Jesus to

him. "When Herod saw Jesus, he was very happy. Herod had heard all about Jesus. So he had wanted to meet Jesus for a long time. Herod wanted to see a miracle.* So he hoped that Jesus would do a miracle. "Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus said nothing. "The leading priests and teachers of the law were standing there. They were shouting things against Jesus. "Then Herod and his soldiers laughed at Jesus. They made fun of Jesus by dressing him in clothes like kings wear. Then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. "In the past, Pilate and Herod had always been enemies. But on that day Herod and Pilate became friends.

Jesus Must Die

"Pilate called all the people together with the leading priests and the Jewish leaders. "Pilate said to them, "You brought this man (*Jesus*) to me. You said that he was making trouble among the people. But I judged him before you all. I found no wrong that he had done. Jesus is not guilty of the things you say. "Also, Herod* found nothing wrong with him; Herod sent Jesus back to us. Look, Jesus has done nothing wrong. He should not be killed. "So, after I punish him a little, I will let him go free." 17*

"But all the people shouted, "Kill him! Let Barabbas go free!" "Barabbas was a man that was in jail because he started a riot in the city. He had also killed some people.)

"Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free. So again Pilate told them that he would let Jesus go. "But they shouted again, "Kill him! Kill him on a cross!"

"A third time Pilate said to the people, "Why? What wrong has he done? He is not guilty. I can find no reason to kill him. So I will let him go free after I punish him a little."

"But the people continued to shout. They demanded that Jesus be killed on the cross. Their shouting became so loud that "Pilate

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Pilate Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

miracle An amazing work done by the power of God.

Verse 17 A few Greek copies of Luke add verse 17: "Every year at the Passover Festival, Pilate had to release one prisoner to the people."

decided to give them what they wanted. ²⁵The people wanted Barabbas to go free. Barabbas was in jail for starting a riot and for killing people. Pilate let Barabbas go free. And Pilate gave Jesus to the people to be killed. This is what the people wanted.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

²⁶The soldiers led Jesus away to be killed. At that same time, there was a man coming into the city from the fields. His name was Simon. Simon was from the city of Cyrene. The soldiers forced Simon to carry Jesus' cross and walk behind Jesus.

²⁷Many, many people followed Jesus. Some of the women were sad and crying. They felt sorry for Jesus. ²⁸But Jesus turned and said to the women, "Women of Jerusalem, don't cry for me. Cry for yourselves and for your children too! ²⁹The time is coming when people will say, 'Happy are the women that cannot have babies! Happy are the women that have no children to care for.' ³⁰Then the people will say to the mountain, 'Fall on us!' The people will say to the hills, 'Cover us!' ³¹If people act like this now when life is good, what will happen when bad times come?"

³²There were also two criminals led out with Jesus to be killed. ³³Jesus and the two criminals were led to a place called "The Skull." There the soldiers nailed Jesus to his cross. They also nailed the criminals to their crosses. They put one criminal beside Jesus on the right, and they put the other criminal beside Jesus on the left. ³⁴Jesus said, "Father, forgive these people, that are killing me. They don't know what they are doing."³⁵

The soldiers gambled with dice to decide who would get Jesus' clothes. ³⁶The people stood there watching Jesus. The Jewish leaders laughed at Jesus. They said, "If he is God's Chosen One, the Christ,* then let him save himself. He saved other people, didn't

he?"

³⁷Even the soldiers laughed at Jesus and teased him. They came to Jesus and offered him some wine. ³⁸The soldiers said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁹(At the top of the cross these words were written: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.")

⁴⁰One of the criminals began to shout very bad things at Jesus: "Aren't you the Christ? Then save yourself! And save us too!"

⁴¹But the other criminal stopped him. He said, "You should fear God! All of us will die soon! 'You and I are guilty; we should be killed because we did wrong. But this man (Jesus) has done nothing wrong!' ⁴²Then this criminal said to Jesus, 'Jesus, remember me when you begin your kingdom!'"

⁴³Then Jesus said to him, "Listen! What I say is true: Today you will be with me in Paradise*!"

Jesus Dies

⁴⁴It was about noon, but the whole area became dark until three o'clock in the afternoon. ⁴⁵There was no sun! The curtain in the temple* was torn into two pieces. ⁴⁶Jesus shouted, "Father, I give you my spirit." After Jesus said this, he died.

⁴⁷The army officer* there saw what happened. He praised God, saying, "I know this man was a good man!"

⁴⁸Many people had come out of the city to see this thing. When the people saw it, they felt very sorry and left. ⁴⁹The people who were close friends of Jesus were there. Also, there were some women that had followed Jesus from Galilee. They all stood far away from the cross and watched these things.

Paradise Place where good people go when they die.

curtain ... temple A curtain divided the "most holy place" from the other part of the temple, the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

If people ... come Literally, "If they do these things in the green tree, what will happen in the dry?"

Jesus ... doing Some early copies of Luke do not have these words.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Joseph of Arimathea

^{30,31} A man was there from the Jewish town of Arimathea. His name was Joseph. He was a good, religious man. He wanted the kingdom of God to come. Joseph was a member of the Jewish council. But he did not agree when the other Jewish leaders decided to kill Jesus. ³² Joseph went to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus. (Pilate let Joseph have the body.) ³³ So Joseph took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in cloth. Then he put Jesus' body in a tomb (grave) that was dug in a wall of rock. This tomb had never been used before. ³⁴ This was late on Preparation day.* When the sun went down, the Sabbath day* would begin.

³⁵ The women that had come from Galilee with Jesus followed Joseph. They saw the tomb. Inside they saw where the body of Jesus was put. ³⁶ Then the women left to prepare some sweet-smelling spices to put on Jesus' body.

On the Sabbath day* they rested. The law of Moses commanded all people to do this.

News That Jesus Has Risen from Death

24 Very early Sunday morning, the women came to the tomb (grave) where Jesus' body was laid. They brought the sweet-smelling spices they had prepared. ² A heavy stone had been put in the doorway to close the tomb. But the women found that the stone was rolled away. ³ They went in, but they did not find the Lord Jesus' body. ⁴ The women did not understand this. While they were wondering about it, two men (angels) in shining clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women were very afraid; they bowed their heads down. The two men said to the women, "Why are you looking for a living person here? This is a place for dead people! ⁶ Jesus is not here. He has risen from death! Do you remember what he said in Galilee? ⁷ Jesus said that the Son of Man* must be given to evil men, be killed on a cross, and

rise from death on the third day." ⁸ Then the women remembered the things that Jesus said.

⁹ The women left the tomb (grave) and went to the eleven apostles* and the other followers. The women told them everything that happened at the tomb. ¹⁰ These women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and some other women. These women told the apostles everything that happened. ¹¹ But the apostles did not believe what the women said. It sounded like crazy talk. ¹² But Peter got up and ran to the tomb to see if this was true. He looked in, but he saw only the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in. The cloth was lying there alone. Jesus was gone. ¹³ Peter went away to be alone, wondering what had happened.

On The Road to Emmaus

¹⁴ That same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a town named Emmaus. It is about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁵ They were talking about everything that had happened. ¹⁶ While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself came near and walked with them. ¹⁷ (But the two men were not allowed to recognize Jesus.) ¹⁸ Then Jesus said, "What are these things you are talking about while you walk?"

The two men stopped. Their faces looked very sad. ¹⁹ The one named Cleopas answered, "You must be the only man in Jerusalem who does not know what has just happened there."

²⁰ Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about?"

The men said to him, "It is about Jesus, the one from Nazareth. He was a prophet* from God to all the people. He said and did many powerful things. ²¹ Our leaders and the leading priests gave him away to be judged and killed. They nailed Jesus to a cross. ²² But we were hoping that Jesus would free Israel (the Jews). It has been three days since this happened. ²³ And today some of our women told us some

Preparation day Friday, the day before the Sabbath.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14, this is the name for the Messiah (Christ), the person God chose to save his people.

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

amazing things. Early this morning the women went to the tomb (*grave*) where the body of Jesus was laid. ²³But they did not find his body there. The women came and told us that they had seen two angels in a vision.* The angels said that Jesus was alive! ²⁴So some of our group went to the tomb too. It was just like the women said—the tomb was empty. We looked, but none of us saw him (*Jesus*)."

²⁵Then Jesus said to the two men, "You are foolish and slow to realize what is true. You should believe everything the prophets* said. ²⁶The prophets said that the Christ* must suffer these things before he enters his glory." ²⁷Then Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures.* Jesus started with the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had said about him.

²⁸They came near the town of Emmaus and Jesus acted like he did not plan to stop there. ²⁹But they wanted him to stay. They begged him, "Stay with us. It is late; it is almost night." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰Jesus sat down with them and took some bread. He gave thanks for the food and divided it. Then he gave it to them. ³¹At that time, the men were allowed to recognize Jesus. But when they saw who he was, he disappeared. ³²The two men said to each other, "When Jesus talked to us on the road, it felt like a fire burning in us. It was exciting when he explained the true meaning of the Scriptures.*"

³³So the two men got up then and went back to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem they found the followers of Jesus meeting together. The eleven apostles* and those people that were with them ³⁴said, "The Lord (*Jesus*) really has risen from death! He showed himself to Simon (*Peter*)."

³⁵Then the two men told the things that had happened on the road. They talked about how

they recognized Jesus when he divided the bread.

Jesus Appears to His Followers

¹While the two men were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among the group of followers. Jesus said to them, "Peace be with you."

²This surprised the followers. They became afraid. They thought they were seeing a ghost. ³But Jesus said, "Why are you troubled? Why do you doubt what you see? ⁴Look at my hands and my feet. It is really me! Touch me. You can see that I have a living body; a ghost does not have a body like this."

⁵After Jesus told them this, he showed them the holes in, his hands and feet. ⁶The followers were amazed and very, very happy to see that Jesus was alive. They still could not believe what they saw. Jesus said to them, "Do you have any food here?" ⁷They gave him a piece of cooked fish. ⁸While the followers watched, Jesus took the fish and ate it.

⁹Jesus said to them, "Remember when I was with you before? I said that everything written about me must happen—everything written in the law of Moses, the books of the prophets,* and the Psalms."

¹⁰Then Jesus explained all the Scriptures* to the followers. Jesus helped them understand the things written about him. ¹¹Then Jesus said to them, "It is written that the Christ* would be killed and rise from death on the third day."

¹²You saw these things happen—you are witnesses. You must go and tell people that their sins can be forgiven. Tell them that they must change their hearts and be sorry for their sins. If they will do this, then God will forgive them. You must start from Jerusalem and preach these things in my name. This Good News must be told to all people in the world.

¹³Listen! My Father has promised you something; I will send it to you. But you must stay in Jerusalem until you have received that power from heaven."

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

prophets Men who spoke for God. Some of them wrote books that are in the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

Jesus Goes Back to Heaven

^aJesus led his followers out of Jerusalem almost to Bethany. Jesus raised his hands and blessed his followers. ^aWhile Jesus was

blessing them, he was separated from them and carried into heaven. ^aThe followers worshiped him there. Then they went back to the city. They were very happy. ^aThey stayed at the temple* all the time, praising God.

John

Christ Comes to the World

1 Before the world began, the Word* was there. The Word was there with God. The Word was God. ²He was there with God in the beginning. ³All things were made through him (*the Word*). Nothing was made without him. ⁴In him there was life. That life was light (*understanding, goodness*) for the people of the world. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness. But the darkness did not defeat* the Light.

⁶There was a man named John.* He was sent by God. ⁷John came to tell people about the Light (*Christ*). Through John all people could hear about the Light, and believe. ⁸John was not the Light. But John came to tell people about the Light. ⁹The true Light was coming into the world. This is the true Light that gives light to all people.

¹⁰The Word* was already in the world. The world was made through him. But the world (*people*) did not know him. ¹¹He came to the world that was his own. But his own people did not accept him. ¹²Some people did accept him. They believed in him. He gave something to those people who believed. He gave them the right to become children of God. ¹³These children were not born like little babies are born. They were not born from the wish or plan of a mother and, father. These children were born from God.

Word The Greek word is "logos," meaning any kind of communication. It could be translated "message." Here, it means Christ—the way God told people about himself.

defeat Or, "understand."

John John the Baptizer, who preached to people about Christ's coming (Read Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

¹⁴The Word* became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory—the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace (*kindness*) and truth. ¹⁵John told people about him. John said, "This is the One I was talking about. I said, 'The One who comes after me is greater than I am. He was living before me.'"

¹⁶The Word* (*Christ*) was full of grace and truth. From him we all received more and more blessings. ¹⁷The law was given through Moses. But grace and, the way of, truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No man has ever seen God. But the only Son (*Jesus*) is God. He is very close to the Father* (*God*). And the Son has shown us what God is like.

John Tells People About Jesus

¹⁹The Jews in Jerusalem sent some priests and Levites* to John.* The Jews sent them to ask, "Who are you?"

²⁰John spoke freely. John did not refuse to answer. John said clearly, "I am not the Christ.*" That is what John told people.

²¹The Jews asked John, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah*?"

But ... Father Or, "But the only God is very close to the Father." Some Greek copies say, "But the only Son is very close to the Father."

Levites Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Elijah A prophet who lived about 850 B.C. The Jews expected Elijah to return before the Messiah would come. See Mal. 4:5-6.

John answered, "No, I am not Elijah."

The Jews asked, "Are you the Prophet?"

John answered, "No, I am not the Prophet."

²²Then the Jews said, "Who are you? Tell us about yourself. Give us an answer to tell the people who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

²³John told them the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I am the voice of a person shouting in the desert:

'Make a straight road ready for the Lord.'"

Isaiah 40:3

²⁴These Jews were sent from the Pharisees.*

²⁵These men said to John: "You say you are not the Christ.* You say you are not Elijah* or the Prophet.* Then why do you baptize* people?"

²⁶John answered, "I baptize people with water. But there is a person here with you that you don't know. ²⁷That person is the One who comes after me. I am not good enough to untie the strings on his shoes."

²⁸These things all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan River. This is where John was baptizing people.

²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him. John said, "Look, the Lamb of God.* He takes away the sins of the world!"

³⁰This is the One I was talking about. I said, 'A man will come after me, but he is greater than I am, because he was living before me—he has always lived.' ³¹Even I did not know who he was. But I came baptizing* people with water so that Israel (*the Jews*) could know that Jesus is the Christ.*

Prophet This probably meant the prophet that God told Moses he would send (Deut. 18:15-19).

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.
Elijah A prophet who lived about 850 B.C. The Jews expected Elijah to return before the Messiah would come. See Mal. 4:5-6.

baptize, baptizing Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

Lamb of God Name for Jesus. Jesus is like the lambs that were offered for a sacrifice to God.

³²⁻³³Then John said, "I also did not know who the Christ was. But God sent me to baptize* people with water. And God told me, 'You will see the Spirit come down and rest on a man. That man is the One who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.*' " John said, "I have seen this happen. I saw the Spirit come down from heaven. The Spirit looked like a dove and sat on him (*Jesus*). ³⁴So this is what I tell people: 'He (*Jesus*) is the Son of God.'"

The First Followers of Jesus

³⁵The next day John was there again. John had two of his followers with him. ³⁶John saw Jesus walking by. John said, "Look, the Lamb of God*!"

³⁷The two followers heard John say this, so they followed Jesus. ³⁸Jesus turned and saw the two men following him. Jesus asked, "What do you want?"

The two men said, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" ("Rabbi" means "Teacher.")

³⁹Jesus answered, "Come with me and you will see." So the two men went with Jesus. They saw the place where Jesus stayed. They stayed there with Jesus that day. It was about four o'clock.

⁴⁰These two men followed Jesus after they heard about Jesus from John. One of these two men was named Andrew. Andrew was Simon Peter's brother. "The first thing Andrew did was to go find his brother, Simon. Andrew said to Simon, 'We have found the Messiah.'" ("Messiah" means "Christ."*)

⁴¹Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon and said, "You are Simon, the son of John. You will be called Cephas." ("Cephas" means "Peter."*)

⁴²The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. Jesus found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." "Philip was from the town of Bethsaida, the same as Andrew and Peter. "Philip found Nathaniel and told him,

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

Peter The Greek name "Peter," like the Aramaic name "Cephas," means "rock."

"Remember what Moses wrote in the law. Moses wrote about a man that was coming. The prophets* wrote about him too. We have found him. His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph. He is from Nazareth."

"But Nathaniel said to Philip, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Philip answered, "Come and see."

"Jesus saw Nathaniel coming toward him. Jesus said, "This man coming is truly one of God's people.* There is nothing false in him."

"Nathaniel asked, "How do you know me?"

Jesus answered, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree. That was before Philip told you about me."

"Then Nathaniel said to Jesus, "Rabbi (*Teacher*), you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel (*the Jews*)."

"Jesus said to Nathaniel, "I told you that I saw you under the fig tree. That is why you believe in me. But you will see much greater things than that!"* Jesus also said, "I tell you the truth. You will all see heaven open. You will see 'angels of God going up and coming down'* on the Son of Man.*"

The Wedding at Cana

2 Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. At the wedding there was not enough wine. After the wine was all gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

"Jesus answered, "Dear woman, you should not tell me what to do. My time has not yet come."

"Jesus' mother said to the servants, "Do what Jesus tells you to do."

"In that place there were six large waterpots made of stone. The Jews used waterpots like

these in their washing ceremonies.* Each waterpot held about 20 or 30 gallons.

"Jesus said to the servants, "Fill those waterpots with water." So the servants filled the pots to the top.

"Then Jesus said to the servants, "Now take out some water. Carry the water to the master of the feast."

So the servants brought the water to the master. Then the man in charge of the wedding feast tasted it, but the water had become wine. The man did not know where the wine came from. But the servants that brought the water knew where it came from. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom.* "He said to the bridegroom, "People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have become drunk, people serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine until now."

"This was the first miracle* that Jesus did. Jesus did this miracle in the town of Cana in Galilee. So Jesus showed his greatness. And his followers believed in him.

Jesus in the Temple

"Then Jesus went to the town of Capernaum. Jesus' mother and brothers and his followers went with him. They all stayed in Capernaum a few days. "It was almost time for the Jewish Passover* So Jesus went to Jerusalem. "In Jerusalem Jesus went to the temple.* In the temple Jesus found men selling cattle, sheep, and doves. Jesus saw other men sitting at tables. These men were exchanging and trading people's money. "Jesus made a whip with some pieces of rope. Then Jesus forced all these men and the sheep and cattle to leave the temple. Jesus turned over the tables and scattered the money of the men that

washing ceremonies The Jews had religious rules about washing in special ways before eating, before worshipping in the temple, and at other special times.

bridegroom A man ready to be married.

miracle An amazing work done by the power of God.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophets Men who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

one of God's people Literally, "an Israelite."

'angels ... down' Quote from Gen. 28:12.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

exchange money. ¹⁴Then Jesus said to the men that were selling pigeons, "Take these things out of here! Don't make my Father's house a place for buying and selling!"

¹⁵When this happened the followers of Jesus remembered what was written in the Scriptures*:

"My excitement for your house
will destroy me."

Psalm 69:9

¹⁶The Jews said to Jesus, "Show us a miracle* for a sign. Prove that you have the right to do these things."

¹⁷Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple and I will build it again in three days."

¹⁸The Jews answered, "People worked 46 years to build this temple! Do you really believe you can build it again in three days?"

¹⁹(But the temple Jesus meant was his own body. ²⁰After Jesus was raised from death, his followers remembered that Jesus had said this. So his followers believed the Scripture* about him, and they believed the words Jesus said.)

²¹Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover* festival. Many people believed in Jesus because they saw the miracles* he did. ²²But Jesus did not trust them. Why? Because Jesus knew the things people were thinking. ²³Jesus did not need any person to tell him about people. Jesus knew what was in a person's mind.

Jesus and Nicodemus

3 There was a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees.* He was an important Jewish leader. ²One night Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus said, "Rabbi (*Teacher*), we know that you are a teacher sent from God. No person can do these miracles* that you do without God's help."

³Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. A person must be born again. If a person is not born again, then that person cannot be in God's kingdom."

⁴Nicodemus said, "But if a man is already old, how can he be born again? A person cannot enter his mother's body again! So a person cannot be born a second time!"

⁵But Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. A person must be born from water and the Spirit.* If a person is not born from water and the Spirit, then he cannot enter God's kingdom. ⁶A person's body is born from his human parents. But a person's spiritual life is born from the Spirit. ⁷Don't be surprised that I told you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows where it wants to go. You hear the wind blow. But you don't know where the wind comes from or where the wind is going. It is the same with every person that is born from the Spirit."

⁹Nicodemus asked, "How can all this be possible?"

¹⁰Jesus said, "You are an important teacher of Israel (*the Jews*). But you still don't understand these things? ¹¹I tell you the truth. We talk about what we know. We tell about what we have seen. But you people don't accept what we tell you. ¹²I have told you about things here on earth. But you do not believe me. So surely you will not believe me if I tell you about the things of heaven! ¹³The only one that has ever gone up to heaven is the One that came down from heaven—the Son of Man*"

¹⁴"Moses lifted up the snake in the desert.* It is the same with the Son of Man. The Son of Man must be lifted up too. ¹⁵Then every person that believes in the Son of Man can have life forever."

¹⁶Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son. God gave his Son so that every person that believes in him would not be

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

Scripture A part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Moses ... desert When God's people were dying from snake bites, God told Moses to put a brass snake on a pole for them to look at and be healed. Read Num. 21:4-9.

lost, but have life forever. "God sent his Son into the world. God did not send his Son to judge the world guilty. God sent his Son so that the world could be saved through his Son. "The person that believes in God's Son is not judged (*condemned*). But the person that does not believe is already judged. Why? Because that person has not believed in God's only Son. "People are judged by this fact: The Light (*goodness*) has come into the world. But men did not want light. They wanted darkness (*sin*). Why? Because they were doing evil things. "Every person that does evil hates the light. That person will not come to the light. Why? Because then the light will show all the bad things he has done. "But the person that follows the true way comes to the light. Then the light will show that the things that person has done were done through God.*

Jesus and John the Baptizer

"After this, Jesus and his followers went into the area of Judea. There Jesus stayed with his followers and baptized* people. "John was also baptizing people in Aenon. Aenon is near Salim. John was baptizing there because there was plenty of water. People were going there to be baptized. "This happened before John was put into prison.)

"Some of John's followers had an argument with another Jew. They were arguing about religious washing.* "So the followers came to John. They said, "Rabbi (*Teacher*), remember the man that was with you on the other side of the Jordan River? He is the man you were telling people about. That man is baptizing* people, and many people are going to him."

"John answered, "A man can get only what God gives him. "You yourselves heard me say, 'I am not the Christ.* I am only the one that

God sent to prepare the way for him.' "The bride belongs only to the bridegroom.* The friend that helps the bridegroom waits and listens for the bridegroom to come. This friend is very happy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That is the same pleasure I have. And my time of joy is now here. "He (*Jesus*) must become greater. And I must become less important.

The One That Comes from Heaven

"The One (*Jesus*) that comes from above is greater than all other people. The person that is from the earth belongs to the earth. That person talks about things that are on the earth. But the One (*Jesus*) that comes from heaven is greater than all other people. "He (*Jesus*) tells what he has seen and heard. But people don't accept what he says. "The person that accepts what he (*Jesus*) says has given proof that God is true. "God sent him (*Jesus*). And he tells the things that God says. God gives him, the Spirit* fully. "The Father loves the Son. The Father has given the Son power over everything. "The person that believes in the Son has life forever. But the person that does not obey the Son will never have that life. God's anger stays with that person."

Jesus Talks to a Woman in Samaria

4 The Pharisees* heard that Jesus was making and baptizing* more followers than John. "But really Jesus himself did not baptize people. His followers baptized people for him.) Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard about him. "So Jesus left Judea and went back to Galilee. "On the way to Galilee Jesus had to go through the country of Samaria.

"In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sychar. This town is near the field that Jacob

Verses 16-21 Some scholars think verses 16-21 are Jesus' words. Others think John wrote them.

baptized, baptizing Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

religious washing The Jews had religious rules about washing in special ways before eating, before worshipping in the temple, and at other special times.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

bridegroom A man ready to be married.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

gave to his son Joseph. "Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip. So Jesus sat down beside the well. It was about noon. "A Samaritan* woman came to that well to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink of water." " (This happened while Jesus' followers were in town buying some food.)

"The Samaritan woman answered, "I am surprised that you ask me for a drink! You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman!" (Jews are not friends with Samaritans.*)"

"Jesus answered, "You don't know about the thing God gives. And you don't know who I am that asked you for a drink. If you knew these things, you would have asked me and I would have given you living water."

"The woman said, "Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with. "Are you greater than Jacob our father (ancestor)? Jacob is the one that gave us this well. He drank from it himself. Also, his sons and all his animals drank water from this well."

"Jesus answered, "Every person that drinks this water will be thirsty again. "But the person that drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. That water I give will become like a spring of water flowing inside that person. That water will bring that person life forever."

"The woman said to Jesus, "Sir, give me this water. Then I will never be thirsty again. And I will not have to come back here to get more water."

"Jesus told her, "Go get your husband and come back here."

"The woman answered, "But I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You are right to say you have no husband. "Really you have had five husbands. But the man you live with now is not your husband. You told me the truth."

"The woman said, "Sir, I can see that you

are a prophet.* "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain. But you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where people must worship."

"Jesus said, "Believe me, woman! The time is coming when you will not have to be in Jerusalem or on that mountain to worship the Father (God). "You Samaritans worship something that you don't understand. We Jews understand what we worship. Salvation comes from the Jews. "The time is coming when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. That time is now here. And those are the kind of people the Father wants to be his worshipers. "God is spirit. So the people that worship God must worship in spirit and truth."

"The woman said, "I know that the Messiah is coming." (Messiah is the One called Christ.*)" "When the Messiah comes, he will explain everything to us."

"Then Jesus said, "That person is talking to you now. I am, the Messiah."

"At that time Jesus' followers came back from town. They were surprised because they saw Jesus talking with a woman. But none of them asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

"Then the woman left her water and went back to town. She told the people in town, "A man told me everything I have ever done. Come see him. Maybe he is the Christ.*" "So the people left the town and went to see Jesus."

"While the woman was in town Jesus' followers were begging him, "Teacher, eat something!"

"But Jesus answered, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

"So the followers asked themselves, "Did somebody already bring Jesus some food?"

"Jesus said, "My food is to do what the One (God) who sent me wants me to do. My food is to finish the work that he gave me to do."

"When you plant, you always say, 'Four more months to wait before we gather the grain.' But I tell you, open your eyes. Look at the people. They are like, fields ready for harvesting now.

Samaritan From Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but the Jews did not accept them.

Jews ... Samaritans This can also mean, "Jews don't use things that Samaritans have used."

prophet A person who spoke for God. He could tell things that most people could not know.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

*Even now, the person that harvests the crop is being paid. He is gathering crops for eternal life. So now the person that plants can be happy together with the person that harvests. "It is true when we say, 'One person plants, but another person harvests the crop.' "I sent you to harvest a crop that you did not work for. Other people did the work, and you get the profit from their work."

"Many of the Samaritan people in that town believed in Jesus. They believed because of what the woman had told them about Jesus. She had told them, 'He (Jesus) told me everything I have ever done.' "The Samaritans went to Jesus. They begged Jesus to stay with them. So Jesus stayed there two days. "Many more people believed because of the things Jesus said.

"The people said to the woman, "First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know now that he really is the one that will save the world."

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

"Two days later Jesus left and went to Galilee. "(Jesus had said before that a prophet* is not respected in his own country.) "When Jesus arrived in Galilee, the people there welcomed him. These people had seen all the things Jesus did at the Passover,* festival in Jerusalem. These people had been at the festival too.

"Jesus went to visit Cana in Galilee again. Cana is where Jesus had changed the water into wine. One of the king's important officials lived in the city of Capernaum. This man's son was sick. "The man heard that Jesus had come from Judea and was now in Galilee. So the man went to Jesus in Cana. He begged Jesus to come to Capernaum and heal his son. His son was almost dead. "Jesus said to him, "You people must see miracles* and wonderful

works before you will believe in me."

"The king's official said, "Sir, come to my house, before my little son dies."

*Jesus answered, "Go. Your son will live."

The man believed what Jesus told him and went home. "On the way home the man's servants came and met him. They told him, "Your son is well."

"The man asked, "What time did my son begin to get well?"

The servants answered, "It was about one o'clock yesterday when the fever left him."

"The father knew that one o'clock was the same time that Jesus had said, "Your son will live." So the man and all the people in his home believed in Jesus.

That was the second miracle that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Jesus Heals a Man at a Pool

5 Later Jesus went to Jerusalem for a special Jewish festival. "In Jerusalem there is a pool with five covered porches. In the Jewish language* it is called Bethzatha.* This pool is near the Sheep Gate. "Many sick people were lying on the porches beside the pool. Some of the people were blind, some were crippled, and some were paralyzed.* "There was a man lying there who had been sick for 38 years. "Jesus saw the man lying there. Jesus knew that the man had been sick for a very long time. So Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to be well?"

"The sick man answered, "Sir, there is no person to help me get into the water when the water starts moving. I try to be the first person into the water. But when I try, another person always goes in before I can."

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

Bethzatha Also called Bethesda or Bethesda, a pool of water north of the temple in Jerusalem.

Verse 3 Some Greek copies add "and they waited for the water to move." A few later copies add verse 4: "Sometimes an angel of the Lord came down to the pool and shook the water. After the angel did this, the first person to go into the pool was healed from any sickness he had."

prophet A person who spoke for God.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

¹Then Jesus said, "Stand up! Pick up your bed and walk." ²Then immediately the man was well. The man picked up his bed and started walking.

The day all this happened was a Sabbath day.* ¹⁰So the Jews said to the man that had been healed, "Today is the Sabbath. It is against our law for you to carry your bed on the Sabbath day."

¹¹But the man answered, "The person (*Jesus*) that made me well told me, 'Pick up your bed and walk.'"

¹²The Jews asked the man, "Who is the person that told you to pick up your bed and walk?"

¹³But the man that had been healed did not know who the person was. There were many people in that place, and Jesus had left.

¹⁴Later Jesus found the man at the temple.* Jesus said to him, "See, you are well now. But stop sinning or something worse may happen to you!"

¹⁵Then the man left and went back to those Jews. The man told them that Jesus was the one that made him well.

¹⁶Jesus was doing these things (*healing*) on the Sabbath day.* So the Jews began to do bad things to Jesus. ¹⁷But Jesus said to the Jews, "My Father never stops working. And so I work too."

¹⁸This made the Jews try harder to kill him. The Jews said, "First Jesus was breaking the law about the Sabbath day. Then he said that God is his Father! He is making himself equal with God!"

Jesus Has God's Authority

¹⁹But Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. The Son can do nothing alone. The Son does only what he sees his Father doing. The Son does the same things that the Father does. ²⁰The Father loves the Son, and the Father shows the Son all the things he does. (This man was healed.) But the Father will show the Son

greater things than this to do. Then you will all be amazed. ²¹The Father raises dead people and gives them life. In the same way, the Son gives life to the people he wants to. ²²Also, the Father judges no one. But the Father has given the Son power to do all the judging. ²³God did this so that all people will respect the Son the same as they respect the Father. If a person does not respect the Son, then that person does not respect the Father. The Father is the One who sent the Son.

²⁴"I tell you the truth. If a person hears what I say and believes in the One who sent me, that person has life forever. That person will not be judged guilty. He has already left death and has entered into life. ²⁵I tell you the truth: An important time is coming. That time is already here. People that are dead in sin will hear the voice of the Son of God. And the people that accept the things they hear from the Son will have life forever. ²⁶Life comes from the Father (*God*) himself. So the Father has also allowed the Son (*Jesus*) to give life. ²⁷And the Father has given the Son the power to judge all people. Why? Because that Son is the Son of Man. ²⁸Don't be surprised at this. A time is coming when all people that are dead and in their graves will hear his voice. ²⁹Then they will come out of their graves. The people that did good in life will rise and have life forever. But the people that did evil will rise to be judged guilty.

Jesus Continues Talking to the Jews

³⁰"I can do nothing alone. I judge only the way I am told. So my judgment is right. Why? Because I don't try to please myself. But I want to please the One (*God*) who sent me.

³¹"If I tell people about myself, then people cannot accept those things I say about myself. ³²But there is another person that tells people about me. And I know that the things he says about me are true.

³³"You have sent men to John. And he has told you about the truth. ³⁴I don't need a man to

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

tell people about me. But I tell you these things so that you can be saved. "John was like a lamp that burned and gave light. And you were happy to enjoy his light for a while.

"But I have a proof about myself that is greater than John. The things I do are my proof. These are the things my Father gave me to do. These things show that the Father sent me. "And the Father that sent me has given proof about me himself. But you have never heard his voice. You have never seen what he looks like. "The Father's teaching does not live in you. Why? Because you don't believe in the One the Father sent. "You carefully study the Scriptures.* You think that those Scriptures give you life forever. Those same Scriptures tell about me! "But you refuse to come to me to have that life, you want,.

"I don't want praise from men. "But I know you—I know that you don't have God's love in you. "I have come from my Father—I speak for him. But you don't accept me. But when another person comes speaking only for himself, you will accept him. "You like to have praise from each other. But you never try to get the praise that comes from the only God. So how can you believe? "Don't think that I will stand before the Father and say that you are wrong. Moses is the person that says that you are wrong. And Moses is the one that you hoped would save you. "If you really believed Moses, you would believe me. Why? Because Moses wrote about me. "But you don't believe what Moses wrote. So you cannot believe the things I say."

Jesus Feeds More than 5,000 People

6 Later, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or, Lake Tiberias). "Many people followed Jesus. They followed him because they saw the ways Jesus showed his power by healing the sick people. "Jesus went up on the side of the hill. He sat there with his followers. "It was

almost the time for the Jewish Passover Festival.*

"Jesus looked up and saw many people coming toward him. Jesus said to Philip, "Where can we buy enough bread for all these people to eat?" "Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do.)

"Philip answered, "We would all have to work a month to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece."

"Another follower there was Andrew. Andrew was Simon Peter's brother. Andrew said, "Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people."

"Jesus said, "Tell the people to sit down." This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men that sat down there. "Then Jesus held the loaves of bread. Jesus thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people that were sitting down. He did the same with the fish. Jesus gave the people as much as they wanted.

"All the people had enough to eat. When they finished Jesus said to his followers, "Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don't waste anything." "So the followers gathered up the pieces that were left. The people had started eating with only five loaves of barley bread. But the followers filled twelve large baskets with the pieces of food that were left.

"The people saw this miracle* that Jesus did. The people said, "He must truly be the Prophet* that is coming into the world."

"Jesus knew that the people wanted him to become king. The people planned to come get Jesus and make him their king. So Jesus left and went into the hills alone.

Passover Festival Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

miracle An amazing work done by the power of God.

Prophet They probably meant the prophet that God told Moses he would send (Deut. 18:15-19).

Jesus Walks on the Water

"That evening Jesus' followers went down to the lake (*Lake Galilee*). "It was dark now and Jesus had not yet come back to them. The followers got into a boat and started going across the lake to Capernaum. "The wind was blowing very hard. The waves on the lake were becoming bigger. "They rowed the boat about three or four miles. Then they saw Jesus. He was walking on the water. He was coming to the boat. The followers were afraid. "But Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid. It's me." "After Jesus said this, the followers were happy to take Jesus into the boat. Then the boat came to land at the place where they wanted to go.

The People Seek Jesus

"The next day came. Some people had stayed on the other side of the lake. These people knew that Jesus did not go with his followers in the boat. The people knew that Jesus' followers had left in the boat alone. And they knew that it was the only boat that was there. "But then some boats from Tiberias came. The boats landed near the place where the people had eaten (the day before). This was where they had eaten the bread after the Lord (*Jesus*) gave thanks. "The people saw that Jesus and his followers were not there now. So the people got into the boats and went to Capernaum. They wanted to find Jesus.

Jesus, the Bread of Life

"The people found Jesus on the other side of the lake. They asked Jesus, "Teacher, when did you come here?"

"Jesus answered, "Why are you looking for me? Are you looking for me because you saw me do miracles* that prove my power? No! I tell you the truth. You are looking for me because you ate the bread and you were satisfied (*full*). "Earthly food spoils and ruins. So don't work to get that kind of food. But work to get the food that stays good always and

gives you life forever. The Son of Man* will give you that food. God the Father showed that he is with the Son of Man."

"The people asked Jesus, "What are the things God wants us to do?"

"Jesus answered, "The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent."

"So the people asked, "What miracle* will you do to prove that you are the One God sent? If we can see you do a miracle, then we will believe you. What will you do? "Our fathers (*ancestors*) ate the manna (*food*) God gave them in the desert. This is written in the Scriptures*: 'God gave them bread from heaven to eat.'* "

"Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Moses was not the one that gave your people bread from heaven. But my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. "What is the bread of God? God's bread is the One that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"The people said, "Sir, give us this bread always."

"Then Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. The person that comes to me will never be hungry. The person that believes in me will never be thirsty. "I told you before that you have seen me, and still you don't believe. "The Father gives me my people. Every one of those people will come to me. I will always accept every person that comes to me. "I came down from heaven to do what God wants me to do. I did not come to do what I want to do. "I must not lose any person that God has given me. But I must raise up those people on the last day. This is what the One who sent me wants me to do. "Every person that sees the Son and believes in him has life forever. I will raise up that person on the last day. This is what my Father wants."

"The Jews began to complain about Jesus. They complained because Jesus said, "I am the bread that comes down from heaven." "The

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

'God ... eat' Quote from Ps. 78:24.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

Jews said, "This is Jesus. We know his father and mother. Jesus is only Joseph's son. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

"But Jesus answered, "Stop complaining to each other. "The Father is the One who sent me. And the Father is the One who brings people to me. I will raise up those people on the last day. If the Father does not bring a person to me, then that person cannot come to me. "It is written in the prophets*: 'God will teach all the people.* People listen to the Father and learn from him. Those people come to me. "The only person that has seen the Father is the One that came from him. No other person has ever seen the Father. "I tell you the truth. If a person believes, then that person has life forever. "I am the bread that gives life. "Your ancestors ate the manna (food) God gave them in the desert. But like all people, they died. "I am, that bread that comes down from heaven. If a person eats this bread, he will never die. "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a person eats this bread, then that person will live forever. This bread is my body. I will give my body so that the people in the world can have life."

"Then the Jews began to argue among themselves. They said, "How can this man give us his body to eat?"

"Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, you must eat the body of the Son of Man.* And you must drink his blood. If you don't do this, then you don't have real life in you. "The person that eats my body and drinks my blood has eternal life. I will raise up that person on the last day. "My body is true food. My blood is true drink. "If a person eats my body and drinks my blood, then that person lives in me, and I live in that person. "The Father sent me. The Father lives, and I live because of the Father. So the person that eats me will live because of me. "I am not like the bread that our ancestors ate in the desert. They ate that bread. But, like all

people, they died. I am the bread that came down from heaven. The person that eats this bread will live forever." "Jesus said all these things while he was teaching in the synagogue* in the city of Capernaum.

The Words of Eternal Life

"The followers of Jesus heard this. Many of the followers said, "This teaching is hard to accept. Who can accept this teaching?"

"Jesus knew that his followers were complaining about this. So Jesus said, "Does this teaching bother you? "Then will it also bother you to see the Son of Man* going back to the place where he came from? "It is not the body that gives a person life. It is the spirit that gives life. The things I told you are spirit. And so these things give life. "But some of you don't believe." (Jesus knew the people that did not believe. Jesus knew this from the beginning. And Jesus knew the person that would turn against him.) "Jesus said, "That is why I said, 'If the Father does not let a person come to me, then that person cannot come.'"

"After Jesus said these things, many of his followers left him. They stopped following Jesus.

"Jesus asked the twelve apostles,* "Do you want to leave too?"

"Simon Peter answered Jesus, "Lord, where would we go? You have the things that give life forever. "We believe in you. We know that you are the Holy One from God."

"Then Jesus answered, "I chose all twelve of you. But one of you is a devil."

"Jesus was talking about Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Judas was one of the twelve apostles.* But later Judas would turn against Jesus.

Jesus and His Brothers

7 After this, Jesus traveled around the country of Galilee. Jesus did not want to travel in Judea, because the Jews there wanted

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

'God ... people' Quote from Is. 54:13.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

to kill him.² It was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters.*³ So Jesus' brothers said to him, "You should leave here and go to the festival in Judea. Then your followers there can see the miracles* you do." If a person wants the people to know him, then that person must not hide the things he does. Show yourself to the world. Let them see these things (*miracles*) you do."⁴ (Even Jesus' brothers did not believe in him.) Jesus said to his brothers, "The right time for me has not yet come. But any time is right for you to go. The world cannot hate you. But the world hates me. Why? Because I tell the people in the world that they do evil things. So you go to the festival. I will not go to the festival now. The right time for me has not yet come." After Jesus said this, he stayed in Galilee.

So Jesus' brothers left to go to the festival. After they left, Jesus went too. But Jesus did not let people see him.⁵ At the festival the Jews were looking for Jesus. The Jews said, "Where is that man?"

There was a large group of people there. Many of these people were talking to each other about Jesus. Some people said, "He is a good man."

But other people said, "No, he fools the people." But none of the people were brave enough to talk about Jesus openly. The people were afraid of the Jewish leaders.

Jesus Teaches in Jerusalem

The festival* was about half finished. Then Jesus went to the temple* and began to teach. The Jews were amazed. They said, "This man has never studied in school. How did he learn so much?"

Jesus answered, "The things I teach are not my own. My teaching comes from him (God) who sent me." If a person wants to do what God wants, then that person will know that my

teaching comes from God. That person will know that this teaching is not my own. The person that teaches his own ideas is trying to get honor for himself. But the person that tries to bring honor to the one that sent him—that person speaks the truth. There is nothing false in him. Moses gave you the law.* Right? But none of you obey that law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

The people answered, "A demon* has come into you and made you crazy! We are not trying to kill you."

Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle* and you are all amazed. Moses gave you the law about circumcision.* (But really Moses did not give you circumcision. Circumcision came from our people that lived before Moses.) So sometimes you circumcise a baby on a Sabbath day.* This shows that a person can be circumcised on a Sabbath day to obey the law of Moses. So why are you angry at me for healing a person's whole body on the Sabbath day? Stop judging by the way things look. Be fair and judge by what is really right."

The People Wonder If Jesus Is the Christ

Then some of the people that lived in Jerusalem said, "This is the man they are trying to kill. But he is teaching where everyone can see and hear him. And no person is trying to stop him from teaching. Maybe the leaders have decided that he really is the Christ.* But we know where this man's home is. And when the real Christ comes, no person will know where he comes from."

Jesus was still teaching in the temple.* Jesus said, "Yes, you know me and you know where I am from. But I have not come by my own authority. I was sent by the One (God)

law Moses gave God's people the law that God gave him on Mount Sinai (Ex. 34:29-32).

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Festival of Shelters Special week each year when the Jews lived in tents to remember that their people wandered in the desert 40 years during the time of Moses.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

festival The Festival of Shelters. See footnote on verse 2.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

who is true. You don't know him. ²⁹But I know him and I am from him. He sent me."

³⁰When Jesus said this, the people tried to get him. But no person was able to touch Jesus. It was not yet the right time for Jesus to be killed. ³¹But many of the people believed in Jesus. The people said, "We are waiting for the Christ* to come. When the Christ comes, will he do more miracles* than this man (*Jesus*) has done? No! So this man must be the Christ."

The Jews Try to Arrest Jesus

³²The Pharisees* heard these things the people were saying about Jesus. So the leading priests and the Pharisees sent some temple police to arrest Jesus. ³³Then Jesus said, "I will be with you people a little while longer. Then I will go back to the One (*God*) who sent me. ³⁴You will look for me, but you will not find me. And you cannot come where I am."

³⁵The Jews said to each other, "Where will this man go that we cannot find him? Will he go to the Greek cities where our people live? Will he teach the Greek people there? ³⁶This man (*Jesus*) says, 'You will look for me but you will not find me.' He also says, 'You cannot come where I am.' What does this mean?"

Jesus Talks About the Holy Spirit

³⁷The last day of the festival came. It was the most important day. On that day Jesus stood and said with a loud voice, "If a person is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸If a person believes in me, rivers of living water will flow out from his heart. That is what the Scripture* says." ³⁹Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit.* The Spirit had not yet been given to people, because Jesus had not yet died and, been raised to glory. But later, those

people that believed in Jesus would receive the Spirit.

The People Argue About Jesus

⁴⁰The people heard these things that Jesus said. Some of the people said, "This man really is the Prophet.*"

⁴¹Other people said, "He is the Christ.*"

Other people said, "The Christ will not come from Galilee. ⁴²The Scripture* says that the Christ will come from the family of David.* And the Scripture says that the Christ will come from Bethlehem, the town where David lived." ⁴³So the people did not agree with each other about Jesus. ⁴⁴Some of the people wanted to arrest Jesus. But no person tried to do this.

The Jewish Leaders Refuse to Believe

⁴⁵The temple* police went back to the leading priests and the Pharisees.* The priests and the Pharisees asked, "Why did you not bring Jesus?"

⁴⁶The temple police answered, "The things he says are greater than the words of any man!"

⁴⁷The Pharisees* answered, "So Jesus has fooled you too! ⁴⁸Have any of the leaders believed in Jesus? No! Have any of us Pharisees believed in him? No! ⁴⁹But those people out there, know nothing about the law.* They are under God's curse!"

⁵⁰But Nicodemus was there in that group. Nicodemus was the one that had gone to see Jesus before.* Nicodemus said, ⁵¹"Our law will not let us judge a man without hearing him. We cannot judge him until we know what he has done."

⁵²The Jewish leaders answered, "Are you from Galilee too? Study the Scriptures.* You will learn that no prophet* comes from Galilee."

Prophet They probably meant the prophet God told Moses he would send. See Deut. 18:15-19.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

law The law of Moses.

Nicodemus ... before The story about Nicodemus going and talking to Jesus is in Jn. 3:1-21.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Holy Spirit Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

⁹All the Jewish leaders left and went home.

The Woman Caught In Adultery

8 Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.* ¹Early in the morning Jesus went back to the temple.* All the people came to Jesus. Jesus sat and taught the people. ²The teachers of the law and the Pharisees* brought a woman there. The woman had been caught doing the sin of adultery.* These Jews forced the woman to stand before the people. ³They said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught having sex with a man that is not her husband. ⁴The law of Moses commands that we kill with rocks every woman that does this. What do you say we should do?" ⁵The Jews were using this question to trick Jesus. They wanted to catch Jesus saying something wrong. Then they could have a charge against him. But Jesus knelt down and started writing on the ground with his finger. ⁶The Jewish leaders continued to ask Jesus their question. So Jesus stood up and said, "Is there any person here that has never sinned? That person without sin can throw the first rock at this woman." ⁷Then Jesus knelt down again and wrote on the ground.

⁸The people that heard Jesus began to leave one by one. The older men left first, and then the others. Jesus was left there alone with the woman. She was standing before him. ⁹Jesus looked up again and asked her, "Woman, all of those people are gone. None of them judged you guilty?"

¹⁰The woman answered, "None of them judged me, sir."

Then Jesus said, "So I also don't judge you. You can go now, but don't sin again."¹¹

Mount of Olives A hill near the city of Jerusalem.
temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

Verses 7:53--8:11 The oldest and best Greek copies do not have these verses.

Jesus Is the Light of the World

¹²Later, Jesus talked to the people again. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. The person that follows me will never live in darkness. That person will have the light that gives life."

¹³But the Pharisees* said to Jesus, "When you talk about yourself, you are the only one to say that these things are true. So we cannot accept these things you say."

¹⁴Jesus answered, "Yes, I am saying these things about myself. But people can believe these things I say. Why? Because I know where I came from. And I know where I am going. I am not like you people. You don't know where I came from or where I am going. ¹⁵You judge me the way you would judge any man. I don't judge any person. ¹⁶But if I judge, my judging is true. Why? Because when I judge I am not alone. The Father who sent me is with me. ¹⁷Your own law says that when two witnesses say the same thing, then you must accept what they say. ¹⁸I am one of the witnesses that speaks about myself. And the Father who sent me is my other witness."

¹⁹The people asked, "Where is your father?"

Jesus answered, "You don't know me or my Father. But if you knew me, then you would know my Father too." ²⁰Jesus said these things while he was teaching in the temple.* He was near the place where the money is kept that the people give. But no person arrested him. The right time for Jesus had not yet come.

The Jews Don't Understand About Jesus

²¹Again, Jesus said to the people, "I will leave you. You will look for me, but you will die with your sin. You cannot come where I am going."

²²So the Jews asked themselves, "Will Jesus kill himself? Is that why he said, 'You cannot come where I am going'?"

²³But Jesus said, "You people are from here below. But I am from above. You belong to this world, but I don't belong to this world. ²⁴I told you that you would die with your sins. Yes, you will die with your sins, if you don't believe that

I AM.*"

"The Jews asked, "Then who are you?"

Jesus answered, "I am what I have told you from the beginning. ²¹I have many things to say about you. I could judge you. But I tell people only the things I have heard from the One that sent me. And he speaks the truth."

"The people did not understand who Jesus was talking about. Jesus was telling them about the Father (God). ²²So Jesus said to the people, "You will lift up (kill) the Son of Man.* Then you will know that I AM.* You will know that these things I do are not by my own authority (power). You will know that I say only the things that the Father has taught me." ²³The One (God) who sent me is with me. I always do what pleases him. So he has not left me alone."

²⁴While Jesus was saying these things, many people believed in him.

Jesus Talks About Freedom from Sin

²⁵So Jesus said to the Jews that believed in him, "If you continue to obey my teaching, then you are truly my followers. ²⁶Then you will know the truth. And the truth will make you free."

"The Jews answered, "We are Abraham's people. And we have never been slaves. So why do you say that we will be free?"

"Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Every person that sins is a slave. Sin is his master. ²⁷A slave does not stay with a family forever. But a son belongs to the family forever. ²⁸So if the Son makes you free, then you will be truly free. ²⁹I know you are Abraham's people. But you want to kill me. Why? Because you don't want to accept my teaching. ³⁰I am telling you what my Father has shown me. But you do the things that your father has told you."

"The Jews answered, "Our father is Abraham."

Jesus said, "If you were really Abraham's children, then you would do the things that

Abraham did. ⁴⁰I am a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. But you are trying to kill me. Abraham did nothing like that. ⁴¹So you are doing the things that your own father did."

But the Jews said, "We are not like children that never knew who their father was. God is our Father. He is the only Father we have."

"Jesus said to those Jews, "If God were really your Father, then you would love me. I came from God, and now I am here. I did not come by my own authority. God sent me. ⁴²You don't understand these things I say. Why? Because you cannot accept my teaching. ⁴³Your father is the devil. You belong to him. You want to do what he wants. The devil was a murderer from the beginning. The devil was against the truth. And there is no truth in him. He is like the lies he tells. The devil is a liar, and he is the father of lies. ⁴⁴I speak the truth. That is why you don't believe me. ⁴⁵Can any of you prove that I am guilty of sin? If I tell the truth, then why don't you believe me? ⁴⁶The person that belongs to God accepts what God says. But you don't accept what God says, because you don't belong to God."

Jesus Talks About Himself and Abraham

"The Jews answered, "We say you are a Samaritan.* We say a demon* has come into you and made you crazy.¹ Are we not right when we say these things?"

"Jesus answered, "I have no demon in me. I give honor to my Father. But you give no honor to me. ²I am not trying to get honor for myself. There is One who wants this honor for me. He is the judge. ³I tell you the truth. If a person obeys my teaching, then that person will never die."

"The Jews said to Jesus, "Now we know that you have a demon* in you! Even Abraham and the prophets* died. But you say, 'The person that obeys my teaching will never die.'

I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14, but it can also mean "I am he (the Christ)."

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Samaritan A person from Samaria. Samaritans were part Jewish, but the Jews did not accept them.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

"Do you think you are greater than our father Abraham? Abraham died. And the prophets died too. Who do you think you are?"

"Jesus answered, "If I give honor to myself, then that honor is worth nothing. The One that gives me honor is my Father. And you say that he is your God. "But you don't really know him. I know him. If I said I did not know him, then I would be a liar like you are liars. But I do know him. And I obey what he says. "Your father Abraham was very happy that he would see the day when I came. He saw that day and was happy."

"The Jews said to Jesus, "What? You have never seen Abraham! You are not even 50 years old!"

"Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth. Before Abraham was born, I AM." "When Jesus said this, the people picked up rocks to throw at him. But Jesus hid, and then he left the temple.*

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

9 While Jesus was walking, he saw a blind man. This man had been blind since the time he was born. "Jesus' followers asked him, "Teacher, this man was born blind. But whose sin made him be born blind? His own sin, or his parents' sin?"

"Jesus answered, "It is not this man's sin or his parents' sin that made him be blind. This man was born blind so that God's power could be shown to people when I heal him. "While it is daytime, we must continue doing the work of the One that sent me. The night is coming. And no person can work at night. "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

"After Jesus said this, Jesus spit on the dirt and made some mud with it. Jesus put the mud on the man's eyes. "Jesus told the man, "Go and wash in the pool Siloam." (Siloam means "Sent.") So the man went to the pool. He washed and came back. Now he was able to see.

I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14, but it can also mean "I am he (the Christ)."

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

"Some people had seen this man begging before. These people and the man's neighbors said, "Look! Is this the same man that always sits and begs?"

"Some people said, "Yes! He is the one." But other people said, "No, he is not the same man. He only looks like him."

So the man himself said, "I am the man that was blind before."

"The people asked, "What happened? How did you get your sight?"

"The man answered, "The man that people call Jesus made some mud. He put the mud on my eyes. Then Jesus told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went to Siloam and washed. And then I could see."

"The people asked the man, "Where is this man (Jesus)?"

The man answered, "I don't know."

Jews Question the Man Jesus Healed

"Then the people brought the man to the Pharisees.* This was the man that had been blind. "Jesus had made mud and healed the man's eyes. The day Jesus did this was a Sabbath day.* "So now the Pharisees asked the man, "How did you get your sight?"

The man answered, "He put mud on my eyes. I washed, and now I can see."

"Some of the Pharisees said, "This man (Jesus) does not obey the law about the Sabbath day. So he is not from God."

Other men said, "But a person that is a sinner cannot do miracles* like these." These Jews could not agree with each other.

"The Jewish leaders asked the man again, "This man (Jesus) healed you, and you can see. What do you say about him?"

The man answered, "He is a prophet.**

"The Jews still did not believe that this really happened to the man. They did not believe that this man was blind and was now

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

prophet A person who spoke for God.

healed. But later they sent for the man's parents. "The Jews asked his parents, "Is this your son? You say that he was born blind. So why can he see now?"

"The parents answered, "We know that this man is our son. And we know that he was born blind. "But we don't know why he can see now. We don't know who healed his eyes. Ask him. He is old enough to answer for himself."

"His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders had already decided that they would punish any person that said Jesus was the Christ.* The Jewish leaders would put those people out of the synagogue.* "That is why his parents said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

"So the Jewish leaders called the man that had been blind. They told the man to come in again. The Jewish leaders said, "You should give God the glory by telling the truth. We know that this man (*Jesus*) is a sinner."

"The man answered, "I don't know if he is a sinner. But I do know this: I was blind, and now I can see."

"The Jewish leaders asked, "What did he (*Jesus*) do to you? How did he heal your eyes?"

"The man answered, "I have already told you that. But you would not listen to me. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his followers too?"

"The Jewish leaders became angry and, said some very bad things to the man. Then they said, "You are a follower of that man (*Jesus*). We are followers of Moses. "We know that God spoke to Moses. But we don't even know where this man (*Jesus*) comes from!"

"The man answered, "This is a very strange thing. You don't know where Jesus comes from. But he healed my eyes. "We all know that God does not listen to sinners. But God will listen to a person that worships and obeys him. "This is the first time that any person ever healed a man that was born blind. "This man (*Jesus*) must be from God. If he were not from God, he could not do anything like this."

"The Jewish leaders answered, "You were born full of sin! Are you trying to teach us?" And the Jewish leaders forced the man to leave.

Spiritual Blindness

"Jesus heard that the Jewish leaders had forced the man to leave. Jesus found the man and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man*?"

"The man asked, "Who is the Son of Man, sir? Tell me, so I can believe in him!"

"Jesus said to him, "You have already seen him. The Son of Man is the one talking with you now."

"The man answered, "Yes, I believe, Lord!" Then the man bowed and worshiped Jesus.

"Jesus said, "I came into this world so that the world could be judged. I came so that blind people* could see. And I came so that people that think they can, see will become blind."

"Some of the Pharisees* were near Jesus. They heard Jesus say this. They asked, "What? Are you saying that we are blind too?"

"Jesus said, "If you were really blind (*without understanding*), you would not be guilty of sin. But you say that you see (*know what you are doing*). So you are guilty."

The Shepherd and His Sheep

10 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. When a man enters the sheep pen, he should use the gate. If he climbs in some other way, then he is a robber. He is trying to steal the sheep. "But the man that takes care of the sheep enters through the gate. He is the shepherd. "The man that guards the gate opens the gate for the shepherd. And the sheep listen to the voice of the shepherd. The shepherd calls his own sheep, using their names, and he leads them out. "The shepherd brings all of his sheep out. Then he goes ahead of them and leads

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

blind people Now Jesus is talking about people that are spiritually blind, not physically blind.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

them. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. ¹But sheep will never follow a person they don't know. They will run away from that person, because they don't know his voice." ²Jesus told the people this story. But the people did not understand what the story meant.

Jesus Is the Good Shepherd

³So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth. I am the gate for the sheep. ⁴All the people that came before I came were thieves and robbers. The sheep did not listen to them. ⁵I am the gate. The person that enters through me will be saved. That person will be able to come in and go out. He will find everything he needs. ⁶A thief comes to steal and kill and destroy. But I came to give life—life that is full and good.

⁷"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. ⁸The worker that is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd. The paid worker does not own the sheep. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ⁹The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

¹⁰"I am the shepherd that cares for the sheep (*people*). I know my sheep like the Father knows me. And my sheep know me like I know the Father. I give my life for these sheep. ¹¹I have other sheep too. They are not in this flock here. I must lead them also. They will listen to my voice. In the future there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹²The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can get it back again. ¹³No person takes my life away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life. And I have the right to get it back again. This is what the Father commanded me to do."

¹⁴Again the Jews did not agree with each other because of these things Jesus said. ¹⁵Many of these Jews said, "A demon* has come into him and made him crazy. Why listen to him?"

¹⁶But other Jews said, "A man that is crazy with a demon does not say things like this. Can a demon heal the eyes of blind people? No!"

¹⁷The time came for the Festival of Dedication* at Jerusalem. This was during the winter. ¹⁸Jesus was in the temple* at Solomon's Porch.* ¹⁹The Jews gathered around Jesus. They said, "How long will you make us wonder about you? If you are the Christ,* then tell us clearly."

The Jews Against Jesus

²⁰Jesus answered, "I told you already, but you did not believe. I do miracles* in my Father's name. Those miracles show who I am. ²¹But you don't believe. Why? Because you are not my sheep (*people*). ²²My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. ²³I give my sheep eternal life. They will never die. And no person can take them out of my hand. ²⁴My Father gave my sheep to me. He is greater than all. No person can steal my sheep out of my Father's hand. ²⁵The Father and I are one."

²⁶Again the Jews picked up rocks to kill Jesus. ²⁷But Jesus said to them, "I have done many good things from the Father. You have seen those things. Which of those good things are you killing me for?"

²⁸The Jews answered, "We are not killing you for any good thing you did. But you say things that are against God. You are only a man, but you say you are the same as God! That is why we are trying to kill you with rocks!"

²⁹Jesus answered, "It is written in your law, 'I (*God*) said you are gods.*' ³⁰"This Scripture* called those people gods—the people that received God's message. And Scripture is always true. ³¹So why do you say that I am

Festival of Dedication A special week that the Jews celebrated in December.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Solomon's Porch An area on the east side of the temple.

It was covered by a roof.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

'I ... gods' Quote from Ps. 82:6.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

demon A demon is an evil spirit from the devil.

saying things that are against God? ⁷If I don't do what my Father does, then don't believe what I say. ⁸But if I do the same things my Father does, then you should believe in the things I do. You might not believe in me, but you should believe in the things I do. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

⁹"The Jews tried to get Jesus again. But Jesus escaped from them.

¹⁰"Then Jesus went back across the Jordan River. Jesus went to the place where John* was baptizing* before. Jesus stayed there, ¹¹and many people came to him. The people said, "John never did a miracle.* But everything John said about this man (*Jesus*) is true."¹² And many people there believed in Jesus.

The Death of Lazarus

11 There was a man named Lazarus who was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany. This is the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ²(Mary is the same woman that later put perfume on the Lord (*Jesus*) and wiped his feet with her hair.) Mary's brother was Lazarus, the man that was now sick. ³So Mary and Martha sent a person to tell Jesus, "Lord, your dear friend Lazarus is sick."

⁴"When Jesus heard this he said, "The end of this sickness will not be death. But this sickness is for the glory of God. This has happened to bring glory to the Son of God."⁵ (Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.) ⁶"When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for two more days. ⁷Then Jesus said to his followers, "We should go back to Judea."

⁸"The followers answered, "But teacher, the Jews in Judea tried to kill you with stones. That was only a short time ago. Now you want to go back there?"

⁹Jesus answered, "There are twelve hours of light in the day. Right? If a person walks in the

day, then he will not stumble and fall. Why? Because he can see with the light of this world. ¹⁰"But when a person walks at night he stumbles. Why? Because there is no light to help him see."

¹¹After Jesus said these things, he said, "Our friend Lazarus is now sleeping. But I am going there to wake him."

¹²"The followers answered, "But Lord, if he can sleep, he will be well."

¹³Jesus meant that Lazarus was dead. But Jesus' followers thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was really sleeping. ¹⁴So then Jesus said clearly, "Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And I am glad that I was not there. I am happy for you, because now you will believe in me. We will go to him now."

¹⁶Then Thomas (the one called Didymus) said to the other followers, "We will go too. We will die with Jesus in Judea."

Jesus in Bethany

¹Jesus arrived in Bethany. Jesus found that Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb* for four days. ²Bethany was about two miles from Jerusalem. ³Many Jews had come to Martha and Mary. The Jews came to comfort Martha and Mary about their brother Lazarus.

⁴Martha heard that Jesus was coming. She went out to greet Jesus. But Mary stayed at home. ⁵Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ⁶But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask."

⁷Jesus said, "Your brother will rise and be alive again."

⁸Martha answered, "I know that he will rise and live again when people are resurrected (*raised from death*) on the last day."

⁹Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection.* I am life. The person that believes in me will have life again, after he dies. ¹⁰And the person that lives and believes in me will never really die. Martha, do you believe this?"

John John the Baptizer, who preached to people about Christ's coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

baptizing A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

resurrection Being raised from death to live again.

"Martha answered, "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Christ,* the Son of God. You are the One that was coming to the world."

Jesus Cries

"After Martha said these things, she went back to her sister Mary. Martha talked to Mary alone. Martha said, "The Teacher (*Jesus*) is here. He is asking for you." "When Mary heard this, she stood up and went quickly to Jesus. "Jesus had not yet come into the village. He was still at the place where Martha met him. "The Jews were with Mary in the house. They were comforting her. They saw Mary stand and leave quickly. They thought that she was going to the tomb* of Lazarus. They thought she was going there to cry. So they followed her. "Mary went to the place where Jesus was. When she saw Jesus, she bowed at his feet. Mary said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

"Jesus saw that Mary was crying. Jesus saw the Jews that came with her. They were crying too. Jesus felt very sad in his heart and was deeply troubled. "Jesus asked, "Where did you put him (*Lazarus*)?"

"Jesus cried.

"And the Jews said, "Look! Jesus loved Lazarus very much!"

"But some of the Jews said, "Jesus healed the eyes of the blind man. Why didn't Jesus help Lazarus and stop him from dying?"

Jesus Makes Lazarus Alive Again

"Again Jesus felt very sad in his heart. Jesus came to the tomb* where Lazarus was. The tomb was a cave with a large stone covering the entrance. "Jesus said, "Move the stone away."

Martha said, "But Lord, it has been four days since Lazarus died. There will be a bad smell." Martha was the sister of the dead man (*Lazarus*).

"Then Jesus said to Martha, "Remember what I told you? I said that if you believed then you would see the glory of God."

"So they moved the stone away from the entrance. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. "I know that you always hear me. But I said these things because of the people here around me. I want them to believe that you sent me." "After Jesus said this he called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" "The dead man (*Lazarus*) came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with pieces of cloth. He had a handkerchief covering his face.

Jesus said to the people, "Take the cloth off of him and let him go."

The Jewish Leaders Plan to Kill Jesus

"There were many Jews that came to visit Mary. These Jews saw what Jesus did. And many of these Jews believed in Jesus. "But some of the Jews went to the Pharisees.* They told the Pharisees what Jesus did. "Then the leading priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the Jewish council. They asked, "What should we do? This man (*Jesus*) is doing many miracles.* "If we let him continue doing these things, all the people will believe in him. Then the Romans will come and take away our temple* and our nation."

"One of the men there was Caiaphas. He was the high priest that year. Caiaphas said, "You people know nothing! "It is better for one man to die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed. But you don't realize this."

"Caiaphas did not think of this himself. He was high priest that year. So he was really prophesying* that Jesus would die for the Jewish people. "Yes, Jesus would die for the Jewish people. But Jesus would also die for God's other children that were scattered in all the world. He would die to bring them all together and make them one people.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.
miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.
temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
prophesying Here, to prophesy means to tell something that will happen in the future.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.
tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

³"That day the Jewish leaders began planning to kill Jesus. ⁴So Jesus stopped traveling around openly among the Jews. Jesus left Jerusalem, and went to a place near the desert. Jesus went to the town called Ephraim. Jesus stayed there with his followers.

⁵"It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Festival.* Many people from the country went to Jerusalem before the Passover. They went to do the special things to make themselves pure for the Passover.⁶ ⁷"The people looked for Jesus. They stood in the temple* and asked each other, "Is he (Jesus) coming to the Festival? What do you think?" ⁸"But the leading priests and the Pharisees* had given a special order about Jesus. They said that if any person knew where Jesus was, the person must tell them. Then the leading priests and the Pharisees could arrest Jesus.

Jesus in Bethany with His Friends

12 Six days before the Passover Festival,* Jesus went to Bethany. Bethany is the town where Lazarus lived. (Lazarus is the man Jesus raised from death.) ²In Bethany they had a dinner for Jesus. Martha served the food. Lazarus was one of the people eating with Jesus. ³Mary brought in a pint of very expensive perfume made from pure nard.* Mary poured the perfume on Jesus' feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair. And the sweet smell from the perfume filled the whole house.

⁴Judas Iscariot was there. Judas was one of Jesus' followers. (He was the one that would later be against Jesus.) Judas did not like what Mary did.⁵ Judas said, "That perfume was worth 300 silver coins.* It should have been sold, and the money should have been given to

the poor people." ⁶"But Judas did not really care about poor people. Judas said this because he was a thief. Judas was the one that kept the money box for the group of followers.⁷ And Judas often stole money from the box.

⁸Jesus answered, "Don't stop her. It was right for her to save this perfume for today—the day for me to be prepared for burial. ⁹The poor people will always be with you. But you will not always have me."

The Plot Against Lazarus

¹Many of the Jews heard that Jesus was in Bethany. So they went there to see Jesus. They also went there to see Lazarus. Lazarus was the one Jesus raised from death. ²So the leading priests made plans to kill Lazarus too. ³"Because of Lazarus, many Jews were leaving their leaders, and believing in Jesus. That is why the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Lazarus too.

Jesus Enters Jerusalem

¹"The next day the people in Jerusalem heard that Jesus was coming there. These were the many people that had come to the Passover Festival.* ²"The people took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Jesus. The people shouted,

"Praise* him!

God bless the One that comes
in the name of the Lord!

God bless the King of Israel!"

Psalm 118:25-26

³"Jesus found a donkey and rode on it. This was like the Scripture* says:

¹"Do not be afraid, city of Zion*!

Look! Your king is coming.

He is riding on a young donkey."

Zechariah 9:9

Passover Festival Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in the time of Moses.

temple The special building in Jerusalem where God commanded the Jews to worship him.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow all Jewish laws and customs very carefully.

nard An expensive oil from the root of the nard plant.

silver coins One coin, a denarius, was the average pay for one day's work.

Praise Literally, "Hosanna," a Hebrew word used in praying to God for help. At this time it was probably a shout of joy used in praising God or his Messiah.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Zion Literally, "daughter of Zion," meaning Jerusalem.

¹⁶"The followers of Jesus did not understand this. But after Jesus was raised to glory, they understood that these things were written about him. Then the followers remembered that they had done these things for him.

People Tell About Jesus

¹⁷"There were many people with Jesus when he raised Lazarus from death and told him to come out of the tomb.* Now those people were telling other people about what Jesus did. ¹⁸"Many people went out to meet Jesus, because they heard that Jesus did this miracle.* ¹⁹"So the Pharisees* said to each other, "Look! Our plan is not helping us. All the people are following him!"

Jesus Talks About Life and Death

²⁰There were some Greek people there too. These were some of the people that went to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover Festival.*

²¹These Greek people went to Philip. (Philip was from Bethsaida, in Galilee.) The Greek people said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus."

²²Philip went and told Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

²³Jesus said to them, "Now is the time for the Son of Man* to receive his glory. ²⁴I tell you the truth. A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. Then it grows and makes many seeds. But if it never dies, then it will always be only a single seed. ²⁵The person that loves his own life will lose it. But the person that hates his life in this world will keep it. He will have life forever. ²⁶The person that serves me must follow me. Then my servant will be with me everywhere I am. My Father will give honor to people that serve me.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

miracle Amazing works done by the power of God.

Pharisees A Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Passover Festival Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

Jesus Speaks About His Death

²⁷"Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, 'Father save me from this time of suffering,?' No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. ²⁸Father, bring glory to your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have brought glory to that name. I will do it again."

²⁹The people standing there heard the voice. Those people said it was thunder.

But other people said, "An angel spoke to Jesus!"

³⁰Jesus said to the people, "That voice was for you and not for me. ³¹Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world (*the devil*) will be thrown out. ³²I will be lifted up from the earth. And when this happens, I will bring all people to me." ³³Jesus said this to show how he would die.

³⁴The people said, "But our law says that the Christ* will live forever. So why do you say, 'The Son of Man* must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

³⁵Then Jesus said, "The light will be with you for only a short time more. So walk while you have the light. Then the darkness (*sin*) will not catch you. The person that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶So put your trust in the light while you still have it. Then you will become sons of light." When Jesus finished saying these things, he left. Jesus went to a place where the people could not find him.

The Jews Refuse to Believe in Jesus

³⁷Jesus did all these many miracles.* The people saw these things, but they still did not believe in him. ³⁸This was to make clear the full meaning of what Isaiah the prophet* said:

"Lord, who believed the things we told them?

Who has seen the Lord's power?"

Isaiah 53:1

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

prophet A person who spoke for God to his people.

³⁹This is why the people could not believe. Because Isaiah also said,

⁴⁰ "God made the people blind.
God closed their minds.
God did this so that they will not
see with their eyes
and understand with their minds.
Then I would heal them."

Isaiah 6:10

"Isaiah said this because he saw his (*Jesus*)' glory. So Isaiah spoke about him (*Jesus*).

⁴¹But many people believed in Jesus. Even many of the Jewish leaders believed in Jesus. But they were afraid of the Pharisees.* So they did not say openly that they believed. They were afraid that they would be put out of the synagogue.* ⁴²These men loved praise from people more than praise from God.

Jesus' Teaching Will Judge People

⁴³Then Jesus said loudly, "The person that believes in me is really believing in the One (*God*) who sent me. "The person that sees me is really seeing the One who sent me. "I am light, and I came into this world. I came so that every person that believes in me would not stay in darkness.

⁴⁴"I did not come into the world to judge people. I came to save the people in the world. So I am not the one that judges the people who hear my teaching but don't obey. "There is a judge for the person that refuses to believe in me and does not accept what I say. The message I have taught will judge that person on the last day. "Why? Because the things I taught were not from myself. The Father (*God*) who sent me told me what to say and what to teach.

⁴⁵And I know that eternal life comes from what the Father commands. So the things I say are what the Father told me to say."

Jesus Washes His Followers' Feet

13 It was almost time for the Jewish Passover Festival.* Jesus knew that it was time for him to leave this world. It was now time for Jesus to go back to the Father. Jesus had always loved those people in the world who were his. Now was the time Jesus showed them his love the most.

¹Jesus and his followers were at the evening meal. The devil had already persuaded Judas Iscariot to turn against Jesus. (Judas was the son of Simon.) ²The Father had given Jesus power over everything. Jesus knew this. Jesus also knew that he had come from God. And he knew that he was going back to God. ³While they were eating, Jesus stood up and took off his robe. Jesus got a towel and wrapped the towel around his waist. ⁴Then Jesus poured water into a pitcher. He began to wash the followers' feet. He dried their feet with the towel that was wrapped around his waist.

⁵Jesus came to Simon Peter. But Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, you should not wash my feet."

⁶Jesus answered, "You don't know what I am doing now. But later you will understand."

⁷Peter said, "No! You will never wash my feet."

⁸Jesus answered, "If I don't wash your feet, then you cannot be one of my people."

⁹Simon Peter answered, "Lord, after you wash my feet, wash my hands and my head too!"

¹⁰Jesus said, "After a person has a bath, his whole body is clean. He needs only to wash his feet. And you men are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹Jesus knew who would turn against him. That is why Jesus said, "Not every one of you is clean."

¹²Jesus finished washing their feet. Then he put on his clothes and sat down again. Jesus asked, "Do you understand what I did for you?" ¹³You call me 'Teacher.' And you call me 'Lord.' And this is right, because that is what I am. ¹⁴I am your Lord and Teacher. But I

Pharisees A Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Passover Festival Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

washed your feet like a servant. So you also should wash each other's feet. ¹³I did this as an example for you. So you should do for each other, like I did for you. ¹⁴I tell you the truth. A servant is not greater than his master. The person that is sent to do something is not greater than the one that sent him. ¹⁵If you know these things, you will be happy if you do them.

¹⁶"I am not talking about all of you. I know the people I have chosen. But what the Scripture* said must happen: 'The man that shared my food has turned against me.'* ¹⁷I am telling you this now before it happens. Then when it happens you will believe that I AM.* ¹⁸I tell you the truth. The person that accepts anyone I send also accepts me. And the person that accepts me also accepts the One who sent me."

Jesus Tells Who Will Be Against Him

²After Jesus said these things, he felt very troubled. Jesus said openly, "I tell you the truth. One of you will be against me."

³Jesus' followers all looked at each other. They did not understand who the person was that Jesus was talking about. ⁴One of the followers was sitting* next to Jesus. This was the follower that Jesus loved. ⁵Simon Peter made signs to this follower to ask Jesus who the person was that he was talking about.

⁶That follower leaned closer to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it that will be against you?"

⁷Jesus answered, "I will dip this bread into the dish. The man I give it to is the man that will turn against me." So Jesus took a piece of bread. He dipped it and gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ⁸When Judas took the bread, Satan (*the devil*) entered him. Jesus said to Judas, "The thing that you will do—do it

quickly!" ⁹None of the men at the table understood why Jesus said this to Judas. ¹⁰Judas was the one that kept the money box for the group. So some of the followers thought that Jesus meant for Judas to go and buy some things they needed for the feast. Or they thought that Jesus wanted Judas to go give something to the poor people.

¹¹Judas accepted the bread Jesus gave him. Then Judas went out. It was night.

Jesus Talks About His Death

¹When Judas was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man* receives his glory. And God receives glory through the Son of Man. ²If God receives glory through him, then God will give glory to the Son through himself. God will give him glory quickly."

³Jesus said, "My children, I will be with you only a short time more. You will look for me. And what I told the Jews, I tell you now: Where I am going you cannot come.

⁴"I give you a new command: Love each other. You must love each other like I loved you. ⁵All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other."

Jesus Says that Peter Will Deny Him

¹Simon Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus answered, "Where I am going you cannot follow now. But you will follow later."

²Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to die for you!"

³Jesus answered, "Will you really give your life for me? I tell you the truth. Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me."

Jesus Comforts His Followers

14 Jesus said, "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. And trust in me. ²There are many rooms in my Father's house. I would not tell you this if it were not

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

'The man ... me' Literally, 'The man ... has lifted up his heel against me' (Ps. 41:9).

I AM This is like the name of God used in Ex. 3:14, but it can also mean "I am he (the Christ)."

sitting Literally, "lying." The people of that time ate lying down and leaning on one arm.

Son of Man Jesus. In Dan. 7:13-14 this is the name for the Messiah, the one God chose to save his people.

true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back. Then I will take you with me, so that you can be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am going."

⁵Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going. So how can we know the way?"

⁶Jesus answered, "I am the way. I am the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me. ⁷If you really knew me, then you would know my Father too. But now you know the Father. You have seen him."

⁸Philip said to Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father. That is all we need."

⁹Jesus answered, "Philip, I have been with you for a long time. So you should know me. The person that has seen me has seen the Father too. So why do you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰Do you truly believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The things I have told you don't come from me. The Father lives in me, and he is doing his own work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or believe because of the miracles* I have done. ¹²I tell you the truth. The person that believes in me will do the same things I have done. Yes! He will do even greater things than I have done. Why? Because I am going to the Father. ¹³And if you ask for anything in my name, I will do it for you. Then the Father's glory will be shown through the Son. ¹⁴If you ask me for anything in my name, I will do it.

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

¹⁵"If you love me, then you will do the things I command. ¹⁶I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper.* He will give you this Helper to be with you forever. ¹⁷The Helper is the Spirit* of truth. The world cannot accept him. Why? Because the world does not see him or know him. But you know him. He

lives with you and he will live in you.

¹⁸"I will not leave you all alone like children without parents. I will come back to you. ¹⁹In a very short time the people in the world will not see me any more. But you will see me. You will live because I live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in the Father. You will know that you are in me and I am in you. ²¹If a person knows my commands and obeys those commands, then that person truly loves me. And my Father will love the person that loves me. And I will love that person. I will show myself to him."

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But Lord, why do you plan to show yourself to us, but not to the world?"

²³Jesus answered, "If any person loves me, then he will obey my teaching. My Father will love that person. My Father and I will come to that person and live with him. ²⁴But the person that does not love me does not obey my teaching. This teaching that you hear is not really mine. It is from my Father who sent me.

²⁵"I have told you all these things while I am with you. ²⁶But the Helper* will teach you everything. The Helper will cause you to remember all the things I told you. This Helper is the Holy Spirit* that the Father will send in my name.

²⁷"I leave you peace. It is my own peace I give you. I give you peace in a different way than the world does. So don't let your hearts be troubled. Don't be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, 'I am leaving, but I will come back to you.' If you loved me, then you would be happy that I am going back to the Father. Why? Because the Father is greater than I am. ²⁹I have told you this now, before it happens. Then when it happens, you will believe. ³⁰I will not talk with you much longer. The ruler of this world (*the devil*) is coming. He has no power over me. ³¹But the world must know that I love the Father. So I do exactly what the Father told me to do.

"Come now. We will leave this place.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Helper Or "Comforter," the Holy Spirit.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Jesus Is Like a Vine

15 "I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch of mine that does not make fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that makes fruit, so that it will make even more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the teaching I have told you. ⁴Continue in me and I will continue in you. No branch can make fruit alone. It must continue in the vine. It is the same with you. You cannot make fruit alone. You must continue in me.

⁵"I am the vine and you are the branches. If a person continues in me and I continue in that person, then that person will make much fruit. But without me that person can do nothing. ⁶If a person does not continue in me, then he is like a branch that is thrown away. That branch dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them. ⁷Continue in me and follow my teachings. If you do this, then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given you. ⁸You should make much fruit and show that you are my followers. This brings glory to my Father.

⁹"I loved you like the Father loved me. Now continue in my love. ¹⁰I have obeyed my Father's commands, and I continue in his love. In the same way, if you obey my commands, you will continue in my love. ¹¹I have told you these things so that you can have the same joy I have. I want your joy to be the fullest joy. ¹²This is what I command you: Love each other like I have loved you. ¹³The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do the things I tell you to do. ¹⁵I don't call you servants now. A servant does not know what his master is doing. But now I call you friends because I have told you everything I heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me; I chose you. And I gave you this work: to go and make fruit. I want this fruit to continue in your life. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Jesus Warns His Followers

¹⁸"If the world hates you, remember that the world hated me first. ¹⁹If you belonged to the world, then the world would love you like it loves its own people. But I have chosen you out of the world. So you don't belong to the world. That is why the world hates you. ²⁰Remember the lesson I told you: A servant is not greater than his master. If people did wrong to me, then they will do wrong to you too. And if people obeyed my teaching, then they will obey yours too. ²¹People will do all this to you because of me. They don't know the One who sent me. ²²If I had not come and spoken to the people of the world, then they would not be guilty of sin. But now I have spoken to them. So they have no excuse for their sin. ²³Any person that hates me also hates my Father. ²⁴I did things among those people that no other person has ever done. If I had not done those things, they would not be guilty of sin. But they have seen those things I did. And still they hate me and my Father. ²⁵But this happened so that what is written in their law would be true: 'They hated me for no reason.'"

²⁶"I will send you the Helper* from the Father. The Helper is the Spirit* of truth who comes from the Father. When he comes, he will tell about me. ²⁷And you will tell people about me too, because you have been with me from the beginning.

16 "I have told you these things so that people will not be able to destroy your faith. ²People will make you leave their synagogues.* Yes, a time is coming when people will think that killing you would be doing service for God. ³People will do these things because they have not known the Father, and they have not known me. ⁴I have told you these things now. So when the time comes for

"They ... reason" These words could be from Ps. 35:19 or Ps. 69:4.

Helper Or "Comforter," the Holy Spirit.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

these things to happen, you will remember that I warned you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

"I did not tell you these things at the beginning, because I was with you then. ⁹Now I am going back to the One who sent me. But none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' ¹⁰Your hearts are filled with sadness because I have told you these things. ¹¹But I tell you the truth: It is better for you that I go away. Why? Because when I go away I will send the Helper* to you. But if I did not go away, then the Helper would not come. ¹²When the Helper comes, he will prove to the people of the world the truth about these things: about sin, about being right with God, and about judgment. ¹³The Helper will prove that people have sin, because they don't believe in me. ¹⁴He will prove to them about *my* being right with God, because I am going to the Father. You will not see me then. ¹⁵And the Helper will prove to the world the truth about judgment, because the ruler of this world (*the devil*) is already judged.

¹⁶"I have many more things to say to you. But those things are too much for you to accept now. ¹⁷But when the Spirit* of truth comes he will lead you into all truth. The Spirit of truth will not speak his own words. He will speak only what he hears. He will tell you the things that will happen. ¹⁸The Spirit of truth will bring glory to me. How? He will get things from me and tell them to you. ¹⁹All the things that the Father has are mine. That is why I said that the Spirit will get things from me and tell them to you.

Sadness Will Change to Happiness

²⁰"After a short time you will not see me. And then after another short time you will see me again."

²¹Some of the followers said to each other, "What does Jesus mean when he says, 'After a

short time you will not see me. And then after another short time you will see me again'?" And what does he mean when he says, 'Because I am going to the Father'?" ²²The followers asked, "What does he mean by 'a short time'? We don't understand what he is saying."

²³Jesus saw that the followers wanted to ask him about this. So Jesus said to the followers, "Are you asking each other what I meant when I said, 'After a short time you will not see me. And then after another short time you will see me again'?" ²⁴I tell you the truth. You will cry and be sad, but the world will be happy. You will be sad, but your sadness will become joy. ²⁵When a woman gives birth to a baby, she has pain, because her time has come. But when her baby is born, she forgets the pain. She forgets because she is so happy that a child has been born into the world. ²⁶It is the same with you. Now you are sad. But I will see you again and you will be happy. And no one will take away your joy. ²⁷In that day you will not ask me for anything. I tell you the truth. My Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. ²⁸You have never asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive. And your joy will be the fullest joy.

Victory over the World

²⁹"I have told you these things, using words that hide the meaning. But the time will come when I will not use words like that to tell you things. I will speak to you in plain words about the Father. ³⁰In that day you will ask the Father for things in my name. I am saying that I will not need to ask the Father for you. ³¹No! The Father himself loves you. He loves you because you have loved me. And he loves you because you have believed that I came from God. ³²I came from the Father into the world. Now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

³³Then the followers of Jesus said, "You are speaking clearly to us now. You are not using words that are hard to understand. ³⁴We can see now that you know all things. You can answer a person's question even before he asks it. This makes us believe that you came from God."

Helper Or "Comforter," the Holy Spirit.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

¹⁰Jesus said, "So now you believe? ¹¹Listen to me. A time is coming when you will be scattered. Each of you will be scattered to his own home. That time is now here. You will leave me. I will be alone. But I am never really alone. Why? Because the Father is with me.

¹²"I told you these things so that you can have peace in me. In this world you will have trouble. But be brave! I have defeated the world!"

Jesus Prays for His Followers

17 After Jesus said these things he looked toward heaven. Jesus prayed, "Father, the time has come. Give glory to your Son so that the Son can give glory to you. ²You gave the Son power over all people so that the Son could give eternal life to all those people you have given to him. ³And this is eternal life: that men can know you, the only true God, and that men can know Jesus Christ, the One you sent. ⁴I finished the work you gave me to do. I brought you glory on earth. ⁵And now, Father, give me glory with you. Give me the glory I had with you before the world was made.

⁶"You gave me some men from the world. I have shown them what you are like. Those men belonged to you, and you gave them to me. They have obeyed your teaching. ⁷Now they know that everything you gave me comes from you. ⁸I gave these men the teachings that you gave me. They accepted those teachings. They know that I truly came from you. And they believed that you sent me. ⁹I pray for them now. I am not praying for the people in the world. But I am praying for those men you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And these men bring glory to me. ¹¹Now I am coming to you. I will not stay in the world now. But these men are still in the world. Holy Father, keep them safe. Keep them safe by the power of your name (the name you gave me), so that they will be one, the same as you and I are one. ¹²While I was with them, I kept them safe. I kept them safe by the power of your name—the name you gave me. I protected them. And only one of them was lost—the man (*Judas*) that chose to be

lost. He was lost so that what was said in the Scripture* would happen.

¹³"I am coming to you now. But I pray these things while I am still in the world. I say these things so that these men can have my joy. I want them to have all of my joy. ¹⁴I have given them your teaching. And the world has hated them. The world hated these men, because they don't belong to the world, the same as I don't belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking you to take them out of the world. But I am asking that you keep them safe from the Evil One (*the devil*). ¹⁶They don't belong to the world, the same as I don't belong to the world. ¹⁷Make them ready for your service through your truth. Your teaching is truth. ¹⁸I have sent them into the world, the same as you sent me into the world. ¹⁹I am making myself ready to serve. I do this for them, so that they can truly be ready for your service.

²⁰"I pray for these men. But I am also praying for all people that will believe in me because of the teaching of these men. ²¹Father, I pray that all people that believe in me can be one. You are in me and I am in you. I pray that these people can also be one in us, so that the world will believe that you sent me. ²²I have given these people the glory that you gave me. I gave them this glory so that they can be one, the same as you and I are one. ²³I will be in them, and you will be in me. So they will be completely one. Then the world will know that you sent me. And the world will know that you loved these people the same as you loved me.

²⁴"Father, I want these people that you have given me to be with me in every place I am. I want them to see my glory. This is the glory you gave me because you loved me before the world was made. ²⁵Father, you are the One who is good. The world does not know you, but I know you. And these people know that you sent me. ²⁶I showed them what you are like. And again I will show them what you are like. Then they will have the same love that you have for me. And I will live in them."

Jesus Is Arrested

18 When Jesus finished praying, he left with his followers. They went across the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden of olive trees. Jesus and his followers went there.

²Judas knew where this place was, because Jesus met there often with his followers. Judas was the one that turned against Jesus. ³So Judas led a group of soldiers to the garden. Judas also brought some guards from the leading priests and the Pharisees.* They were carrying torches, lanterns, and weapons.

⁴Jesus knew everything that would happen to him. Jesus went out and asked, "Who are you looking for?"

⁵The men answered, "Jesus from Nazareth."

Jesus said, "I am Jesus." (Judas, the one that turned against Jesus, was standing there with them.) ⁶"When Jesus said, 'I am Jesus,' the men moved back and fell to the ground.

⁷Jesus asked them again, "Who are you looking for?"

The men said, "Jesus from Nazareth."

⁸Jesus said, "I told you that I am Jesus. So if you are looking for me, then let these other men go free." ⁹"This happened so that the words Jesus said before would be true: 'I have not lost any of the men you gave me.'"

¹⁰Simon Peter had a sword. He took out the sword and struck the servant of the high priest.* Peter cut off the servant's right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back in its place! I must accept the cup* of suffering, the Father has given me."

Jesus Is Brought Before Annas

¹²Then the soldiers with their commander and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus. They tied Jesus ¹³and brought him to Annas. Annas was

the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Caiaphas was the high priest* that year. ¹⁴Caiaphas was the one that had told the Jews that it would be better if one man died for all the people.

Peter Lies About Knowing Jesus

¹⁵Simon Peter and another one of Jesus' followers went with Jesus. This follower knew the high priest.* So he went with Jesus into the yard of the high priest's house. ¹⁶But Peter waited outside near the door. The follower that knew the high priest came back outside. He spoke to the girl that opened the gate for people. Then he brought Peter inside. ¹⁷The girl at the gate said to Peter, "Are you also one of the followers of that man (*Jesus*)?"

Peter answered, "No, I am not!"

¹⁸It was cold, so the servants and guards had built a fire. They were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter was standing with these men.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

¹⁹The high priest* asked Jesus questions about his followers. He asked Jesus questions about the things Jesus taught. ²⁰Jesus answered, "I have always spoken openly to all people. I always taught in the synagogues* and in the temple.* All the Jews come together there. I never said anything in secret. ²¹So why do you question me? Ask the people that heard my teaching. They know what I said."

²²When Jesus said this, one of the guards standing there hit him. The guard said, "You should not talk to the high priest* like that!"

²³Jesus answered, "If I said something wrong, then tell everyone here what was wrong. But if the things I said are right, then why do you hit me?"

²⁴So Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest. Jesus was still tied.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

cup Jesus is talking about the bad things that will happen to him. Accepting these things will be very hard, like drinking a cup of something that tastes very bad.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Peter Lies Again

²⁵Simon Peter was standing at the fire, keeping himself warm. The other men said to Peter, "Are you one of the followers of that man (*Jesus*)?"

But Peter denied it. He said, "No, I am not."

²⁶One of the servants of the high priest* was there. This servant was a relative to the man whose ear Peter had cut off. The servant said, "I think I saw you with him (*Jesus*) in the garden!"

²⁷But again Peter said, "No, I was not with him!" And at that same time a rooster crowed.

Jesus Is Brought Before Pilate

²⁸Then the Jews took Jesus from Caiaphas' house to the Roman governor's, palace. It was early in the morning. The Jews would not go inside the palace. They did not want to make themselves unclean,* because they wanted to eat the Passover* meal. ²⁹So Pilate went outside to the Jews. He asked, "What do you say this man has done wrong?"

³⁰The Jews answered, "He is a bad man. That is why we brought him to you."

³¹Pilate said to the Jews, "You Jews take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

The Jews answered, "But your law does not allow us to punish a person by killing him."

³²(This happened so that what Jesus said about how he would die would be true.)

³³Then Pilate went back inside the palace. Pilate called Jesus to him. He asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

³⁴Jesus said, "Is that your own question, or did other people tell you about me?"

³⁵Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew! It was your own people and their leading priests that brought you before me. What have you done wrong?"

³⁶Jesus said, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it belonged to this world, then my servants would fight so that I would not be given to the Jews. But my kingdom is from another place."

³⁷Pilate said, "So you are a king!"

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. That is true. I was born for this: to tell people about the truth. That is why I came into the world. And every person that belongs to the truth listens to me."

³⁸Pilate said, "What is truth?" When Pilate said this, he went out to the Jews again. Pilate said to the Jews, "I can find nothing to charge against this man. ³⁹But it is one of your customs for me to free one prisoner to you at the time of the Passover.* Do you want me to free this 'king of the Jews'?"

⁴⁰The Jews yelled back, "No, not him! Let Barabbas go free!" (Barabbas was a robber.)

19 Then Pilate ordered that Jesus be taken away and be whipped. ²The soldiers used some thorny branches to make a crown. They put this crown of thorns on Jesus' head. Then the soldiers put a purple robe around Jesus. ³The soldiers came to Jesus many times and said, "Hello, O king of the Jews!" They hit Jesus in the face.

⁴Again Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look! I am bringing Jesus out to you. I want you to know that I find nothing I can charge against him." ⁵Then Jesus came out. He was wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is the man!"

⁶When the leading priests and the Jewish guards saw Jesus they yelled, "Kill him on a cross! Kill him on a cross!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and nail him to a cross yourselves. I find nothing I can charge against him."

⁷The Jews answered, "We have a law that says he must die, because he said that he is the Son of God."

⁸When Pilate heard this, he was more afraid. ⁹Pilate went back inside the palace. He asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus did not answer him. ¹⁰Pilate said, "You refuse to speak to me? Remember, I have the power to make

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

unclean Going into a non-Jewish place would ruin the cleansing they had done (See Jn. 11:55).

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

you free. I also have the power to kill you on a cross."

¹¹Jesus answered, "The only power you have over me is the power given to you by God. So the man who gave me to you is guilty of a greater sin."

¹²After this, Pilate tried to let Jesus go free. But the Jews yelled, "Any person who makes himself a king is against Caesar. So if you let this man (*Jesus*) go free, that means you are not Caesar's friend."

¹³Pilate heard what the Jews said. So he brought Jesus out to the place called "The Stone Pavement." (In the Jewish language* the name is "Gabbatha.") Pilate sat down on the judge's seat there. ¹⁴It was now almost noon on Preparation day* of Passover* week. Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king!"

¹⁵The Jews yelled, "Take him away! Take him away! Kill him on a cross!"

Pilate asked the Jews, "Do you want me to kill your king on a cross?"

The leading priests answered, "The only king we have is Caesar!"

¹⁶So Pilate gave Jesus to them to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

The soldiers took Jesus. ¹⁷Jesus carried his own cross. He went out to a place called "The Place of the Skull." (In the Jewish language* the name of this place is "Golgotha.") ¹⁸At Golgotha they nailed Jesus to the cross. They also put two other men on crosses. They put the men on each side of Jesus with Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate wrote a sign and put it on the cross. The sign said, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." ²⁰The sign was written in the Jewish language, in Latin, and in Greek. Many of the Jews read the sign, because this place where they killed Jesus on the cross was near the city. ²¹The leading Jewish priests said to

Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews.' But write, 'This man said, I am the King of the Jews.'"

²²Pilate answered, "I will not change what I have written."

²³After the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, they took his clothes. They divided his clothes into four parts. Each soldier got one part. They also took his tunic.* It was all one piece of cloth woven from top to bottom. ²⁴So the soldiers said to each other, "We should not tear this into parts (to divide it). We should choose lots* to see who will get it." This happened so that it would be like the Scripture* said:

"They divided my clothes among them.
And they threw lots* for my clothing."

Psalm 22:18

So the soldiers did this.

²⁵Jesus' mother stood near his cross. His mother's sister was also standing there with Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. ²⁶Jesus saw his mother. He also saw the follower that he loved standing there. He said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son." ²⁷Then Jesus said to the follower, "Here is your mother." So after that, this follower took Jesus' mother to live in his home.

Jesus Dies

²⁸Later, Jesus knew that everything had been done. To make the Scripture* happen he said, "I am thirsty."* ²⁹There was a jar full of vinegar there. So the soldiers soaked a sponge in it. They put the sponge on a branch of a hyssop plant. Then they lifted it to Jesus' mouth. ³⁰Jesus tasted the vinegar. Then he said, "It is finished." Jesus bowed his head and died.

³¹This day was Preparation day.* The next day was a special Sabbath day.* The Jews did not want the bodies to stay on the cross on the Sabbath day. So they asked Pilate to order that

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

Preparation day Friday, day before the Sabbath day.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

tunic A piece of clothing like a long undershirt.

lots Rocks or sticks used like dice for making a choice.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"I am thirsty" See Ps. 22:15; 69:21.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

the legs of the men be broken, to make them die sooner. And they asked that the bodies of the men be taken down from the crosses. ³²So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man on the cross beside Jesus. Then they broke the legs of the other man on the cross beside Jesus. ³³But when the soldiers came close to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead. So they did not break his legs. ³⁴But one of the soldiers stuck his spear into Jesus' side. Blood and water came out. ³⁵(The one who saw this happen has told about it. He told about it so that you also can believe. The things he says are true. He knows that he tells the truth.) ³⁶These things happened so that it would be like the Scripture* said: "None of his bones will be broken."^{*} ³⁷And another Scripture said, "People will look at the one they stuck with the spear."^{*}

Jesus Is Buried

¹Later, a man named Joseph from Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. (Joseph was a follower of Jesus. But he did not tell people, because he was afraid of the Jews.) Pilate said that Joseph could take the body of Jesus. So Joseph came and took Jesus' body away. ²Nicodemus went with Joseph. Nicodemus was the man who had come to Jesus before and talked to him at night. Nicodemus brought about 100 pounds* of spices. This was a mixture of myrrh and aloes.* ³These two men took Jesus' body. They wrapped it in pieces of linen cloth with the spices. (This is how the Jews bury people.) ⁴In the place where Jesus was killed on the cross, there was a garden. In the garden there was a new tomb.* No person had ever been buried there before. ⁵The men put Jesus in that tomb

because it was near, and the Jews were preparing to start their Sabbath day.*

Some Followers Find Jesus' Tomb Empty

20 Early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene went to the tomb* where Jesus' body was. It was still dark. Mary saw that the large stone that covered the entrance, was moved away. ²So Mary ran to Simon Peter and the other follower (the one Jesus loved). Mary said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb. We don't know where they put him."

³So Peter and the other follower started going to the tomb.* ⁴They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter. So the other follower reached the tomb first. ⁵The follower bent down and looked in. He saw the pieces of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came from behind him. Peter went into the tomb. He saw the pieces of linen lying there. ⁷He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up and laid in a different place from the pieces of linen. ⁸Then the other follower went in. This was the follower that had reached the tomb first. He saw what had happened and believed. ⁹(These followers did not yet understand from the Scriptures* that Jesus must rise from death.)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹Then the followers went back home. ²But Mary stood outside the tomb,* crying. While she was crying, she bent down and looked inside the tomb. ³Mary saw two angels dressed in white. They were sitting where Jesus' body had been. One angel was sitting where Jesus' head had been, and the other angel was sitting where Jesus' feet had been.

⁴The angels asked Mary, "Woman, why are you crying?"

Mary answered, "Some people have taken away the body of, my Lord. I don't know where they put him." ⁵When Mary said this

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"None ... broken" Quote from Ps. 34:20. The idea is from Ex. 12:46, Num. 9:12.

"People ... spear" Quote from Zech. 12:10.

100 pounds 100 Roman pounds were equal to about 75 pounds today.

myrrh and aloes Sweet-smelling spices used for perfume and also to prepare a body to be buried.

tomb A grave dug in a wall of rock.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

¹¹Jesus asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

Mary thought that this was the man that takes care of the garden. So Mary said to him, "Did you take Jesus away, sir? Tell me where you put him. I will go and get him."

¹²Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Mary turned toward Jesus and said in the Jewish language,* "Rabboni." (This means "Teacher.")

¹³Jesus said to her, "Don't hold me. I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers (*followers*) and tell them this: 'I am going back to my Father and your Father. I am going back to my God and your God.'"

¹⁴Mary Magdalene went to the followers and told them, "I saw the Lord!" And she told them the things Jesus said to her.

Jesus Appears to His Followers

¹⁵The day was Sunday. That same evening the followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus said, "Peace be with you!" ¹⁶After Jesus said this, he showed the followers his hands and his side. The followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.

¹⁷Then Jesus said again, "Peace be with you! The Father sent me. In the same way, I now send you." ¹⁸After Jesus said that, he breathed on the followers. Jesus said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁹If you forgive people's sins, then their sins are forgiven. If you don't forgive people's sins, then their sins are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁰Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the twelve. ²¹The other followers told

Thomas, "We saw the Lord." Thomas said, "I will not believe it until I see the nail holes in his hands. And I will not believe until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side."

²²A week later the followers were in the house again. Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came and stood among them. Jesus said, "Peace be with you!" ²³Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and start believing."

²⁴Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁵Jesus said to Thomas, "You believe because you see me. Those people that believe without seeing me will be truly blessed."

Why John Wrote This Book

¹Jesus did many other miracles* that his followers saw. Those miracles are not written in this book. ²But these things are written so that you can believe that Jesus is the Christ,* the Son of God. Then, by believing, you can have life through his name.

Jesus Appears to Seven Followers

21 Later, Jesus showed himself to his followers. This was by Lake Tiberias (*Galilee*). This is how it happened: ¹Some of the followers were together. They were Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the two sons of Zebedee, and two other followers. ²Simon Peter said, "I am going out to fish."

The other followers said, "We will go with you." So all the followers went out and got into the boat. They fished that night but caught nothing.

³Early the next morning Jesus stood on the shore. But the followers did not know that it was Jesus. ⁴Then Jesus said to the followers, "Friends, have you caught any fish?"

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

The followers answered, "No."

¹Jesus said, "Throw your net into the water on the right side of your boat. You will find some fish there." So the followers did this. They caught so many fish that they could not pull the net back into the boat.

²The follower that Jesus loved said to Peter, "That man is the Lord (*Jesus*)!" Peter heard him say, "That man is the Lord." Peter put his coat around himself. (Peter had taken his clothes off to work.) Then he jumped into the water. ³The other followers went to shore in the boat. They pulled the net full of fish. They were not very far from shore, only about 100 yards. ⁴When the followers stepped out of the boat and onto the shore, they saw a fire of hot coals. There were fish on the fire and some bread there too. ⁵Then Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish that you caught."

⁶Simon Peter went into the boat and pulled the net to the shore. It was full of big fish. There were 153. The fish were very heavy, but the net did not tear. ⁷Jesus said to them, "Come and eat." None of the followers would ask him, "Who are you?" They knew he was the Lord. ⁸Jesus walked to the food. He took the bread and gave it to them. Jesus also got the fish and gave it to them.

⁹This was now the third time Jesus showed himself to his followers after he was raised from death.

Jesus Talks to Peter

¹⁰When they finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these other men love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said to Peter, "Take care of my lambs.*"

¹¹Again Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said to Peter, "Take care of my sheep.*"

¹²A third time Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was sad because Jesus asked him three times, "Do you love me?" Peter said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you!"

Jesus said to Peter, "Take care of my sheep. ¹³I tell you the truth. When you were young, you tied your own belt and went where you wanted. But when you are old, you will put out your hands and another person will tie you. That person will lead you where you don't want to go." (Jesus said this to show how Peter would die to give glory to God.) Then Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me!"

¹⁴Peter turned and saw the follower that Jesus loved walking behind them. (This was the follower that had leaned against Jesus at the supper and said, "Lord, who will turn against you?") ¹⁵When Peter saw this follower behind them he asked Jesus, "Lord, what about him?"

¹⁶Jesus answered, "Maybe I want him to live until I come. That should not be important to you. You follow me!"

¹⁷So a story spread among the brothers (*followers*). They were saying that this follower that Jesus loved, would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die. He only said, "Maybe I want him to live until I come. That should not be important to you."

¹⁸That follower is the one that is telling these things. He is the one that has now written these things. We know that what he says is true.

¹⁹There are many other things that Jesus did. If every one of these things were written down, I think the whole world would not be big enough for all the books that would be written.

lambs, sheep Jesus uses these words to mean his followers, as in Jn. 10.

Acts

Luke Writes Another Book

1 Dear Theophilus,
The first book I wrote was about everything that Jesus did and taught. ²I wrote about the whole life of Jesus, from the beginning until the day he was carried up into heaven. Before this happened, Jesus talked to the apostles* he had chosen. With the help of the Holy Spirit,* Jesus told the apostles what they should do. ³This was after Jesus' death, but he showed the apostles that he was alive. Jesus proved this by doing many powerful things. The apostles saw Jesus many times during the 40 days after he was raised from death. Jesus spoke to the apostles about the kingdom of God. ⁴One time when Jesus was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. Jesus said, "The Father has promised you something; I told you about it before. Wait here in Jerusalem, to receive this promise. ⁵John baptized* people with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.*"

Jesus Is Carried Up into Heaven

"The apostles* were all together. They asked Jesus, "Lord, is this the time for you to give the Jews their kingdom again?"

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

⁶Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. You cannot know these things. ⁷But the Holy Spirit will come to you. Then you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—you will tell people about me. First, you will tell people in Jerusalem. Then you will tell people in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

⁸After Jesus told the apostles these things, he was lifted up into the sky. While the apostles were watching, Jesus went into a cloud, and they could not see him. ⁹Jesus was going away, and the apostles were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men (*angels*) wearing white clothes stood beside them. ¹⁰The two men said to the apostles, "Men from Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? You saw Jesus carried away from you into heaven. He will come back in the same way you saw him go."

A New Apostle Is Chosen

¹¹Then the apostles* went back to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. (This mountain is about one-half mile from Jerusalem.) ¹²The apostles entered the city. They went to the place where they were staying; this was in a room upstairs. The apostles were: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (known as the Zealot*), and Judas (the son of James).

Zealot The Zealots were a Jewish political group.

¹⁴The apostles* were all together. They were constantly praying with the same purpose. Some women, Mary, the mother of Jesus, and his brothers were there with the apostles.

¹⁵After a few days there was a meeting of the believers. (There were about 120 of them.) Peter stood up and said, ^{16,17}"Brothers, in the Scriptures* the Holy Spirit* said through David that something must happen. He was talking about Judas, one of our own group. Judas served together with us. The Spirit said that Judas would lead men to arrest Jesus."

¹⁸(Judas was paid money for doing this. His money was used to buy him a field. But Judas fell on his head, and his body broke open. All his intestines poured out. ¹⁹And all the people of Jerusalem learned about this. That is why they named that field Akeldama. In their language Akeldama means "field of blood.")

²⁰Peter said, "In the book of Psalms, this is written about Judas,:

'People should not go
near his land (*property*);
No one should live there!'

Psalms 69:25

And it is also written:

'Let another man have his work.'

Psalms 109:8

^{21,22}So now another man must join us and become a witness of Jesus' resurrection (*rising from death*). This man must be one of those men who were part of our group during all the time when the Lord Jesus was with us. This man must have been with us from the time John began to baptize* people until the day when Jesus was carried up from us into heaven."

²³The apostles* put two men before the group. One was Joseph Barsabbas. He was also called Justus. The other man was Matthias.

²⁴The apostles prayed, "Lord, you know the minds of all men. Show us which one of these two men you choose to do this work. Judas turned away from it and went where he belongs. Lord, show us which man should take his place as an apostle!" ²⁵Then the apostles used lots* to choose one of the two men. The lots showed that Matthias was the one that the Lord wanted. So he became an apostle with the other eleven.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 The apostles* were all together in one place when the day of Pentecost* came. ²Suddenly a noise came from the sky. It sounded like a strong wind blowing. This noise filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³They saw something that looked like flames of fire. The flames were separated and stood over each person there. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,* and they began to speak different languages. The Holy Spirit was giving them the power to do this.

⁵There were some very religious Jewish men in Jerusalem at this time. These men were from every country in the world. ⁶A large group of these men came together because they heard the noise. They were surprised because the apostles* were speaking, and every man heard in his own language. ⁷The Jews were all amazed at this. They did not understand how the apostles could do this. They said, "Look! These men (*the apostles*) that we hear speaking are all from Galilee*! ⁸But we hear them in our own languages. How is this possible? We are from different places: ⁹Parthia, Media, Elam, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia,* ¹⁰Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the areas of Libya near the city of Cyrene, Rome, ¹¹Crete and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews. Others

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

baptize A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

lots Rocks or sticks used like dice for making a choice.

Pentecost Jewish festival (50 days after Passover) celebrating the harvest of wheat.

from Galilee The people thought men from Galilee could speak only their own language.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

are converts.* We are from these different countries. But we can hear these men in our own languages! We can all understand the great things they are saying about God." ¹²The people were all amazed and confused. They asked each other, "What is happening?" ¹³Other people were laughing at the apostles. These people thought the apostles were drunk from too much wine.

Peter Speaks to the People

¹⁴Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles.* He spoke loudly so that all the people could hear. He said, "My Jewish brothers and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me. I will tell you something you need to know. Listen carefully. ¹⁵These men are not drunk like you think; it is only nine o'clock in the morning! ¹⁶But Joel the prophet* wrote about the things you see happening here today. This is what Joel wrote:

- ¹⁷ 'God says: In the last days,
I will pour out (give) my Spirit*
to all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.*
Your young men will see visions.*
Your old men will have special dreams.
¹⁸ At that time I will pour out (give) my
Spirit* to my servants,
men and women,
and they will prophesy.*
¹⁹ I will show amazing things
in the sky above.
I will give proofs on the earth below.
There will be blood, fire,
and thick smoke.
²⁰ The sun will be changed into darkness,

and the moon will become red
like blood.

Then the great and glorious
day of the Lord will come.

- ²¹ And every person who trusts in the Lord
will be saved.'

Joel 2:28-32

²²"My Jewish brothers, listen to these words: Jesus from Nazareth was a very special man. God clearly showed this to you. God proved this by the powerful and amazing things he did through Jesus. You all saw these things. So you know this is true. ²³Jesus was given to you, and you killed him. With the help of bad men you nailed Jesus to a cross. But God knew all this would happen. This was God's plan. God made this plan long ago. ²⁴Jesus suffered the pain of death, but God made him free. God raised Jesus from death. Death could not hold Jesus. ²⁵David said this about Jesus:

- 'I saw the Lord before me always;
he is at my right side to keep me safe.
²⁶ So my heart is glad,
and my mouth speaks with joy.
Yes, even my body will live with hope;
²⁷ because you will not leave my soul
in the place of death.*
You will not let the body of your Holy
One rot in the grave.
²⁸ You taught me how to live.
You will come close to me
and give me great joy.'

Psalms 16:8-11

²⁹"My brothers, I can tell you truly about David, our ancestor. He died and was buried. His grave is still here with us today. ³⁰David was a prophet* and knew something God said. God promised David that he would make a person from David's family to be a king like David. ³¹David knew this before it happened. That is why David said this about that person:

- 'He was not left in the place of death.*
His body did not rot in the grave.'

place of death Literally, "Hades."

converts People who have changed their religion to become Jews.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

prophet A prophet was a person who spoke for God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophesy Speak for God.

visions A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

David was talking about the Christ* rising from death. ²²So Jesus is the One God raised from death, not David,! We are all witnesses of this. We saw him! ²³Jesus was lifted up to heaven. Now Jesus is with God, at God's right side. The Father (God) has now given the Holy Spirit* to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is what God promised to give. So now Jesus is pouring out (giving) that Spirit. This is what you see and hear. ²⁴David was not the one who was lifted up to heaven. It was Jesus who was lifted up to heaven. David himself said:

'The Lord (God) said to my Lord:
Sit at my right side,
¹⁹ until I put your enemies
under your power.*'

Psalms 110:1

²⁵"So, all the Jewish people should know this truly: God has made Jesus to be Lord and Christ.* He is the man you nailed to the cross!"

²⁶When the people heard this, they felt very, very sorry. They asked Peter and the other apostles, ²⁷"What should we do?"

²⁸Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized,* each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.* ²⁹This promise is for you. It is also for your children and for the people who are far away. It is for every person that the Lord our God calls to himself."

³⁰Peter warned them with many other words; he begged them, "Save yourselves from the evil of the people that live now!" ³¹Then those people who accepted (believed) what Peter said were baptized.* ³²On that day about 3,000 people were added to the group of believers. ³³The believers continued to meet together. They used their time to learn the teaching of the

apostles.* The believers shared with each other. They ate* together and prayed together.

The Believers Share

¹"The apostles* were doing many powerful and amazing things; and every person felt great respect for God. ²All the believers stayed together. They shared everything. ³The believers sold their land and the things they owned. Then they divided the money and gave it to those people who needed it. ⁴The believers met together in the temple* every day. They all had the same purpose. They ate* together in their homes. They were happy to share their food and ate with joyful hearts. ⁵The believers praised God, and all the people liked them. More and more people were being saved every day; the Lord was adding those people to the group of believers."

Peter Heals a Crippled Man

3 One day Peter and John went to the temple.* It was three o'clock in the afternoon. This was the time for the daily temple prayer service. ²When they were going into the temple yard, a man was there. This man had been crippled all his life. He could not walk, so some friends carried him. His friends brought him to the temple every day. They put the crippled man by one of the gates outside the temple. It was called Beautiful Gate. There the man begged for money from the people going into the temple. ³That day, the man saw Peter and John going into the temple. He asked them for money. ⁴Peter and John looked at the crippled man and said, "Look at us!" ⁵The man looked at them; he thought they would give him some money. ⁶But Peter said, "I don't have any silver or gold, but I do have something else I can give you: By the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth—stand up and walk!" ⁷Then Peter held the man's right hand and lifted him up. Immediately the man's feet and legs

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.
Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.
until ... power Literally, "until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

ate Literally, "broke bread." This may mean a meal or the Lord's Supper, the special meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him (Luke 22:14-20).
temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

became strong. ¹⁰The man jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk. He went into the temple with them. The man was walking and jumping, and he was praising God. ¹¹All the people recognized him. The people knew he was the crippled man who always sat by Beautiful Gate to beg for money. Now they saw this same man walking and praising God. The people were amazed. They could not understand how this could happen.

Peter Speaks to the People

¹²The man was holding on to Peter and John. All the people were amazed because the man was healed. They ran to Peter and John at Solomon's Porch. ¹³When Peter saw this, he said to the people, "My Jewish brothers, why are you surprised at this? You are looking at us like it was our power that made this man walk. Do you think this was done because we are good? ¹⁴No! God did it! He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. ¹⁵He is the God of all our fathers (ancestors). He gave glory to Jesus, his special servant. But you gave Jesus to be killed. Pilate decided to let Jesus go free. But you told Pilate you did not want Jesus. ¹⁶Jesus was pure and good (innocent), but you said you did not want him. You told Pilate to give you a murderer* instead of Jesus. ¹⁷And so you killed the One that gives life! But God raised him from death. We are witnesses of this—we saw this with our own eyes. ¹⁸It was the power of Jesus that made this crippled man well. This happened because we trusted in the power of Jesus. You can see this man, and you know him. He was made completely well because of trust in Jesus. You all saw it happen!

¹⁹"My brothers, I know you did those things to Jesus because you did not understand what you were doing. Your leaders also did not understand. ²⁰God said that these things would

happen. God said through the prophets* that his Christ* would suffer and die. I have told you how God made this happen. ²¹So you must change your hearts and lives! Come back to God and he will forgive your sins. ²²Then the Lord (God) will give you times of spiritual rest. He will give you Jesus, the One he chose to be the Christ. ²³But Jesus must stay in heaven until the time when all things will be made right again. God told about this time long ago when he spoke through his holy prophets. ²⁴Moses said, 'The Lord your God will give you a prophet. That prophet will come from among your own people (the Jews). He will be like me. You must obey everything that prophet tells you. ²⁵And if any person refuses to obey that prophet, then that person will die, separated from God's people.'* ²⁶Samuel, and all the other prophets who spoke for God after Samuel, talked about this time now. ²⁷You have received the things the prophets talked about. You have received the agreement that God made with your fathers (ancestors). God said to your father Abraham, 'From your family all people on the earth will be blessed.'* ²⁸God has sent his special servant (Jesus). God sent him to you first. God sent Jesus to bless you. He does this by making each of you turn away from doing bad things."

Peter and John Before the Jewish Council

4 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, some men came to them. There were some Jewish priests, the captain of the soldiers that guarded the temple,* and some Sadducees.* ²They were upset because the two apostles* were teaching the people. Peter and John were preaching that people will rise from

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

'The Lord ... people' Quote from Deut. 18:15, 19.

'From ... blessed' Quote from Gen. 22:18; 26:24.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Solomon's Porch An area on the east side of the temple. It was covered by a roof.

Abraham...Isaac...Jacob Three of the most important leaders of the Old Testament.

murderer Barabbas, the man the Jews asked Pilate to let go free instead of Jesus (Lk. 23:18).

death through the power of Jesus. ³The Jewish leaders grabbed Peter and John and put them in jail. It was already night, so they kept Peter and John in jail until the next day. ⁴But many of the people that heard Peter and John preach believed the things they said. There were now about 5,000 men in the group of believers.

⁵The next day the Jewish leaders, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. ⁶Annas (the high priest*), Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were there. Everyone from the high priest's family was there. ⁷They made Peter and John stand before all the people there. The Jewish leaders asked them many times, "How did you make this crippled man well? What power did you use? With whose authority did you do this?"

⁸Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit.* He said to them, "Leaders of the people and you older leaders: 'Are you questioning us about the good thing that was done to this crippled man? Are you asking us who made him well? ⁹We want all of you and all the Jewish people to know that this man was made well by the power of Jesus Christ from Nazareth! You nailed Jesus to a cross. God raised him from death. This man was crippled, but he is now well and able to stand here before you because of the power of Jesus! ¹⁰Jesus is

'the stone* that you builders
thought was not important.
But this stone has become
the cornerstone.*'

Psalms 118:22

¹²Jesus is the only One who can save people. His name is the only power in the world that has been given to save people. We must be saved through Jesus!"

¹³The Jewish leaders understood that Peter and John had no special training or education. But the leaders also saw that Peter and John

were not afraid to speak. So the leaders were amazed. Then they realized that Peter and John had been with Jesus. ¹⁴They saw the crippled man standing there beside the two apostles.* They saw that the man was healed. So they could say nothing against the apostles. ¹⁵The Jewish leaders told them to leave the meeting. Then the leaders talked to each other about what they should do. ¹⁶They said, "What shall we do with these men (*the apostles*)? Every person in Jerusalem knows that they have done a great miracle.* This is clear. We cannot say it is not true. ¹⁷But we must make them afraid to talk to people about this man (*Jesus*). Then this problem will not spread among the people."

¹⁸So the Jewish leaders called Peter and John in again. They told the apostles* not to say anything or to teach anything in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "What do you think is right? What would God want? Should we obey you or God? ²⁰We cannot be quiet. We must tell people about the things we saw and heard." ²¹⁻²²The Jewish leaders could not find a way to punish the apostles, because all the people were praising God for what had been done. (This miracle* was a proof from God. The man that was healed was more than 40 years old!) So the Jewish leaders warned the apostles again and let them go free.

Peter and John Return to the Believers

²³Peter and John left the meeting of Jewish leaders and went to their own group. They told the group everything that the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders had said to them. ²⁴When the believers heard this, they prayed to God with one purpose—they all felt the same. They prayed, "Master, you are the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything in the world. ²⁵Our father (*ancestor*) David was your servant. With the help of the Holy Spirit* he wrote these words:

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

stone A picture or symbol meaning Jesus.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

‘Why are the nations shouting?
Why are the people of the world
planning things against God?’
It is hopeless!

- ²⁶ The kings of the earth prepare themselves
to fight,
and the rulers all come together
against the Lord (God)
and against his Christ.*

Palm 2:1-2

²⁷These things really happened when Herod,* Pontius Pilate, the nations, and the Jewish people all ‘came together’ against Jesus here in Jerusalem. Jesus is your holy Servant. He is the One you (God) made to be the Christ.* ²⁸These people that ‘came together’ against Jesus made your plan happen; it happened because of your power and your will. ²⁹And now, Lord, listen to what they are saying. They are trying to make us afraid! Lord, we are your servants. Help us to speak the things you want us to say without fear. ³⁰Help us to be brave by showing us your power; make sick people well, give proofs, and make miracles* happen by the power of Jesus, your holy servant.”

³¹After the believers prayed, the place where they were meeting shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,* and they continued to speak God’s message* without fear.

The Believers Share

³²The group of believers were joined in their hearts, and they had the same spirit. No person in the group said that the things he had were his own. Instead, they shared everything. ³³With great power the apostles* told the people that the Lord Jesus was truly raised from death. And God blessed all the believers very much. ³⁴They

all received the things they needed. Everyone that owned fields (*land*) or houses sold them for money. They brought the money ³⁵and gave it to the apostles. Then each person was given the things he needed.

³⁶One of the believers was named Joseph. The apostles* called him Barnabas. (This name means “a person who helps others.”) He was a Levite* born in Cyprus. ³⁷Joseph owned a field. He sold the field, brought the money, and gave it to the apostles.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 There was a man named Ananias. His wife’s name was Sapphira. Ananias sold some land that he had. ²But he gave only part of the money to the apostles.* He secretly kept some of the money for himself. His wife knew this, and she agreed with it. ³Peter said, “Ananias, why did you let Satan (*the devil*) rule your heart? You lied and tried to deceive (*fool*) the Holy Spirit.* You sold your field, but why did you keep part of the money for yourself? ⁴Before you sold the field, it belonged to you. And even after you sold it, you could have used the money any way you wanted. Why did you think of doing this bad thing? You lied to God, not to men!” ⁵When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Some young men came and wrapped his body. They carried it out and buried it. And every person that heard about this was filled with fear.

⁶About three hours later his wife (*Sapphira*) came in. Sapphira did not know about this thing that had happened to her husband. ⁷Peter said to her, “Tell me how much money you got for your field. Was it this much (*the amount Ananias had said*)?”

Sapphira answered, “Yes, that was all we got for the field.”

⁸Peter said to her, “Why did you and your husband agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! Do you hear those footsteps? The men that buried your husband are at the door! They will carry you out in the same way.” ⁹At that

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Herod Herod Antipas, tetrarch (ruler) of Galilee and Perea, son of Herod the Great.

miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does the work of God among people in the world.

God’s message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Levite Levites were men from the family group of Levi who helped the Jewish priests in the temple.

moment Sapphira fell down by his feet and died. The young men came in and saw that she was dead. The men carried her out and buried her beside her husband. "All the believers and all the other people who heard about these things were filled with fear.

Proofs from God

"The apostles* did many miracles* and powerful things. All the people saw these things. The apostles were together in Solomon's Porch*; they all had the same purpose. "None of the other people felt worthy to stand with them. All the people were saying good things about the apostles. "And more and more people believed in the Lord (*Jesus*)—many men and women were added to the group of believers. "So the people brought their sick people into the streets. The people heard that, Peter was coming by. So the people put their sick on little beds and mattresses. They thought that if the sick people could be close enough for Peter's shadow to touch them, it would be enough to heal them. "People came from all the towns around Jerusalem. They brought their sick people and those that were bothered by evil spirits from the devil. All of these people were healed.

The Jews Try to Stop the Apostles

"The high priest* and all his friends (a group called the Sadducees* became very jealous. "They grabbed the apostles* and put them in jail. "But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail. The angel led the apostles outside and said, "Go and stand in the temple.* Tell the people everything about this new life in Jesus." "When the apostles heard this, they obeyed and went into

the temple. It was early in the morning. The apostles began to teach the people.

The high priest* and his friends came to the temple*. They called a meeting of the Jewish leaders and all the important older men of the Jews. They sent some men to the jail to bring the apostles* to them. "When the men went to the jail, they could not find the apostles there. So they went back and told the Jewish leaders about this. "The men said, "The jail was closed and locked. The guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, the jail was empty!" "The captain of the temple guards and the leading priests heard this. They were confused. They wondered, "What will happen because of this?" "Then another man came and told them, "Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple. They are teaching the people!" "Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. But the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid of the people. The soldiers were afraid that the people would become angry and, kill them (*the soldiers*) with rocks.

"The soldiers brought the apostles* to the meeting and made them stand before the Jewish leaders. The high priest* questioned the apostles. "He said, "We told you never to teach about this man (*Jesus*)! But look what you have done! You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching. You are trying to make us responsible (*guilty*) for the death of this man (*Jesus*)."

"Peter and the other apostles* answered, "We must obey God, not you! "You killed Jesus. You hung him on a cross. But God, the same God our fathers (*ancestors*) had, raised Jesus up from death! "Jesus is the One that God raised to his right side. God made Jesus our Leader and Savior. God did this so that all Jews can change their hearts and lives. Then God can forgive their sins. "We saw all these things happen, and we can say these things are true. The Holy Spirit* also shows that these things are true. God has given the Spirit to all people who obey him."

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Solomon's Porch An area on the east side of the temple.

It was covered by a roof.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament. They believed that people don't live again after death.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

¹The Jewish leaders heard these words. They became very angry. They began to plan a way to kill the apostles.* ²One of the Pharisees* in the meeting stood up. His name was Gamaliel. He was a teacher of the law, and all the people respected him. He told the men to make the apostles leave the meeting for a few minutes. ³Then he said to them, "Men of Israel, be careful of what you are planning to do to these men! ⁴Remember when Theudas appeared? He said that he was an important man. About 400 men joined him. But he was killed. And all who followed him were scattered and ran away. They were able to do nothing. ⁵Later, a man named Judas came from Galilee. It was at the time of the registration.* He led a group of followers, too. He was also killed. And all his followers were scattered and ran away. ⁶And so now I tell you: Stay away from these men. Leave them alone. If their plan comes from men, it will fail. ⁷But if this is from God, then you will not be able to stop them. You might even be fighting against God himself!"

The Jewish leaders agreed with the thing that Gamaliel said. ⁸They called the apostles* in again. They beat the apostles and told them not to talk to people about Jesus again. Then they let the apostles go free. ⁹The apostles left the meeting. The apostles were happy because they were given the honor of suffering dishonor (*shame*) for the name of Jesus.* ¹⁰The apostles did not stop teaching people. The apostles continued to tell the people the Good News—that Jesus is the Christ.* They did this every day in the temple* and in people's homes.

Seven Men Chosen for a Special Work

6 More and more people were becoming followers of Jesus. But during this same

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

registration A census or counting of all the people and the things they own.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

time, the Greek-speaking followers had an argument with the other Jewish followers. They said that their widows* were not getting their share of the things that the followers received every day. ²The twelve apostles* called the whole group of followers together. The apostles said to them, "Our work of teaching God's word has stopped. That's not good! It is better for us to continue teaching God's word than to help people have something to eat. ³So, brothers, choose seven of your own men. They must be men that people say are good. They must be full of wisdom and full of the Spirit.* We will give them this work to do. ⁴Then we can use all our time to pray and to teach the word of God."

⁵The whole group liked the idea. So they chose these seven men: Stephen (a man with great faith and full of the Holy Spirit*), Philip,* Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus (a man from Antioch, who had become a Jew). ⁶Then they put these men before the apostles.* The apostles prayed and put their hands on* the men.

⁷The word of God was reaching more and more people. The group of followers in Jerusalem became larger and larger. Even a big group of Jewish priests believed and obeyed.

The Jews Against Stephen

¹Stephen (*one of the seven men*) received a great blessing. God gave Stephen power to do miracles* and to show proofs from God to the people. ²But some Jews came and argued with Stephen. These Jews were from a synagogue.* It was called a synagogue for Libertines.* (This synagogue was also for Jews from Cyrene, and

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

put ... on Here, doing this showed that these men were given a special work of God.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Libertines Jews who had been slaves or whose fathers had been slaves, but were now free.

for Jews from Alexandria.) Jews from Cilicia and Asia were with them. They all came and argued with Stephen. ¹⁰But the Spirit* was helping Stephen speak with wisdom. His words were so strong that the Jews could not argue with him. ¹¹So the Jews paid some men to say, "We heard Stephen say bad things against Moses and against God!" ¹²By doing this, these Jews upset the people, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law. They became so angry that they came and grabbed Stephen. They took him to a meeting of the Jewish leaders. ¹³The Jews brought some men into the meeting. They told these men to tell lies about Stephen. The men said, "This man (*Stephen*) always says bad things about this holy place (*the temple**). And he always says bad things against the law ^{of Moses}." ¹⁴We heard him say that Jesus from Nazareth will destroy this place. He also said that Jesus will change the things that Moses told us to do." ¹⁵All the people sitting in the meeting watched Stephen closely. His face looked like the face of an angel, and they saw it.

Stephen's Speech

7 The high priest* said to Stephen, "Are these things true?" ²Stephen answered, "My Jewish fathers and brothers, listen to me. Our glorious God appeared to Abraham, our father (*ancestor*). Abraham was in Mesopotamia. This was before he lived in Haran. ³God said to Abraham, 'Leave your country and your people, and go to the country I will show you.'* ⁴So Abraham left the country of Chaldea.* He went to live in Haran. After Abraham's father died, God sent him to this place here, where you live now. ⁵But God did not give Abraham any of this land. God did not give him even a foot of it. But God

promised that in the future he would give Abraham this land for himself and for his children. (This was before Abraham had any children.) ⁶This is what God said to him: 'Your descendants* will live in another country. They will be strangers. The people there will make them slaves and do bad things to them for 400 years. ⁷But I will punish the nation that made them slaves.'* And God also said, 'After those things happen, your people will come out of that country. Then your people will worship me here in this place.'* ⁸God made an agreement with Abraham; the sign for this agreement was circumcision.* And so when Abraham had a son, he circumcised his son when he was eight days old. His son's name was Isaac. Isaac also circumcised his son Jacob. And Jacob did the same for his sons. These sons later became, the twelve fathers.*

⁹These fathers became jealous of Joseph (*their younger brother*). They sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. But God was with Joseph. ¹⁰Joseph had many troubles there, but God saved him from all those troubles. Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. He liked Joseph and respected him because of the wisdom that God gave Joseph. Pharaoh gave Joseph the job of being a governor of Egypt. He even let Joseph rule over all the people in Pharaoh's house. ¹¹But all the land of Egypt and of Canaan became dry. It became so dry that food could not grow there. This made the people suffer very much. Our fathers* could not find anything to eat. ¹²But Jacob heard that there was food stored in Egypt. So he sent our fathers (*Jacob's sons*) there. (This was their first trip to Egypt.) ¹³Then they went there a second time. This time, Joseph told his brothers who he was. And Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. ¹⁴Then Joseph sent some men

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

'Leave ... you' Quote from Gen. 12:1.

Chaldea Or Babylonia, a land in the south part of Mesopotamia. See verse 2.

descendants All the people born in a person's family after that person dies.

'Your ... slaves' Quote from Gen. 15:13-14.

'After ... place' Quote from Gen. 15:14, Ex. 3:12.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

fathers Important ancestors of the Jews; the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups.

to invite Jacob, his father, to come to Egypt. He also invited all his relatives (75 persons altogether). ¹³So Jacob went down to Egypt. Jacob and our fathers (*ancestors*) lived there until they died. ¹⁴Later their bodies were moved to Shechem. They were put in a grave there. (It was the same grave that Abraham had bought in Shechem from the sons of Hamor. He paid them with silver.)

¹⁵"The number of Jewish people in Egypt grew. There were more and more of our people there. (The promise that God made to Abraham was soon to come true.) ¹⁶Then a different king began to rule Egypt. He knew nothing about Joseph. ¹⁷This king tricked (*deceived*) our people. He was bad to our fathers (*ancestors*). The king made them put their children outside to die. ¹⁸This was the time when Moses was born. He was a very fine child. For three months they took care of Moses in his father's house. ¹⁹When they put Moses outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him. She raised him like he was her own son. ²⁰The Egyptians taught Moses about all the things they knew. He was powerful in the things he said and did.

²¹"When Moses was about 40 years old, he thought it would be good to visit his brothers, the Jewish people. ²²Moses saw an Egyptian man doing wrong to a Jew. So he defended the Jew. Moses punished the Egyptian for hurting the Jew; Moses hit him so hard that he died. ²³Moses thought that his Jewish brothers would understand that God was using him to save them. But they did not understand. ²⁴The next day, Moses saw two Jewish men fighting. He tried to make peace between them. He said, "Men, you are brothers! Why are you doing wrong to each other?" ²⁵The man who was doing wrong to the other man pushed Moses away. He said to Moses, "Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No! ²⁶Will you kill me like you killed the Egyptian man yesterday?" ²⁷When Moses heard him say this, he left Egypt. He went to live in the land of Midian. He was a stranger there. While Moses lived in Midian, he had two sons.

²⁸"After 40 years Moses was in the desert near Mount Sinai. An angel appeared to him in the flame of a burning bush. ²⁹When Moses saw this, he was amazed. He went near to look closer at it. Moses heard a voice; it was the Lord's (*God's*). ³⁰The Lord said, 'I am the same God your fathers (*ancestors*) had—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*.' ³¹Moses began to shake with fear. He was afraid to look at the bush. ³²The Lord said to him, 'Take off your shoes, because the place where you are now standing is holy ground.' ³³I have seen my people suffer much in Egypt. I have heard my people crying. I have come down to save them. Come now, Moses, I am sending you back to Egypt.*

³⁴"This Moses was the same man the Jews said they did not want. They had said to him, 'Did anyone say you could be our ruler and judge? No!' Moses is the same man that God sent to be a ruler and savior. God sent Moses with the help of an angel. This was the angel Moses saw in the burning bush. ³⁵So Moses led the people out. He did powerful things and miracles.* ³⁶Moses did these things in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and then in the desert for 40 years. ³⁷This is the same Moses that said these words to the Jewish people: 'God will give you a prophet.* That prophet will come from among your own people. He will be like me.*' ³⁸This is the same Moses who was with the gathering of the Jews, in the desert. He was with the angel that spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and he was with our fathers (*ancestors*). Moses received commands from God, that give life. Moses gave us those commands.

³⁹"But our fathers (*ancestors*) did not want to obey Moses. They rejected him. They wanted to go back to Egypt again. ⁴⁰Our fathers said to Aaron, 'Moses led us out of the country of Egypt. But we don't know what has

Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob Three of the most important leaders of the Old Testament.

'I am ... Jacob' Quote from Ex. 3:6.

'Take ... Egypt' Quote from Ex. 3:5-10.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

prophet Person who spoke for God.

'God ... me' Quote from Deut. 18:15.

'Did ... yesterday' Quote from Ex. 2:14.

happened to him. So make some gods to go before us and lead us.* "So the people made an idol that looked like a calf. Then they brought sacrifices (*gifts*) to it. The people were very happy with what they had made with their own hands! "But God turned against them. God finished trying to stop them from worshiping the army of false gods, in the sky. This is what is written in the book of the prophets* God says,

'You Jewish people did not bring me blood offerings and sacrifices* in the desert for 40 years;

" You carried with you the tent (*place of worship*) for Moloch (*a false god*) and the image of the star of your god Rephan.

These were the idols you made to worship.

So I will send you away beyond Babylon.'

Amos 5:25-27

"The tent* where God spoke to our fathers (*ancestors*) was with these Jews in the desert. God told Moses how to make this tent. He made it like the plan that God showed him. "Later, Joshua led our fathers to capture the lands of the other nations. Our people went in and God made the other people go out. When our people went into this new land, they took with them this same tent. Our people received this tent from their fathers, and our people kept it until the time of David. "God was very pleased with David. David asked God to let him build a house (*temple**) for him, the God of Jacob. "But Solomon (*David's son*) was the person who built the temple.

"But the Most High (*God*) does not live in houses that men build with their hands. This is what the prophet* writes:

'Moses ... us' Quote from Ex. 32:1.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

sacrifices Offerings or gifts to God.

tent This tent, which could be moved, was used as a place for worship like the temple that was built later.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophet Isaiah, who spoke for God about 740-700 B.C.

'The Lord says,
Heaven is my throne.

" The earth is a place to rest my feet.
What kind of house can you build for me?

There is no place where I need to rest!

" Remember, I made all these things!"

Isaiah 66:1-2

"Stephen continued speaking: "You stubborn Jewish leaders! You have not given your hearts to God! You won't listen to him! You are always against what the Holy Spirit* is trying to tell you. Your fathers (*ancestors*) did this, and you are just like them! "Your fathers persecuted (*did bad things to*) every prophet* that ever lived. Those prophets said long ago that the Righteous One (*Christ*) would come. But your fathers killed those prophets. And now you have turned against the Righteous One and killed him. "You are the people that received the law of Moses. God gave you this law through his angels. But you don't obey this law!"

Stephen Is Killed

"The Jewish leaders heard Stephen say these things. They became very angry. The Jewish leaders were so mad that they were grinding their teeth at Stephen. "But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit.* Stephen looked up into the sky. He saw the glory of God. He saw Jesus standing at God's right side. "Stephen said, "Look! I see heaven open. And I see the Son of Man (*Jesus*) standing at God's right side!"

"Then the Jewish leaders all shouted with a loud voice. They closed (*covered*) their ears with their hands. They all ran at Stephen together. "They took him out of the city and threw rocks at him until he was dead. The men who told lies against Stephen gave their coats to a young man named Saul. "Then they threw rocks at Stephen. But Stephen was praying. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" "He fell

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

on his knees and shouted, "Lord, don't blame them for this sin!" After Stephen said this, he died.

8 Saul agreed that the killing of Stephen was a good thing.

Trouble for the Believers

¹¹Some good (*religious*) men buried Stephen. They cried very loudly for him. On that day the Jews began to persecute* the group of believers in Jerusalem. The Jews made them suffer very much. Saul was also trying to destroy the group. Saul went into their houses. He dragged out men and women and put them in jail. All the believers left Jerusalem. Only the apostles* stayed. The believers went to different places in Judea and Samaria. ¹²The believers were scattered everywhere. Every place the believers went they told people the Good News.*

Philip Preaches in Samaria

¹³Philip* went to the city of Samaria. He preached about the Christ.* ¹⁴The people there heard Philip and saw the miracles* he was doing. They all listened carefully to the things Philip said. ¹⁵Many of these people had evil spirits from the devil, inside them. But Philip made the evil spirits leave them. The spirits made a loud noise when they came out. There were also many weak and crippled people there. Philip made these people well, too. ¹⁶The people in that city were very happy because of this.

¹⁷But there was a man named Simon in that city. Before Philip came there, Simon did magic tricks. He amazed all the people of Samaria with his tricks. Simon boasted and called himself a great man. ¹⁸All the people – the least important and the most important –

believed the things Simon said. The people said, "This man has the power of God that is called 'the Great Power!'" ¹⁹Simon amazed the people with his magic tricks so long that the people became his followers. ²⁰But Philip told the people the Good News* about the kingdom of God and the power of Jesus Christ. Men and women believed Philip. They were baptized.* ²¹Simon himself also believed and was baptized. Simon stayed very close to Philip. He saw the miracles* and the very powerful things that Philip did. Simon was amazed.

²²The apostles* were still in Jerusalem. They heard that the people of Samaria had accepted the word of God. So the apostles sent Peter and John to the people in Samaria. ²³When Peter and John arrived, they prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit.* ²⁴These people had been baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. But the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them. This is why Peter and John prayed. ²⁵The two apostles put their hands on* the people. Then the people received the Holy Spirit.

²⁶Simon saw that the Spirit* was given to people when the apostles* put their hands on them. So Simon offered the apostles money. ²⁷Simon said, "Give me this power so that when I put my hands on a person, he will receive the Holy Spirit.*"

²⁸Peter said to Simon, "You and your money should both be destroyed! You thought you could buy God's gift with money. ²⁹You cannot share with us in this work. Your heart is not right before God. ³⁰Change your heart! Turn away from this bad thing you have done. Pray to the Lord (God). Maybe he will forgive you for thinking this. ³¹I see that you are full of bitter jealousy and ruled by sin."

³²Simon answered, "Both of you pray for me to the Lord (God). Pray that the things you

persecute To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

put ... on Here, doing this showed that the apostles had God's authority or power to give people the special powers of the Holy Spirit.

have said will not happen to me!"

²⁵Then the two apostles* told the people the things they had seen Jesus do. The apostles told the people the message* of the Lord. Then they went back to Jerusalem. On the way they went through many Samaritan towns and preached the Good News* to the people.

Philip Teaches a Man from Ethiopia

²⁶An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip.* The angel said, "Get ready and go south. Go to the road that leads down to Gaza from Jerusalem—the road that goes through the desert." ²⁷So Philip got ready and went. On the road he saw a man from Ethiopia. This man was a eunuch.* He was an important officer in the service of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians. He was responsible for taking care of all her money. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. ²⁸Now he was on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot* and reading from the book of Isaiah, the prophet.* ²⁹The Spirit* said to Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." ³⁰So Philip went toward the chariot, and he heard the man reading. He was reading from Isaiah, the prophet. Philip said to him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹The man answered, "How can I understand? I need some person to explain it to me!" Then he invited Philip to climb in and sit with him. ³²The part of Scripture* that he was reading was this:

"He was like a sheep when it is taken to be killed.

He was like a lamb that makes no sound when someone cuts off its wool. He says nothing.

³³ He was shamed; and all his rights were taken away.

His life on earth was ended; There will be no story about his family (*descendants*)."

Isaiah 53:7-8

³⁴The officer said to Philip, "Please, tell me, who is the prophet* talking about? Is he talking about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵Philip began to speak. He started with this same Scripture and told the man the Good News* about Jesus.

³⁶While they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The officer said, "Look! Here is water! What is stopping me from being baptized*?" ³⁷Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁸When they came up out of the water, the Spirit* of the Lord took Philip away; the officer never saw him again. The officer continued on his way home. He was very happy. ³⁹But Philip appeared in a city called Azotus. He was going to the city of Caesarea. He preached the Good News* in all the towns on the way from Azotus to Caesarea.

Saul Is Converted

9 In Jerusalem, Saul was still trying to scare and kill the followers of the Lord (*Jesus*) all the time. So he went to the high priest.* ²Saul asked him to write letters to the Jews of the synagogues* in the city of Damascus. Saul wanted the high priest to give him the authority to find people in Damascus who were followers

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
message, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven.

Philip Not the apostle named Philip.

eunuch Man who cannot have sexual relations. Rulers often gave them important work.

chariot Something like a wagon pulled by horses.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scripture A part of the Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Verse 37 Some late copies of Acts add verse 37: "Philip answered, 'If you believe with all your heart, you can.' The officer said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

of Christ's, Way. If he found any believers there, men or women, he would arrest them and bring them back to Jerusalem.

¹So Saul went to Damascus. When he came near the city, a very bright light from the sky suddenly shined around him. ²Saul fell to the ground. He heard a voice saying to him: "Saul, Saul! Why are you doing these bad things to me?"

³Saul said, "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice answered, "I am Jesus. I am the One you are trying to hurt. ⁴Get up now and go into the city. Someone there will tell you what you must do."

⁵The men traveling with Saul stood there. They said nothing. The men heard the voice, but they saw no one. ⁶Saul got up from the ground. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. So the men with Saul held his hand and led him into Damascus. ⁷For three days Saul could not see; he did not eat or drink.

⁸There was a follower of Jesus in Damascus. His name was Ananias. The Lord (Jesus) spoke to Ananias in a vision*: "Ananias!"

Ananias answered, "Here I am, Lord."

⁹The Lord said to Ananias, "Get up and go to the street called Straight Street. Find the house of Judas.* Ask for a man named Saul from the city of Tarsus. He is there now, praying. ¹⁰Saul has seen a vision.* In this vision a man named Ananias came to him and put his hands on him. Then Saul could see again."

¹¹But Ananias answered, "Lord (Jesus), many people have told me about this man (Saul). They told me about the many bad things this man did to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹²Now he (Saul) has come here to Damascus. The leading priests have given him the power to arrest all people who believe in you.*"

¹³But the Lord (Jesus) said to Ananias, "Go! I have chosen Saul for an important work. He must tell about me to kings, to the Jewish

people, and to other nations. ¹⁴I will show Saul the things he must suffer for my name."

¹⁵So Ananias left and went to the house of Judas. He put his hands on Saul and said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord Jesus sent me. He is the One you saw on the road when you came here. Jesus sent me so that you can see again and so that you can be filled with the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁶Immediately, something that looked like fish scales fell off Saul's eyes. Saul was able to see again! Saul got up and was baptized.* ¹⁷Then he ate some food and began to feel strong again.

Saul Preaches in Damascus

Saul stayed with the followers of Jesus in Damascus for a few days. ²Soon he began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues.* He told the people, "Jesus is the Son of God!"

³All the people who heard Saul were amazed. They said, "This is the same man that was in Jerusalem. He was trying to destroy the people that trust in this name (Jesus)! He (Saul) has come here to do the same thing. He came here to arrest the followers of Jesus, and take them back to Jerusalem, to the leading priests."

⁴But Saul became more and more powerful. He proved that Jesus is the Christ.* His proofs were so strong that the Jews who lived in Damascus could not argue with him.

Saul Escapes from the Jews

¹After many days, the Jews made plans to kill Saul. ²The Jews were watching the city gates day and night, waiting for Saul. They wanted to kill him. But Saul learned about their plan. ³One night some followers that Saul had taught helped him leave the city. The followers put Saul in a basket. They put the basket

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baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Judas This is not either of the apostles named Judas.

believe in you Literally, "call on your name," meaning to show faith in Jesus by worshipping him.

through a hole in the city wall and lowered him down.

Saul in Jerusalem

²Then Saul went to Jerusalem. He tried to join the group of followers (*believers*), but they were all afraid of him. They did not believe that Saul was really a follower of Jesus.³ But Barnabas accepted Saul and brought him to the apostles.⁴ Barnabas told the apostles that Saul had seen the Lord (*Jesus*) on the road to Damascus.⁵ Barnabas explained to the apostles how the Lord had spoken to Saul. Then he told the apostles that Saul preached for the Lord (*Jesus*) without fear to the people in Damascus.

⁶And so Saul stayed with the followers. He went everywhere in Jerusalem, preaching for the Lord (*Jesus*) without fear.⁷ Saul often talked with the Jews that spoke Greek. He had arguments with them. But they were trying to kill him.⁸ When the brothers (*believers*) learned about this, they took Saul to the city of Caesarea. From Caesarea they sent Saul to the city of Tarsus.

⁹The church (*believers*) everywhere in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had a time of peace. With the help of the Holy Spirit,¹⁰ the group became stronger. The believers showed that they respected the Lord by the way they lived. Because of this, the group of believers grew larger and larger.

¹¹Peter traveled through all the towns around Jerusalem.¹² He visited the believers who lived in Lydda.¹³ In Lydda he met a paralyzed (*crippled*) man named Aeneas. Aeneas had not been able to leave his bed for the past eight years.¹⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Stand up and make your bed! You can do this for yourself now!" Aeneas stood up immediately.¹⁵ All the people living in Lydda and on the plain of Sharon saw him. These people turned to (*believed in*) the Lord (*Jesus*).

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

believers Literally, "holy ones," a name for people that believe in Jesus.

Peter in Joppa

¹In the city of Joppa there was a follower of Jesus, named Tabitha. (Her Greek name, Dorcas, means "a deer.") She always did good things for people. She always gave money to people who needed it.² While Peter was in Lydda, Tabitha became sick and died. They washed her body and put it in a room upstairs.³ The followers in Joppa heard that Peter was in Lydda. (Lydda is near Joppa.) So they sent two men to Peter. They begged him, "Hurry, please come quickly!"⁴ Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows⁵ stood around Peter. They were crying. They showed Peter the coats and other clothes that Dorcas (*Tabitha*) had made when she was still alive.⁶ Peter sent all the people out of the room. He kneeled and prayed. Then he turned to Tabitha's body and said, "Tabitha, stand up!" She opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up.⁷ He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. Then he called the believers⁸ and the widows into the room. He showed them Tabitha; she was alive!⁹ People everywhere in Joppa learned about this. Many of these people believed in the Lord (*Jesus*).¹⁰ Peter stayed in Joppa for many days. He stayed with a man named Simon who was a leatherworker.¹¹

Peter and Cornelius

10 In the city of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius. He was an army officer¹ in the "Italian" group of the Roman army.² Cornelius was a good (*religious*) man. He and all the other people who lived in his home worshiped the true God. He gave much of his money to the poor people. Cornelius prayed to God always.³ One afternoon about three o'clock, Cornelius saw a vision.⁴ He saw it clearly. In the vision an angel from God came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

'Cornelius looked at the angel. He became afraid and said, "What do you want, sir?"

The angel said to Cornelius, "God has heard your prayers. He has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. 'Send some men now to the city of Joppa. Send your men to bring back a man named Simon. Simon is also called Peter. 'Simon is staying with a man, also named Simon, who is a leatherworker.* He has a house beside the sea.'" The angel who spoke to Cornelius left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants and a soldier. This soldier was a good (*religious*) man. The soldier was one of Cornelius' close helpers. 'Cornelius explained everything to these three men. Then he sent them to Joppa.

'The next day these men came near Joppa. At that time, Peter was going up to the roof to pray. It was about noon. ¹⁰Peter was hungry. He wanted to eat. But while they were preparing the food for Peter to eat, a vision* came to him. ¹¹He saw something coming down through the open sky. It looked like a big sheet coming down to the ground. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²Every kind of animal was in it—animals that walk, animals that crawl on the ground, and birds that fly in the air. ¹³Then a voice said to Peter, "Get up, Peter; kill any of these animals and eat it."

"But Peter said, "I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten food that is unholy or not pure."

¹³But the voice said to him again, "God has made these things clean (*pure*). Don't call them 'unholy'!" ¹⁴This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back up into the sky.

¹⁵Peter wondered what this vision* meant. The men that Cornelius sent had found Simon's house. They were standing at the door. ¹⁶"They asked, "Is Simon Peter staying here?"

¹⁷Peter was still thinking about the vision.* But the Spirit* said to him, "Listen! Three men

are looking for you. ¹⁸Get up and go downstairs. Go with these men and don't ask questions. I have sent them to you." ¹⁹So Peter went downstairs to the men. He said, "I am the man you are looking for. Why did you come here?"

²⁰The men said, "A holy angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house. Cornelius is an army officer.* He is a good (*righteous*) man; he worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. The angel told Cornelius to invite you to his house so that he can listen to the things you have to say." ²¹Peter asked the men to come in and stay for the night.

The next day Peter got ready and went away with the three men. Some of the brothers (*believers*) from Joppa went with Peter. ²²The next day they came into the city of Caesarea. Cornelius was waiting for them. He had already gathered his relatives and close friends at his house. ²³When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and worshiped him. ²⁴But Peter told him to get up. Peter said, "Stand up! I am only a man like you." ²⁵Peter continued talking with Cornelius. Then Peter went inside and saw a large group of people together there. ²⁶Peter said to the people, "You people understand that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to associate with or visit any person who is not a Jew. But God has shown me that I should not call any person 'unholy' or 'not clean.' ²⁷That is why I did not argue when the men asked me to come here. Now, please tell me why you sent for me."

²⁸Cornelius said, "Four days ago, I was praying in my house. It was at this same time—three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was a man (*angel*) standing before me. He was wearing bright, shiny clothes. ²⁹The man said, 'Cornelius! God has heard your prayer. God has seen the things you give to the poor people. God remembers you. ³⁰So send some men to the city of Joppa. Ask Simon Peter to come. Peter is staying in the house of a man,

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

also named Simon, who is a leatherworker.* His house is beside the sea.”³³ So I sent for you immediately. It was very good of you to come here. Now we are all here before God to hear everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

Peter Speaks in the House of Cornelius

*Peter began to speak: “I really understand now that to God every person is the same.³⁴ And God accepts any person who worships him and does what is right. It is not important what country a person comes from. *God has spoken to the Jewish people. God sent them the Good News* that peace has come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord (*Ruler*) of all people! *You know what has happened all over Judea. It began in Galilee after John* preached to the people about baptism.* *You know about Jesus from Nazareth. God made him the Christ* by giving him the Holy Spirit* and power. Jesus went everywhere doing good things for people. Jesus healed the people who were ruled by the devil. This showed that God was with Jesus. *We saw all the things that Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem. We are witnesses. But Jesus was killed. They put him on a cross made of wood. *But, on the third day (after his death), God raised Jesus to life! God let people see Jesus clearly. *But Jesus was not seen by all the people. Only the witnesses that God had already chosen saw him. We are those witnesses! We ate and drank with Jesus after he was raised from death. *Jesus told us to preach to the people. He told us to tell people that he is the One that God chose to be the Judge of all people who are living and all people who are dead. *Every

leatherworker Man who made leather from animal skins.
Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.
John John the Baptist, who preached to people about Christ’s coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).
baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.
Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

person who believes (*trusts*) in Jesus will be forgiven. God will forgive the sins of that person through the name of Jesus. All the prophets* say this is true.”

The Holy Spirit Comes to Non-Jews

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those people who were listening to his speech. *The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed. They were amazed that the Holy Spirit was poured out (*given*) to the non-Jewish people too. *These Jewish believers heard them speaking different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, “*We cannot refuse to allow these people to be baptized* in water. They have received the Holy Spirit the same as we did!” *So Peter commanded that Cornelius and his relatives and friends be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then the people asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Returns to Jerusalem

11 The apostles* and the brothers in Judea heard that non-Jewish people had accepted God’s teaching too. *But when Peter came to Jerusalem, some Jewish believers* argued with him. *They said, “You went into the homes of people that are not Jews and are not circumcised*! You even ate with them!”

*So Peter explained the whole story to them. *Peter said, “I was in the city of Joppa. While I

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.
Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.
baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.
apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
Jewish believers Literally, “those of circumcision.” This may mean Jews who thought that all Christians must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses (See Gal. 2:12).
circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

was praying, a vision* came to me. In the vision I saw something coming down from the sky. It looked like a big sheet. It was being lowered to the ground by its four corners. It came down and stopped very close to me. ⁶I looked inside it. I saw animals, both tame and wild. I saw animals that crawl and birds that fly in the air. ⁷I heard a voice say to me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill any of these animals and eat it!' ⁸But I said, 'I would never do that, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unholy or not pure.' ⁹But the voice from the sky answered again, 'God has made these things clean (*pure*). Don't call them unholy!' ¹⁰This happened three times. Then the whole thing was taken back into the sky. ¹¹Then three men came to the house where I was staying. These three men were sent to me from the city of Caesarea. ¹²The Spirit* told me to go with them without doubting. These six brothers (*believers*) here also went with me. We went to the house of Cornelius. ¹³Cornelius told us about the angel he saw standing in his house. The angel said to Cornelius, 'Send some men to Joppa. Invite Simon Peter to come.' ¹⁴He will speak to you. The things he will say will save you and all your family.' ¹⁵After I began my speech, the Holy Spirit* came on them the same as he (*the Spirit*) came on us at the beginning.* ¹⁶Then I remembered the words of the Lord (*Jesus*). The Lord said, 'John baptized* people in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Spirit!' ¹⁷God gave to these people the same gift that he gave to us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So could I stop the work of God? No!"

"When the Jewish believers heard these things, they stopped arguing. They praised God and said, "So God is allowing the non-Jewish people to change their hearts and have life the same as us!"

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

beginning The beginning of the church on the day of Pentecost. (Read Acts 2).

baptized A Greek word meaning to immerse, dip, or bury a person or thing briefly under water.

The Good News Comes to Antioch

¹⁸The believers were scattered by the persecution* that happened after Stephen was killed. Some of the believers went to places far away like Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. The believers told the Good News* in these places; but they told it only to Jews. ¹⁹Some of these believers were men from Cyprus and Cyrene. When these men came to Antioch, they also spoke to Greeks (*non-Jews*). They told these Greek people the Good News about the Lord Jesus. ²⁰The Lord was helping the believers. And a large group of people believed and started following the Lord (*Jesus*).

²¹The church (*group of believers*) in Jerusalem heard about these new believers in Antioch. So the believers in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²²Barnabas was a good man. He was full of the Holy Spirit* and full of faith. When Barnabas went to Antioch, he saw that God had blessed those people very much. This made Barnabas very happy. He encouraged all the believers in Antioch. He told them, "Never lose your faith. Always obey the Lord with all your hearts." Many, many people became followers of the Lord Jesus.

²³Then Barnabas went to the city of Tarsus. He was looking for Saul. ²⁴When he found Saul, Barnabas brought him to Antioch. Saul and Barnabas taught many people. In Antioch the followers of Jesus were called "Christians" for the first time.

²⁵About that same time some prophets* went from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁶One of these prophets was named Agabus. In Antioch, Agabus stood up and spoke. With the help of the Holy Spirit* he said, "A very bad time is coming to the whole world. There will be no food for people to eat." (This time without food

persecution A time when the Jews were punishing people who believed in Christ (Acts 8:1-4).

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

prophets People who spoke for God.

happened when Claudius was emperor.)* ²⁰The believers decided that they would all try to help their brothers and sisters, who lived in Judea. Each believer planned to send them as much as he could. ²¹They gathered the money and gave it to Barnabas and Saul. Then Barnabas and Saul brought it to the elders* in Judea.

Herod Agrippa Hurts the Church

12 During that same time King Herod* began to persecute (*do bad things to*) some of the people who belonged to the church (*group of believers*). ¹Herod ordered James to be killed with a sword. James was the brother of John. ²Herod saw that the Jews liked this. So he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Jewish holiday called the Passover.)* ³Herod arrested Peter and put him in jail. A group of 16 soldiers guarded Peter. Herod wanted to wait until after the Passover Festival. Then he planned to bring Peter before the people. ⁴So Peter was kept in jail. But the church was constantly praying to God for Peter.

Peter Leaves the Jail

⁵Peter was sleeping between two of the soldiers. He was bound with two chains. More soldiers were guarding the door of the jail. It was at night, and Herod planned to bring Peter out before the people the next day. ⁶Suddenly, an angel of the Lord stood there. A light shined in the room. The angel touched Peter on the side and woke him up. The angel said, "Hurry, get up!" The chains fell off Peter's hands. ⁷The angel said to Peter, "Get dressed and put on your shoes." And so Peter did this. Then the angel said, "Put on your coat and follow me." ⁸So the angel went out and Peter followed. Peter did not know if the angel was really doing

this. He thought he might be seeing a vision.* ⁹Peter and the angel went past the first guard and the second guard. Then they came to the iron gate that separated them from the city. The gate opened itself for them. Peter and the angel went through the gate and walked about a block. Then the angel suddenly left.

¹⁰Peter realized then what had happened. He thought, "Now I know that the Lord really sent his angel to me. He rescued (*saved*) me from Herod. The Jewish people thought that bad things would happen to me. But the Lord saved me from all these things."

¹¹When Peter realized this, he went to the home of Mary. She was the mother of John. (John was also called Mark.) Many people were gathered there. They were all praying. ¹²Peter knocked on the outside door. A servant girl named Rhoda came to answer it. ¹³Rhoda recognized Peter's voice, and she was very happy. She even forgot to open the door. She ran inside and told the group, "Peter is at the door!" ¹⁴The believers said to Rhoda, "You are crazy!" But she continued to say that it was true. So they said, "It must be Peter's angel."

¹⁵But Peter continued to knock. When the believers opened the door, they saw Peter. They were amazed. ¹⁶Peter made a sign with his hand to tell them to be quiet. He explained to them how the Lord led him out of the jail. He said, "Tell James and the other brothers what happened." Then Peter left to go to another place.

¹⁷The next day the soldiers were very upset. They wondered what happened to Peter. ¹⁸Herod looked everywhere for Peter but could not find him. So Herod questioned the guards. Then he ordered that the guards be killed.

The Death of Herod Agrippa

Later Herod* moved from Judea. He went to the city of Caesarea and stayed there a while. ²Herod was very angry with the people from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Those people all came in a group to Herod. They were able to

emperor The ruler (*leader*) of the Roman empire.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (*"shepherds"*), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

Herod Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

get Blastus on their side. Blastus was the king's personal servant. The people asked Herod for peace because their country needed food from Herod's country.

²¹Herod decided a day to meet with them. On that day Herod was wearing a beautiful royal robe. He sat on his throne and made a speech to the people. ²²The people shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not a man!" ²³Herod accepted this praise and, did not give the glory to God. So an angel of the Lord caused him to become sick. He was eaten by worms inside him, and he died.

²⁴The message* of God was spreading and influencing more and more people. The group of believers became larger and larger.

²⁵After Barnabas and Saul finished their work in Jerusalem, they returned to Antioch. John Mark was with them.

Barnabas and Saul Given a Special Work

13 In the church (*group of believers*) at Antioch there were some prophets* and teachers. They were: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod,* the ruler) and Saul. ²These men were all serving the Lord and fasting.* The Holy Spirit* said to them, "Give Barnabas and Saul to me to do a special work. I have chosen them to do this work."

³So the church fasted* and prayed. They put their hands on* Barnabas and Saul and sent them out.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

prophets People who spoke for God.

Herod Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great.

fasting, fasted To fast is to live without food for a special time of prayer and worship to God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

put their hands on Here, this was a sign to show that these men were given a special work of God.

Barnabas and Saul In Cyprus

¹Barnabas and Saul were sent out by the Holy Spirit.* They went to the city of Seleucia. Then they sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus. ²When Barnabas and Saul came to the city of Salamis, they preached the message* of God in the Jewish synagogues.* (John Mark, was with them to help.)

³They went across the whole island to the city of Paphos. In Paphos they met a Jewish man who did magic tricks. His name was Barjesus. He was a false prophet.* ⁴Barjesus always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, the governor. Sergius Paulus was a wise man. He asked Barnabas and Saul to come to him. He wanted to hear the message* of God. ⁵But Elymas, the magician, was against Barnabas and Saul. (Elymas is the name for Barjesus in the Greek language.) Elymas tried to stop the governor from believing in Jesus. ⁶But Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.* (Saul's other name was Paul.) Paul looked at Elymas (*Barjesus*) ⁷and said, "You son of the devil! You are an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of evil tricks and lies. You always try to change the Lord's truths into lies! ⁸Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun."

⁹Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost. He was trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. ¹⁰When the governor (*Sergius Paulus*) saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Leave Cyprus

¹¹Paul and those people with him sailed away from Paphos. They came to Parga, a city in Pamphylia. But John Mark, left them; he returned to Jerusalem. ¹²They continued their trip from Parga and went to Antioch, a city near

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

false prophet A person who says he speaks for God but does not really speak God's truth.

Pisidia. In Antioch on the Sabbath day* they went into the Jewish synagogue* and sat down. ¹⁵The law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* were read. Then the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to Paul and Barnabas: "Brothers, if you have something to say that will help the people here, please speak!"

¹⁶Paul stood up. He raised his hand* and said, "My Jewish brothers and you other people who also worship the true God, please listen to me! ¹⁷The God of Israel (*the Jews*) chose our fathers (*ancestors*). God helped his people to have success during the time they lived in Egypt as strangers. God brought them out of that country with great power. ¹⁸And God was patient with them for 40 years in the desert. ¹⁹God destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan. He gave their land to his people. ²⁰All this happened in about 450 years.

"After this, God gave our people, judges (*leaders*) until the time of Samuel* the prophet. ²¹Then the people asked for a king. God gave them Saul, the son of Kish. Saul was from the family group of Benjamin. He was king for 40 years. ²²After God took Saul away, God made David their king. This is what God said about David: 'David, the son of Jesse, is the man I like. He will do all the things I want him to do.' ²³God has brought one of David's descendants to Israel (*the Jews*) to be their Savior.* That descendant is Jesus. God promised to do this. ²⁴Before Jesus came, John* preached to all the Jewish people. John told the people to be baptized* to show they wanted to change their lives. ²⁵When John was finishing his work, he

said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the Christ.* He is coming later. I am not worthy to untie his shoes.'

²⁶"My brothers, sons in the family of Abraham, and you non-Jews who also worship the true God, listen! The news about this salvation has been sent to us. ²⁷The Jews, living in Jerusalem and the Jewish leaders did not realize that Jesus, was the Savior. The words that the prophets* wrote about Jesus, were read to the Jews every Sabbath day,* but they did not understand. The Jews condemned Jesus. When they did this, they made the words of the prophets come true! ²⁸They could not find any real reason why Jesus should die, but they asked Pilate to kill him. ²⁹These Jews did all the bad things that the Scriptures* said would happen to Jesus. Then they took Jesus down from the cross and put him in a grave. ³⁰But God raised him up from death! ³¹After this, for many days, the people who had gone with Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem saw Jesus. These people are now his witnesses to the people. ³²We tell you the Good News* about the promise God made to our fathers (*ancestors*). ³³We are their children (*descendants*), and God has made this promise come true for us. God did this by raising Jesus from death. We also read about this in Psalm 2:

'You are my Son.

Today I have become your Father.'

Psalm 2:7

³⁴God raised Jesus from death. Jesus will never go back to the grave and become dust. So God said:

'I will give you the true and holy promises that I made to David.'

Isaiah 55:3

³⁵But in another place God says:

'You will not let the body of your Holy One rot in the grave.'

Psalm 16:10

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

raised his hand A sign to make the people listen.

Samuel Last judge and first prophet of Israel.

Savior The One God promised to send to save his people from punishment for their sins.

John John the Baptist, who preached to people about Christ's coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

³⁶David did God's will during the time when he lived. Then he died. David was buried with his fathers. And his body did rot in the grave! ³⁷But the One (*Jesus*) that God raised from death did not rot in the grave. ³⁸Brothers, you must understand what we are telling you: You can have forgiveness of your sins through this One (*Jesus*). The law of Moses could not free you from your sins. But every person who believes in *Jesus*, is free from all his sins through him (*Jesus*). ³⁹The prophets* said some things would happen. Be careful! Don't let these things happen to you. The prophets said:

- ⁴⁰ 'Listen, you people who doubt!
You can wonder, but then
go away and die;
because during your time,
I (*God*) will do something
that you will not believe.
You will not believe it,
even if someone explains it to you!'"

Habakkuk 1:5

⁴¹While Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue,* the people asked Paul and Barnabas to come again, on the next Sabbath day* and tell them more about these things. ⁴²After the meeting, many of the Jews followed Paul and Barnabas from that place. With the Jews there were many converts* to the Jewish religion. These converts also worshiped the true God. Paul and Barnabas were persuading them to continue trusting in God's grace (*kindness*).

⁴³On the next Sabbath day,* almost all the people in the city came together to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁴The Jews saw all these people there. So the Jews became very jealous. They said some very bad things and argued against the words that Paul said. ⁴⁵But Paul and

Barnabas spoke very boldly. They said, "We must speak the message* of God to you Jews first. But you refuse to listen. You are making yourselves lost—not worthy of having eternal life! So we will now go to the people of other nations! ⁴⁶This is what the Lord (*God*) told us to do. The Lord said:

- 'I have made you to be a light
for other nations,
so that you can show
the way of salvation
to people all over the world.'"

Isaiah 49:6

⁴⁷When the non-Jewish people heard Paul say this, they were happy. They gave honor to the message* of the Lord. And many of the people believed the message. These were the people chosen to have life forever.

⁴⁸And so the message* of the Lord was being told through the whole country. ⁴⁹But the Jews caused some of the important religious women and the leaders of the city to become angry and to be against Paul and Barnabas. These people did things against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of town. ⁵⁰So Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet.* Then they went to the city of Iconium. ⁵¹But the followers of *Jesus* in Antioch, were happy and full of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

14 Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Iconium. They entered the Jewish synagogue.* (This is what they did in every city.) They spoke to the people there. Paul and Barnabas spoke so well that many Jews and Greeks (*non-Jews*) believed what they said. ²But some of the Jews did not believe. These Jews excited the non-Jewish people and made them think bad things about the brothers

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

converts People who have changed their religion to become Jews.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

shook ... feet A warning. It showed that they were finished talking to these people.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

(believers). ³So Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium a long time, and they spoke bravely for the Lord. Paul and Barnabas preached about God's grace (*kindness*). The Lord proved that what they said was true by helping the apostles* (*Paul and Barnabas*) do miracles and wonders.* ⁴But some of the people in the city agreed with the Jews. Other people in the city believed Paul and Barnabas. So the city was divided.

⁵Some non-Jewish people, some Jews, and their Jewish leaders tried to hurt Paul and Barnabas. These people wanted to kill them with rocks. ⁶When Paul and Barnabas learned about this, they left that city. They went to Lystra and Derbe, cities in Lycaonia, and to the areas around those cities. ⁷They told the Good News* there too.

Paul in Lystra and Derbe

⁸In Lystra there was a man who had something wrong with his feet. He had been born crippled; he had never walked. ⁹This man was sitting and listening to Paul speak. Paul looked at him. Paul saw that the man believed that God could heal him. ¹⁰So Paul shouted, "Stand up on your feet!" The man jumped up and began walking around. ¹¹When the people saw what Paul did, they shouted in their own Lycaonian language. They said, "The gods have become like men! They have come down to us!" ¹²The people began to call Barnabas "Zeus."* They called Paul "Hermes,"* because he was the main speaker. ¹³The temple of Zeus was near the city. The priest of this temple brought some bulls and flowers to the city gates. The priest and the people wanted to give an offering to, worship, Paul and Barnabas.

¹⁴But when the apostles,* Barnabas and Paul, understood what the people were doing,

they tore their own clothes.* Then they ran in among the people and shouted to them: ¹⁵"Men, why are you doing these things? We are not gods! We have the same feelings as you have! We came to tell you the Good News.* We are telling you to turn away from these worthless things. Turn to the true living God. He is the One who made the sky, the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them. ¹⁶In the past, God let all the nations do what they wanted. ¹⁷But God did things that prove he is real: He does good things for you. He gives you rain from the sky. He gives you good harvests at the right times. He gives you plenty of food, and he fills your hearts with joy." ¹⁸Paul and Barnabas told the people these things. But still Paul and Barnabas almost could not stop the people from offering sacrifices to, worship, them.

¹⁹Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. They persuaded the people to be against Paul. And so the people threw rocks at Paul and dragged him out of the town. The people thought that they had killed Paul. ²⁰The followers of Jesus, gathered around Paul and he got up and went back into the town. The next day, he and Barnabas left and went to the city of Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

²¹Paul and Barnabas told the Good News* in the city of Derbe too. Many people became followers of Jesus. Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. ²²In those cities Paul and Barnabas made the followers of Jesus, stronger. They helped them to stay in the faith. Paul and Barnabas said, "We must suffer many things on our way into God's kingdom." ²³Paul and Barnabas chose elders* for each church (*group of believers*). They fasted* and prayed for these elders. These elders were men who had trusted the Lord Jesus. So Paul and Barnabas put them in the Lord's care.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Zeus The most important of the many Greek gods.

Hermes Another Greek god. The Greeks believed he was a messenger for the other gods.

tore ... clothes This showed that they were very angry.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

fasted To live without food for a special time of prayer.

¹Paul and Barnabas went through the country of Pisidia. Then they came to the country of Pamphylia. ²They preached the message* of God, in the city of Perga, and then they went down to the city of Attalia. ³And from there Paul and Barnabas sailed away to Antioch in Syria. This is the city where the believers had put them into God's care and sent them to do this work. Now they had finished the work.

⁴When Paul and Barnabas arrived, they gathered the church (*group of believers*) together. Paul and Barnabas told them about all the things God had done with them. They said, "God opened a door so that the people of other nations (*non-Jews*) could also believe!" ⁵Paul and Barnabas stayed there a long time with the followers of Christ.

The Meeting at Jerusalem

15 Then some men came to Antioch, from Judea. They began teaching the non-Jewish brothers: "You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised.* Moses taught us to do this." ²Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching. They argued with these men about it. So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some other men to Jerusalem. These men were going there to talk more about this with the apostles* and elders.*

³The church helped the men leave on the trip. These men went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria. In these countries they told all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the brothers very happy. ⁴Paul, Barnabas, and the others arrived in Jerusalem. The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole group of believers welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others

told about all the things that God had done with them. ⁵Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisees* They stood up and said, "The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised.* We must tell them to obey the law of Moses!"

⁶Then the apostles* and the elders* gathered to study this problem. ⁷There was a long debate. Then Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, I know that you remember what happened in the early days. God chose me then from among you to preach the Good News* to the non-Jewish people. They heard the Good News from me and they believed. ⁸God knows the thoughts of all men, and he accepted these non-Jewish people. God showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit* the same as he did to us. ⁹To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, God made their hearts pure. ¹⁰So now, why are you putting a heavy burden* around the necks of the non-Jewish brothers? Are you trying to make God angry? We and our fathers (*ancestors*) were not strong enough to carry that burden ¹¹No, we believe that we and these people will be saved by the grace (*mercy*) of the Lord Jesus!"

¹²Then the whole group became quiet. They listened to Paul and Barnabas speak. Paul and Barnabas told about all the miracles and wonders* that God did through them among the non-Jewish people. ¹³Paul and Barnabas finished speaking. Then James spoke. He said, "My brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Simon (*Peter*) has told us how God showed his love for the non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted the non-Jewish people and made them

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement that God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

Pharisees A Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

burden The Jewish law. Some of the Jews tried to make the non-Jewish believers follow this law.

miracles and wonders Amazing works or great things done by the power of God.

his people. ¹⁵The words of the prophets* agree with this too:

- ¹⁶ 'I (God) will return after this.
I will build David's house again.
It has fallen down.
But I will build again the parts of his house that have been pulled down.
I will make his house new.
¹⁷ Then all other people will look for the Lord (God)—
all the non-Jewish people that are my people too.
The Lord (God) said this.
And he is the One who does all these things.
¹⁸ These things have been known from the beginning of time.'

Amos 9:11-12

¹⁹"So I think we should not bother the non-Jewish brothers who have turned to God. ²⁰Instead, we should write a letter to them. We should tell them these things:

Don't eat food that has been given to idols.* (This makes the food unclean.)
Don't do any kind of sexual sin.
Don't taste (eat) blood.
Don't eat animals that have been strangled (choked).

²¹They should not do these things, because there are still men (Jews) in every city who teach the law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the synagogue* every Sabbath day* for many years."

The Letter to the Non-Jewish Believers

²²The apostles,* the elders,* and the whole church (group of believers) wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas. These men were respected by the brothers in Jerusalem. ²³The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said:

From the apostles and elders, your brothers.

To all the non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia:

Dear Brothers,

²⁴We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. The things they said troubled and upset you. But we did not tell them to do this! ²⁵We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul. ²⁶Barnabas and Paul have given their lives to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. ²⁸The Holy Spirit* thinks that you should have no more burdens, and we agree. You need to do only these things:

²⁹Don't eat any food that has been given to idols.
Don't taste (eat) blood.
Don't eat any animals that have been strangled (choked).
Don't do any kind of sexual sin.

If you stay away from these things, you will do well.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshipped.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

We say good-bye now.

²So Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas left Jerusalem. They went to Antioch. In Antioch they gathered the group of believers and gave them the letter. ³When the believers read it, they were happy. The letter comforted them. ⁴Judas and Silas were also prophets.* They said many things to help the brothers (*believers*) and make them stronger. ⁵After Judas and Silas stayed there for a while, they left. They received a blessing of peace from the brothers. Judas and Silas went back to the brothers in Jerusalem, who had sent them. ******

⁶But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch. They and many others told the Good News* and taught the people the message* of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

⁷A few days later, Paul said to Barnabas, "We told the message* of the Lord in many towns. We should go back to all those towns to visit the brothers and sisters, and see how they are doing." Barnabas wanted to bring John Mark with them too. ⁸But on their first trip, John Mark had left them at Pamphylia; he did not continue with them in the work. So Paul did not think it was a good idea to take him. ⁹Paul and Barnabas had a big argument about this. They separated and went different ways. Barnabas sailed to Cyprus and took Mark with him. ¹⁰Paul chose Silas to go with him. The brothers in Antioch put Paul into the Lord's care and sent him out. ¹¹Paul and Silas went through the countries of Syria and Cilicia, helping the churches* grow stronger.

Timothy Goes with Paul and Silas

16 Paul went to the cities of Derbe and Lystra. A follower of Christ, named Timothy was there. Timothy's mother was a

prophets Men who spoke for God.

Verse 34 Some Greek copies of Acts add verse 34: "... but Silas decided to remain there."

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven.

churches Groups of believers in the towns where Paul and Barnabas went before.

Jewish believer. His father was a Greek (*not a Jew*). ²The believers in the cities of Lystra and Iconium respected Timothy. They said good things about him. ³Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him. But all the Jews living in that area knew that Timothy's father was Greek (*not Jewish*). So Paul circumcised* Timothy to please the Jews. ⁴Then Paul and the men with him traveled through other cities.* They gave the believers the rules and decisions from the apostles* and elders* in Jerusalem. They told the believers to obey these rules. ⁵So the churches (*groups of believers*) were becoming stronger in the faith and were growing bigger every day.

Paul Is Called out of Asia

⁶Paul and the men with him went through the countries of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit* did not allow them to preach the Good News* in the country of Asia.* ⁷Paul and Timothy went near the country of Mysia. They wanted to go into the country of Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus did not let them go in. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went to the city of Troas. ⁹That night Paul saw a vision.* In this vision, a man from the country of Macedonia came to Paul. The man stood there and begged, "Come across to Macedonia. Help us!" ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we immediately prepared to leave for Macedonia. We understood that God had called us to tell the Good News to those people.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

cities The cities where there were groups of believers.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

The Conversion of Lydia

¹¹We left Troas in a ship, and we sailed to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis. ¹²Then we went to Philippi. Philippi is an important city in that part of Macedonia. It is a city for Romans. We stayed in that city for a few days.

¹³On the Sabbath day* we went out the city gate to the river. At the river we thought we might find a special place for prayer. Some women had gathered there. So we sat down and talked with them. ¹⁴There was a woman named Lydia from the city of Thyatira. Her job was selling purple cloth. She worshiped the true God. Lydia listened to Paul. The Lord opened her heart. She believed the things Paul said. ¹⁵She and all the people living in her home were baptized.* Then Lydia invited us into her home. She said, "If you think I am truly a believer in the Lord Jesus, then come stay in my house." She persuaded us to stay with her.

Paul and Silas in Jail

¹⁶One time something happened to us while we were going to the place for prayer. A servant girl met us. She had a special spirit* in her. This spirit gave her the power to tell what would happen in the future. By doing this she earned a lot of money for the men who owned her. ¹⁷This girl followed Paul and us. She said loudly, "These men are servants of the Most High God! They are telling you how you can be saved!" ¹⁸She continued doing this for many days. This bothered Paul, so he turned and said to the spirit, "By the power of Jesus Christ, I command you to come out of her!" Immediately, the spirit came out.

¹⁹The men that owned the servant girl saw this. These men knew that now they could not use her to make money. So they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the meeting place of the city. The city officials were there.

²⁰The men brought Paul and Silas to the leaders and said, "These men are Jews. They are making trouble in our city. ²¹They are telling the people to do things that are not right for us. We are Roman citizens and cannot do these things." ²²The people were against Paul and Silas. Then the leaders tore the clothes of Paul and Silas and told some men to beat Paul and Silas with rods. ²³The men beat Paul and Silas many times. Then the leaders put Paul and Silas in jail. The leaders told the jailer, "Guard them very carefully!" ²⁴The jailer heard this special order. So he put Paul and Silas far inside the jail. He tied their feet between large blocks of wood.

²⁵About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing songs to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly, there was a big earthquake. It was so strong that it shook the foundation of the jail. Then all the doors of the jail opened. All the prisoners were freed from their chains. ²⁷The jailer woke up. He saw that the jail doors were open. He thought that the prisoners had already escaped. So the jailer got his sword and was ready to kill himself.* ²⁸But Paul shouted, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all here!"

²⁹The jailer told someone to bring a light. Then he ran inside. He was shaking. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, "Men, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹They said to him, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved—you and all the people living in your house." ³²So Paul and Silas told the message* of the Lord to the jailer and all the people in his house. ³³It was late at night, but the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Then the jailer and all his people were baptized.* ³⁴After this the jailer took Paul and Silas home and gave them some food. All the people were very happy because they now believed in God.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

spirit A spirit from the devil that gave special knowledge.

kill himself He thought the leaders would kill him for letting the prisoners escape.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

¹³The next morning, the leaders sent some soldiers to tell the jailer, "Let these men (*Paul and Silas*) go free!"

¹⁴The jailer said to Paul, "The leaders have sent these soldiers to let you go free. You can leave now. Go in peace."

¹⁵But Paul said to the soldiers, "Your leaders did not prove that we did wrong. But they beat us in front of the people and put us in jail. We are Roman citizens,* so we have rights. Now the leaders want to make us go quietly. No! The leaders must come and bring us out!"

¹⁶The soldiers told the leaders what Paul said. When the leaders heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens,* they were afraid. ¹⁷So the leaders came and told Paul and Silas they were sorry. The leaders took Paul and Silas out of jail and asked them to leave the city. ¹⁸But when Paul and Silas came out of the jail, they went to Lydia's house. They saw some of the believers there and comforted them. Then Paul and Silas left.

Paul and Silas in Thessalonica

17 Paul and Silas traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to the city of Thessalonica. In that city there was a Jewish synagogue.* ²Paul went into this synagogue to see the Jews. This is what he always did. Every Sabbath day* for three weeks Paul talked with the Jews about the Scriptures.* ³Paul explained these Scriptures to the Jews. He showed that the Christ* must die and then rise from death. Paul said "This man Jesus that I am telling you about is the Christ." ⁴In the synagogue there were some Greek men who worshiped the true God. There were also some important women. Many of these people also joined Paul and Silas.

Roman citizens Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before they had a trial.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

⁵But the Jews, that did not believe, became jealous. They hired some bad men from the city. These bad men gathered many people and made trouble in the city. The people went to Jason's house, looking for Paul and Silas. The men wanted to bring Paul and Silas out before the people. ⁶But they did not find Paul and Silas. So the people dragged Jason and some of the other believers to the leaders of the city. The people all yelled, "These men (*Paul and Silas*) have made trouble everywhere in the world. And now they have come here too! ⁷Jason is keeping them in his house. All of them do things against the laws of Caesar.* They say that there is another king called Jesus."

⁸The leaders of the city and the other people heard these things. They became very upset. ⁹They made Jason and the other believers pay a fine. Then they let the believers go free.

Paul and Silas Go to Berea

¹⁰That same night the believers sent Paul and Silas to another city named Berea. In Berea, Paul and Silas went to the Jewish synagogue.* ¹¹These Jews were better people than the Jews in Thessalonica. These Jews were very happy to listen to the things Paul and Silas said. These Jews in Berea studied the Scriptures* every day. They wanted to know if these things were true. ¹²Many of these Jews believed. Many important Greek men and Greek women also believed. ¹³But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was telling the word of God in Berea, they came to Berea too. The Jews from Thessalonica upset the people in Berea and made trouble. ¹⁴So the believers sent Paul away quickly to the sea. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. ¹⁵The believers that went with Paul took him to the city of Athens. These brothers carried a message from Paul back to Silas and Timothy. The message said, "Come to me as soon as you can."

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Paul in Athens

¹"Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. Paul was troubled because he saw that the city was full of idols.* ²"In the synagogue,* Paul talked with the Jews and the Greeks who worshiped the true God. Paul also talked with some people^{1a} in the business area of the city. Paul did this every day. ³"Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers* argued with him.

Some of them said, "This man doesn't really know what he is talking about. What is he trying to say?" Paul was telling them the Good News about Jesus' rising from death. So they said, "He seems to be telling us about some other gods." ¹⁴"They got Paul and took him to a meeting of the Areopagus council.* They said, "Please explain to us this new idea that you have been teaching. ¹⁵"The things that you are saying are new to us. We have never heard these things before. We want to know what this teaching means." ¹⁶"(All the people of Athens and the people from other countries who lived there always used their time talking about all the newest ideas.)

¹⁷"Then Paul stood before the meeting of the Areopagus council.* Paul said, "Men of Athens, I can see that you are very religious in all things. ¹⁸"I was going through your city and I saw the things you worship. I found an altar that had these words written on it: 'TO THE GOD WHO IS NOT KNOWN.' You worship a god that you don't know. This is the God I am telling you about! ¹⁹"He is the God who made the whole world and everything in it. He is the Lord (*Ruler*) of the land and the sky. He does not live in temples* that men build! ²⁰"This God is the One who gives life, breath, and everything else to people. He does not need any help from people. God has everything he needs.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.
synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

philosophers People who study and talk about their own ideas and the ideas and teachings of other people.

Areopagus council A group of important leaders in Athens. They were like judges.

temples Buildings where people go to worship.

²¹"God began by making one man (*Adam*). From him God made all the different people. God made them to live everywhere in the world. God decided exactly when and where they must live. ²²"God wanted the people to look for him. Maybe they could search all around for him and find him. But he is not far from any of us:

* 'We live with him.
We walk with him.
We are with him.'

Some of your own writers have said:

'For we are his children.'

²³"We are God's children. So, you must not think that God is like something that people imagine or make. He is not like gold, silver, or rock. ²⁴"In the past, people did not understand God, but God ignored this. But now, God tells every person in the world to change his heart and life. ²⁵"God has decided a day when he will judge all the people in the world. He will be fair. He will use a man (*Jesus*) to do this. God chose this man long ago. And God has proved this to every person; God proved it by raising that man from death!"

²⁶"When the people heard about Jesus, being raised from death, some of them laughed. The people said, "We will hear more about this from you later." ²⁷"Paul went away from them. ²⁸"But some of the people believed Paul and joined him. One of the people who believed was Dionysius. He was a member of the Areopagus council.* Another person who believed was a woman named Damaris. There were also some other people who believed.

Paul in Corinth

18 Later, Paul left Athens and went to the city of Corinth. ²In Corinth Paul met a Jewish man named Aquila. Aquila was born in the country of Pontus. But Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, had recently moved to Corinth, from Italy. They left Italy because Claudius* commanded that all Jews must leave Rome. Paul went to visit Aquila and Priscilla. ³They

Claudius The emperor (ruler) of Rome, A.D. 41-54.

were tentmakers, the same as Paul. Paul stayed with them and worked with them. *Every Sabbath day* Paul talked with the Jews and Greeks in the synagogue.* Paul tried to persuade these people to believe in Jesus,.

¹Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia to Paul in Corinth. After this, Paul used all his time telling people the Good News.* He showed the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.* *But the Jews would not accept Paul's teaching. The Jews said some very bad things. So Paul shook off the dust from his clothes.* He said to the Jews, "If you are not saved, it will be your own fault! I have done all I can do! After this, I will go only to non-Jewish people!" *Paul left the synagogue and moved into the home of Titius Justus. This man worshiped the true God. His house was next to the synagogue.* *Crispus was the leader of that synagogue. Crispus and all the people living in his house believed in the Lord (Jesus). Many other people in Corinth also listened to Paul. They too believed and were baptized.*

²During the night, Paul had a vision.* The Lord said to him, "Don't be afraid! Continue talking to people and don't stop! *I am with you. No one will be able to hurt you. Many of my people are in this city." *Paul stayed there for a year and a half, teaching God's truth to the people.

Paul Is Brought Before Gallio

³Gallio became the governor of the country of Achaia. At that time, some of the Jews came together against Paul. They took Paul to the court. ¹³The Jews said to Gallio, "This man is

teaching people to worship God in a way that is against our Jewish law!"

⁴Paul was ready to say something, but Gallio spoke to the Jews. Gallio said, "I would listen to you Jews if you were complaining about a bad crime or some wrong. ¹⁵But the things you Jews are saying are only questions about words and names—arguments about your own Jewish law. So you must solve this problem yourselves. I don't want to be a judge of these things!" *Then Gallio made them leave the court.

¹⁶Then they all grabbed Sosthenes. (Sosthenes was now the leader of the synagogue.* They beat Sosthenes before the court. But this did not bother Gallio.

Paul Returns to Antioch

¹⁷Paul stayed with the brothers for many days. Then he left and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila were also with him. At Cenchrea, Paul cut off his hair.* (This showed that he had made a promise (vow) to God. ¹⁸Then they went to the city of Ephesus. This is where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. While Paul was in Ephesus, he went into the synagogue* and talked with the Jews. ²⁰The Jews asked Paul to stay longer, but he refused. ²¹Paul left them and said, "I will come back to you again if God wants me to." And so Paul sailed away from Ephesus.

²²Paul went to the city of Caesarea. Then he went and said hello to the church (*group of believers*) in Jerusalem. After that, Paul went to the city of Antioch. ²³Paul stayed in Antioch for a while. Then he left Antioch and went through the countries of Galatia and Phrygia. Paul traveled from town to town in these countries. He made all the followers of Jesus, stronger.

Apollos In Ephesus and Achaia (Corinth)

²⁴A Jew named Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos was born in the city of Alexandria. He

cut ... hair Jews did this to show that the time of a special promise to God was finished.

Sabbath day Seventh day of the Jewish week. It was a special religious day for the Jews.

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

shook ... clothes This was a warning. It showed that Paul was finished talking to the Jews.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

was an educated man. He knew very much about the Scriptures.* ²Apollos had been taught about the Lord (*Jesus*). Apollos was always very excited when he talked to people about Jesus. The things Apollos taught about Jesus were right. But the only baptism* that Apollos knew about was the baptism that John* taught. ³Apollos began to speak very boldly in the synagogue.* Priscilla and Aquila heard him speak. They took him to their home and helped him understand the way of God better. ⁴Apollos wanted to go to the country of Achaia. So the brothers in Ephesus, helped him. They wrote a letter to the followers of Jesus in Achaia. In the letter they asked these followers to accept Apollos. These followers in Achaia, had believed in Jesus because of God's grace (*kindness*). When Apollos went there, he helped them very much. ⁵He argued very strongly against the Jews before all the people. Apollos clearly proved that the Jews were wrong. He used the Scriptures* and showed that Jesus is the Christ.*

Paul In Ephesus

19 While Apollos was in the city of Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to the city of Ephesus. In Ephesus Paul found some followers of John.* ¹Paul asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit* when you believed?"

These followers said to him, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit!"

²So Paul asked them, "What kind of baptism* did you have?"

They said, "It was the baptism that John* taught."

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

John John the Baptizer, who preached to people about Christ's coming (Mt. 3; Lk. 3).

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

³Paul said, "John told people to be baptized to show they wanted to change their lives. John told people to believe in the One who would come after him. That person is Jesus."

⁴When these followers of John, heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁵Then Paul put his hands on them* and the Holy Spirit* came into them. They began speaking different languages and prophesying.* ⁶There were about twelve men in this group.

⁷Paul went into the synagogue* and spoke very boldly. Paul continued doing this for three months. He talked with the Jews and persuaded them to accept the things he said about the kingdom of God. ⁸But some of the Jews became stubborn. They refused to believe. These Jews said some very bad things about the Way of God. All the people heard these things. So Paul left those Jews and took the followers of Jesus, with him. Paul went to a place where a man named Tyrannus had a school. There Paul talked with people every day. ⁹Paul did this for two years. Because of this work, every Jew and Greek (*non-Jew*) in the country of Asia* heard the word of the Lord.

The Sons of Sceva

¹God used Paul to do some very special miracles.* ²Some people carried away handkerchiefs and clothes that Paul had used. The people put these things on sick people. When they did this, the sick people were healed, and evil spirits from the devil, left them.

³⁻⁴Some Jews also were traveling around and making evil spirits go out of people. The seven sons of Sceva were doing this. (Sceva was a high priest.*) These Jews tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus to make the evil spirits go out of people. They all said, "By the same

put ... them Here, doing this was a sign to show that Paul had God's authority or power to give these people special powers of the Holy Spirit.

prophesying Speaking or teaching things from God.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Jesus that Paul talks about, I order you to come out!"

"But one time an evil spirit said to these Jews, "I know Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

"Then the man, who had the evil spirit [from the devil], inside him, jumped on these Jews. He was much stronger than all of them. He beat them up and tore their clothes off. These Jews ran away from that house. "All the people in Ephesus, Jews and Greeks (non-Jews), learned about this. They all began to have great respect for God. And the people gave great honor to the name of the Lord Jesus. "Many of the believers began to confess and tell all the bad things they had done. "Some of the believers had used magic. These believers brought their magic books and burned them before everyone. Those books were worth about 50,000 silver coins.* "This is how the word of the Lord was influencing more and more people in a powerful way. And more and more people believed.

Paul Plans a Trip

"After these things, Paul made plans to go to Jerusalem. Paul planned to go through the countries of Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem. Paul thought, "After I visit Jerusalem, I must also visit Rome." "Timothy and Erastus were two of Paul's helpers. Paul sent them ahead to the country of Macedonia. Paul stayed in Asia* for a while.

Trouble in Ephesus

"But during that time, there was some bad trouble in Ephesus. This trouble was about the Way of God. This is how it all happened: "There was a man named Demetrius. He worked with silver. He made little silver models that looked like the temple* of the

goddess Artemis.* The men that did this work made much money. "Demetrius had a meeting with these men and some other men who did the same kind of work. Demetrius told them, "Men, you know that we make much money from our business. "But look at what this man Paul is doing! Listen to what he is saying! Paul has influenced and changed many people. He has done this in Ephesus and all over the country of Asia.* Paul says the gods that men make are not real. "These things that Paul says might turn the people against our work. But there is also another problem: People will begin to think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is not important! Her greatness will be destroyed. Artemis is the goddess that everyone in Asia and the whole world worships."

"When the men heard this, they became very angry. The men shouted, "Artemis,* the goddess of the city of Ephesus, is great!" "All the people in the city became upset. The people grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus. (These two men were from Macedonia and were traveling with Paul.) Then all the people ran to the stadium. "Paul wanted to go in and talk to the people, but the followers of Jesus, did not let him go. "Also, some leaders of the country were friends of Paul. These leaders sent him a message. They told Paul not to go into the stadium. "Some people were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. The meeting was very confused. Most of the people did not know why they had come there. "The Jews made a man named Alexander stand before the people. The people told him what to do. Alexander waved his hand because he wanted to explain things to the people. "But when the people saw that Alexander was a Jew, they all began shouting the same thing. They continued shouting for two hours. The people said, "Great is Artemis* of Ephesus! Great is Artemis of Ephesus! Great is Artemis . . .!"

"Then the city clerk persuaded the people to be quiet. He said, "Men of Ephesus, all people know that Ephesus is the city that keeps the

50,000 silver coins Probably drachmas. One coin was enough to pay a man for working one day.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

temple The special building in Ephesus where the people worshipped the false goddess Artemis.

Artemis A Greek goddess that the people of Asia Minor worshipped.

temple* of the great goddess Artemis.* All people know that we also keep her holy rock.*

³No person can say that this is not true. So you should be quiet. You must stop and think before you do anything. ⁴You brought these men,* but they have not said anything bad against our goddess. They have not stolen anything from her temple. ⁵We have courts of law and there are judges. Do Demetrius and those men that work with him have a charge against anyone? They should go to the courts! That is where they can argue with each other! ⁶Is there something else you want to talk about? Then come to the regular town meeting of the people. It can be decided there. ⁷I say this because some person might see this trouble today and say that we are rioting (*making trouble*). We could not explain all this trouble, because there is no real reason for this meeting." ⁸After the city clerk said these things, he told the people to go home. And all the people left.

Paul Goes to Macedonia and Greece

20 When the trouble stopped, Paul invited the followers of Jesus, to come visit him. He said things to comfort them and then told them good-bye. Paul left and went to the country of Macedonia. ²He said many things to strengthen the followers of Jesus, in the different places on his way through Macedonia. Then Paul went to Greece (*Achaia*). ³He stayed there three months. He was ready to sail for Syria, but some Jews were planning something against him. So Paul decided to go back through Macedonia to Syria. ⁴Some men were with him. They were: Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus, from the city of Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus, from the city of Thessalonica, Gaius, from the city of Derbe, Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus, two men from Asia.*

temple The special building in Ephesus where the people worshiped the false goddess, Artemis.

Artemis A Greek goddess, called Diana by the Romans.

holy rock Probably a meteorite or rock that the people thought looked like Artemis and worshiped.

men Gaius and Aristarchus, the men traveling with Paul.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

⁵These men went first, ahead of Paul. They waited for us in the city of Troas. ⁶We sailed from the city of Philippi after the Jewish, Festival of Unleavened Bread.* ⁷We met these men in Troas five days later. We stayed there seven days.

Paul's Last Visit to Troas

⁷On Sunday,* we all met together to eat the Lord's Supper.* Paul talked to the group. He was planning to leave the next day. Paul continued talking until midnight. ⁸We were all together in a room upstairs, and there were many lights in the room. ⁹There was a young man named Eutychus sitting in the window. Paul continued talking, and Eutychus became very, very sleepy. Finally, Eutychus went to sleep and fell out of the window. He fell to the ground from the third floor. When the people went and lifted him up, he was dead. ¹⁰Paul went down to Eutychus. He knelt down and hugged Eutychus. Paul said to the other believers, "Don't worry. He is alive now." ¹¹Paul went upstairs again. He divided the bread and ate. Paul spoke to them a long time. When he finished talking, it was early morning. Then Paul left. ¹²The people took the young man (*Eutychus*) home. He was alive, and the people were very much comforted.

The Trip from Troas to Miletus

¹³We sailed for the city of Assos. We went first, ahead of Paul. He planned to meet us in Assos and join us on the ship there. Paul told us to do this because he wanted to go to Assos by land. ¹⁴Later, we met Paul at Assos, and then he came on the ship with us. We all went to the city of Mitylene. ¹⁵The next day, we sailed away from Mitylene. We came to a place near the island of Chios. Then the next day, we

Festival ... Bread Important Jewish holiday week. In the Old Testament it began the day after Passover, but by this time the two holidays had become one.

Sunday Literally, "first day of the week," which for the Jews began at sunset on Saturday. But if Luke is using Greek time here, then the meeting was Sunday night.

Lord's Supper The meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him (Lk. 22:14-20).

sailed to the island of Samos. A day later, we came to the city of Miletus. ¹⁴Paul had already decided not to stop at Ephesus. He did not want to stay too long in Asia.* He was hurrying because he wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost* if possible.

Paul Speaks to the Elders from Ephesus

¹⁵In Miletus Paul sent a message back to Ephesus. Paul invited the elders* (*leaders*) of the church in Ephesus to come to him. ¹⁶When the elders came, Paul said to them, "You know about my life from the first day I came to Asia.* You know the way I lived all the time I was with you. ¹⁷The Jews planned things against me. This gave me much trouble, and I often cried. But you know that I always served the Lord. I never thought about myself first. ¹⁸I always did what was best for you. I told you the Good News* about Jesus in public before the people and also taught in your homes. ¹⁹I told all people – Jewish people and Greek (*non-Jewish*) people – to change their hearts and turn to God. I told them all to believe in our Lord Jesus. ²⁰But now I must obey the Holy Spirit* and go to Jerusalem. I don't know what will happen to me there. ²¹I know only that in every city the Holy Spirit tells me that troubles and even jail wait for me (in Jerusalem). ²²I don't care about my own life. The most important thing is that I finish my work. I want to finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do—to tell people the Good News about God's grace (*kindness*).

²³"And now listen to me. I know that none of you will ever see me again. All the time I was with you, I told you the Good News* about the kingdom of God. ²⁴So today I can tell you

one thing that I am sure of: God will not blame me if some of you are not saved! ²⁵I can say this because I know that I told you everything that God wants you to know. ²⁶Be careful for yourselves and for all the people that God has given you. The Holy Spirit* gave you the work of caring for this flock (*God's people*). You must be like shepherds to the church (*people*) of God.* This is the church that God bought with his own blood.* ²⁷I know that after I leave, some men will come into your group. They will be like wild wolves. They will try to destroy the flock (*group*). ²⁸Also, men from your own group will become bad leaders. They will begin to teach things that are wrong. They will lead some followers of Jesus, away from the truth. ²⁹So be careful! Always remember this: I was with you for three years. During this time, I never stopped warning you. I taught you night and day. I often cried for you.

³⁰"Now I am giving you to God. I am depending on the message* about God's grace (*kindness*) to make you strong. That message is able to give you the blessings that God gives to all his holy people. ³¹When I was with you, I never wanted anyone's money or fine clothes. ³²You know that I always worked to take care of my own needs and the needs of the people that were with me. ³³I always showed you that you should work like I did and help people that are weak. I taught you to remember the words of the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, 'You will be happier when you give than when you receive.'"

³⁴When Paul finished saying these things, he kneeled down and they all prayed together. ³⁵They all cried and cried. The men were very sad because Paul had said that they would never see him again. They hugged Paul and kissed him. They went with him to the ship to say good-bye.

Paul Goes to Jerusalem

21 We all said good-bye to the elders.* Then we sailed away. We sailed

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

Pentecost Jewish festival (50 days after Passover) celebrating the harvest of wheat.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

Good News, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

of God Some Greek copies say, "of the Lord."
his own blood Or, "the blood of his own son."

straight to Cos island. The next day, we went to the island of Rhodes. From Rhodes we went to Patara. ²At Patara we found a ship that was going to the area of Phoenicia. We went on the ship and sailed away. ³We sailed near the island of Cyprus. We could see it on the north side, but we did not stop. We sailed to the country of Syria. We stopped at the city of Tyre because the ship needed to unload its cargo there. ⁴We found some followers of Jesus, in Tyre, and we stayed with them for seven days. They warned Paul not to go to Jerusalem because of what the Holy Spirit* had told them. ⁵But when we finished our visit, we left. We continued our trip. All the followers of Jesus, even the women and children, came outside the city with us to say good-bye. We all knelt down on the beach and prayed. ⁶Then we said good-bye and got on the ship. The followers went home.

⁷We continued our trip from Tyre and went to the city of Ptolemais. We greeted the brothers (*believers*) there and stayed with them one day. ⁸The next day we left Ptolemais and went to the city of Caesarea. We went into the home of Philip and stayed with him. Philip had the work of telling the Good News.* He was one of the seven helpers.* ⁹He had four daughters who were not married. These daughters had the gift of prophesying.* ¹⁰After we had been there for many days, a prophet* named Agabus came from Judea. ¹¹He came to us and borrowed Paul's belt. Then Agabus used the belt to tie his own hands and feet. Agabus said, "The Holy Spirit* tells me, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie the man who wears this belt.*' Then they will give him to the non-Jewish people." ¹²

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

helpers The seven men chosen for a special work described in Acts 6:1-6.

prophesying Speaking or teaching things from God.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

belt Paul's belt; so Agabus means that the Jews in Jerusalem will tie (arrest) Paul.

¹³We all heard these words. So we and the other followers of Jesus, there begged (*asked*) Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¹⁴But Paul said, "Why are you crying? Why are you making me so sad? I am ready to be tied in Jerusalem. I am also ready to die for the name of the Lord Jesus!"

¹⁵We could not persuade him to stay away from Jerusalem. So we stopped begging him and said, "We pray that what the Lord wants will be done."

¹⁶After this, we got ready and left for Jerusalem. ¹⁷Some of the followers of Jesus, from Caesarea went with us. These followers took us to the home of Mnason, a man from Cyprus. Mnason was one of the first people to be a follower of Jesus. They took us to his home so that we could stay with him.

Paul Visits James

¹⁸In Jerusalem the believers were very happy to see us. ¹⁹The next day, Paul went with us to visit James. All the elders (*church leaders*) were there too. ²⁰Paul greeted all of them. Then he told them about how God used him to do many things among the non-Jewish people. He told them all the things that God did through him. ²¹When the leaders heard these things, they praised God. Then they said to Paul, "Brother, you can see that thousands of Jews have become believers. But they think it is very important to obey the law of Moses. ²²These Jews have heard about your teaching. They heard that you tell the Jews who live in other countries among non-Jews to leave the law of Moses. They heard that you tell those Jews not to circumcise* their children and not to obey Jewish customs. ²³What should we do? The Jewish believers here will learn that you have come. ²⁴So we will tell you what to do: Four of our men have made a vow* (*promise*) to God. ²⁵Take these men with you and share in

circumcise To cut off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

vow Probably a Nazirite vow, a time of special service that Jews promised to give to God.

their cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* Pay their expenses. Then they can shave their heads.* Do this and it will prove to everyone that the things they have heard about you are not true. They will see that you obey the law of Moses in your own life.²⁵ We have already sent a letter to the non-Jewish believers. The letter said:

'Don't eat food that has been given to idols.*

Don't taste (*eat*) blood.

Don't eat animals that have been strangled (*choked*).

Don't do any kind of sexual sin.**

²⁶Then Paul took the four men with him. The next day, Paul shared in the cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* Then he went to the temple.* Paul announced the time when the days of the cleansing ceremony would be finished. On the last day an offering would be given for each of the men.

²⁷The seven days were almost finished. But some Jews from Asia* saw Paul at the temple.* They caused all the people to be upset, and they grabbed Paul. ²⁸They shouted, "You Jewish men, help us! This is the man who is teaching things that are against the law of Moses, against our people, and against this place (*the temple*). This man is teaching these things to all people everywhere. And now he has brought some Greek (*non-Jewish*) men into the temple! He has made this holy place unclean!" ²⁹(The Jews said this because they had seen Trophimus with Paul in Jerusalem. Trophimus was a Greek, man from Ephesus. The Jews thought that Paul had taken him into the temple.)

³⁰All the people in Jerusalem became very upset. They all ran and grabbed Paul. They dragged him out of the temple.* The temple doors were closed immediately. ³¹The people were trying to kill Paul. The commander of the Roman army in Jerusalem learned that there was trouble in the whole city. ³²Immediately the

commander went to the place where the people were. He brought some army officers* and soldiers with him. The people saw the commander and his soldiers. So they stopped beating Paul. ³³The commander went to Paul and arrested him. The commander told his soldiers to tie Paul with two chains. Then the commander asked, "Who is this man? What has he done wrong?" ³⁴Some people there were yelling one thing and other people were yelling other things. Because of all this confusion and shouting, the commander could not learn the truth about what had happened. So the commander told the soldiers to take Paul to the army building. ³⁵All the people were following them. When the soldiers came to the steps, they had to carry Paul. They did this to protect Paul, because the people were ready to hurt him. The people shouted, "Kill him!"

³⁶The soldiers were ready to take Paul into the army building. But Paul spoke to the commander. Paul asked, "Do I have the right to say something to you?"

The commander said, "Oh, You speak Greek? ³⁷Then you are not the man I thought you were? I thought you were the Egyptian man who started some trouble against the government not long ago. That Egyptian man led 4,000 killers out to the desert."

³⁸Paul said, "No, I am a Jewish man from Tarsus. Tarsus is in the country of Cilicia. I am a citizen of that important city. Please, let me speak to the people."

³⁹The commander let Paul speak to the people. So Paul stood on the steps. He made signs with his hands so that the people would be quiet. The people became quiet and Paul spoke to them. He used the Jewish language.*

Paul Speaks to the People

22 Paul said, "My brothers and my fathers, listen to me! I will make my defense to you." ²The Jews heard Paul speaking

cleansing ceremony The special things the Jews did to end the Nazirite vow.

shave their heads To show their vow was finished.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worship.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

army officers Centurions, Roman army officers who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

the Jewish language.* So they became very quiet. Paul said, "I am a Jew. I was born in Tarsus in the country of Cilicia. I grew up in this city (*Jerusalem*). I was a student of Gamaliel.* He carefully taught me everything about the law of our fathers (*ancestors*). I was very serious about serving God, the same as all of you here today. 'I persecuted (*did bad things to*) the people who followed the Way of Jesus. Some of them were killed because of me. I arrested men and women. I put them in jail. 'The high priest* and the whole council of older Jewish leaders can tell you that this is true! One time these leaders gave me some letters. The letters were to the Jewish brothers in the city of Damascus. I was going there to arrest the followers of Jesus and bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

Paul Tells About His Conversion

"But something happened to me on my way to Damascus. It was about noon when I came close to Damascus. Suddenly a bright light from the sky shined all around me. 'I fell to the ground. I heard a voice saying to me: 'Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me?' 'I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The voice said, 'I am Jesus from Nazareth. I am the One you are persecuting.' 'The men who were with me did not understand the voice. But the men saw the light. 'I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' The Lord (*Jesus*) answered, 'Get up and go into Damascus. There you will be told all the things I have planned for you to do.' 'I could not see, because the bright light had made me blind. So the men led me into Damascus.

"In Damascus a man named Ananias* came to me. Ananias was a religious man; he obeyed the law of Moses. All the Jews who lived there respected him. 'Ananias came to

me and said, 'Brother Saul, see again!' Immediately I was able to see him. 'Ananias told me, 'The God of our fathers (*ancestors*) chose you long ago. God chose you to know his plan. He chose you to see the Righteous One (*Jesus*) and to hear words from him. 'You will be his witness to all people. You will tell men about the things you have seen and heard. 'Now, don't wait any longer. Get up, be baptized* and wash your sins away. Do this, trusting in him (*Jesus*), to save you.'

"Later, I came back to Jerusalem. I was praying in the temple* yard, and I saw a vision.* 'I saw Jesus, and Jesus said to me: 'Hurry! Leave Jerusalem now! The people here will not accept the truth about me.' 'I said, 'But Lord, the people know that I was the one who put the believers in jail and beat them. I went through all the synagogues* to find and arrest the people who believe in you. 'The people also know that I was there when Stephen, your witness, was killed. I stood there and agreed that they should kill Stephen. I even held the coats of the men who were killing him!' 'But Jesus said to me, 'Leave now. I will send you far away to the non-Jewish people.'"

"The people stopped listening when Paul said this last thing about going to the non-Jewish people. They all shouted, "Kill him! Get him out of the world! A man like this should not be allowed to live!" "They yelled and threw off their coats.* They threw dust into the air.* "Then the commander told the soldiers to take Paul into the army building. He told the soldiers to beat Paul. The commander wanted to make Paul tell why the people were shouting against him like this. "So the soldiers were tying Paul, preparing to beat him. But

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

threw ... coats This showed that the Jews were very angry at Paul.

threw ... air In this way they showed that they were very, very angry.

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

Gamaliel A very important teacher of the Pharisees, a Jewish religious group (See Acts 5:34).

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Ananias In Acts there are three men with this name. See Acts 5:1 and 23:2 for the other two.

Paul said to an army officer* there, "Do you have the right to beat a Roman citizen* who has not been proven guilty?"

²⁶When the officer heard this, he went to the commander and told him about it. The officer said, "Do you know what you are doing? This man (Paul) is a Roman citizen!"

²⁷The commander came to Paul and said, "Tell me, are you really a Roman citizen?"

Paul answered, "Yes."

²⁸The commander said, "I paid much money to become a Roman citizen."

But Paul said, "I was born a citizen."

²⁹The men who were preparing to question Paul moved away from him immediately. The commander was afraid because he had already tied Paul, and Paul was a Roman citizen.*

Paul Speaks to the Jewish Leaders

¹The next day the commander decided to learn why the Jews were speaking against Paul. So he commanded the leading priests and the Jewish council to meet together. The commander took Paul's chains off. Then he brought Paul out and stood Paul before their meeting.

23 Paul looked at the Jewish council meeting and said, "Brothers, I have lived my life in a good way before God. I have always done what I thought was right."

²Ananias,* the high priest,* was there. Ananias heard Paul and told the men who were standing near Paul to hit him on his mouth. ³Paul said to Ananias, "God will hit you too! You are like a dirty wall that has been painted white! You sit there and judge me, using the law of Moses. But you are telling them to hit me, and that is against the law of Moses."

⁴The men standing near Paul said to him, "You cannot talk like that to God's high priest* You are insulting him!"

⁵Paul said, "Brothers, I did not know this man was the high priest. It is written in the Scriptures,* 'You must not say bad things about a leader of your people.'"⁶

⁷Some of the men in the meeting were Sadducees* and some others were Pharisees.* So Paul had an idea: He shouted to them, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee and my father was a Pharisee! I am on trial here because I hope (believe) that people will rise from death!"

⁸When Paul said this, there was a big argument between the Pharisees* and the Sadducees.* The group was divided. (The Sadducees believe that after people die, they cannot live again. The Sadducees also teach that there are no angels or spirits. But the Pharisees believe in all these things.) ⁹All these Jews began shouting louder and louder. Some of the teachers of the law, who were Pharisees, stood up and argued, "We find nothing wrong with this man! Maybe an angel or a spirit did speak to him, on the road to Damascus!"

¹⁰The argument became a fight. The commander was afraid that the Jews would tear Paul to pieces. So the commander told the soldiers to go down and take Paul away from these Jews and to put him in the army building.

¹¹The next night the Lord Jesus, came and stood by Paul. He said, "Be brave! You have told people in Jerusalem about me. You must also go to Rome to tell people there about me!"

¹²The next morning some of the Jews made a plan. They wanted to kill Paul. The Jews made a promise (vow) to themselves that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. ¹³There were more than 40 Jews who made this plan. ¹⁴These Jews went and talked to the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders. The Jews said, "We have made a serious promise to ourselves. We promised that we will not eat or drink until we have killed Paul! ¹⁵So this is what we want you to

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Roman citizen Roman law said that Roman citizens must not be beaten before their trial.

Ananias Not the same man named Ananias in Acts 22:12.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

'You ... people' Quote from Ex. 22:28.

Sadducees A leading Jewish religious group. They accepted only the first five books of the Old Testament.

Pharisees Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

do: Send a message to the commander from you and all the Jewish leaders. Tell the commander you want him to bring Paul out to you. Tell the commander that you want to ask Paul more questions. We will be waiting to kill Paul while he is on the way here."

"But Paul's nephew heard about this plan. He went to the army building and told Paul about the plan. "Then Paul called one of the army officers* and said to him, "Take this young man to the commander. He has a message for him." "So the army officer brought Paul's nephew to the commander. The officer said, "The prisoner, Paul, asked me to bring this young man to you. He wants to tell you something."

"The commander led the young man to a place where they could be alone. The commander asked, "What do you want to tell me?"

"The young man said, "The Jews have decided to ask you to bring Paul down to their council meeting tomorrow. The Jews want you to think that they plan to ask Paul more questions. "But don't believe them! There are more than 40 Jews who are hiding and waiting to kill Paul. They have all promised (*vowed*) not to eat or drink until they have killed him! Now they are waiting for you to say yes."

"The commander sent the young man away. The commander told him, "Don't tell anyone that you have told me about their plan."

Paul Is Sent to Caesarea

"Then the commander called two army officers.* He said to them, "I need some men to go to Caesarea. Get 200 soldiers ready. Also, get 70 soldiers on horses and 200 men to carry spears. Be ready to leave at nine o'clock tonight. "Get some horses for Paul to ride. He must be taken to Governor Felix safely." "The commander wrote a letter. This is what the letter said:

*From Claudius Lysias

To the Most Excellent Governor Felix:

Greetings.

"The Jews had taken this man (*Paul*), and they planned to kill him. But I learned that he is a Roman citizen, so I went with my soldiers and saved him. "I wanted to know why they were accusing him. So I brought him before their council meeting. "This is what I learned: The Jews said Paul did some things that were wrong. But these charges were about their own Jewish laws. And none of these things were worthy of jail or death. "I was told that some of the Jews were making a plan to kill Paul. So I send him to you. I also told those Jews to tell you the things they have against him.

"The soldiers did the things they were told. The soldiers got Paul and took him to the city of Antipatris that night. "The next day the soldiers on horses went with Paul to Caesarea. But the other soldiers and the spearmen went back to the army building in Jerusalem. "The soldiers on horses entered Caesarea and gave the letter to the governor (*Felix*). Then they gave Paul to him. "The governor read the letter. Then he asked Paul, "What country are you from?" The governor learned that Paul was from Cilicia. "The governor said, "I will hear your case when the Jews who are against you come here too." Then the governor gave orders for Paul to be kept in the palace. (This building had been built by Herod.*)"

The Jews Accuse Paul

24 Five days later Ananias went to the city of Caesarea. Ananias was the high priest.* Ananias also brought some of the older Jewish leaders and a lawyer named Tertullus. They went to Caesarea to make charges against Paul before the governor. "Paul was called into

army officers Centurions, Roman army officers who each had authority over 100 soldiers.

Herod Herod I (the Great) of Judea, 40–4 B.C.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

the meeting, and Tertullus began to make his charges.

Tertullus said, "Most Excellent Felix! Our people enjoy much peace because of you, and many wrong things in our country are being made right through your wise help. 'We are very thankful to accept these things from you. We accept these things always and in every place. 'But I don't want to take any more of your time. So I will say only a few words. Please be patient. 'This man (*Paul*) is a troublemaker. He makes trouble with the Jews everywhere in the world. He is a leader of the Nazarene group. 'Also, he was trying to make the temple* unclean, but we stopped him.* 'You can decide if all these things are true. Ask him some questions yourself.'" "The other Jews agreed. They said, "These things are really true!"

¹⁰The governor made a sign for Paul to speak. So Paul answered, "Governor Felix, I know that you have been a judge over this nation (*Israel*) for a long time. So I am happy to defend myself before you. 'I went to worship in Jerusalem only twelve days ago. You can learn for yourself that this is true. ¹²These Jews who are accusing me did not find me arguing with anyone in the temple.* I was not making trouble with the people. And I was not making trouble or arguing in the synagogues* or any other place in the city. ¹³These Jews cannot prove the things they are saying against me now. 'But I will tell you this: I worship the God of our fathers (*ancestors*) as a follower of the Way of Jesus. The Jews say that the Way of Jesus is not the right way. But I believe everything that is taught in the law of Moses. And I believe everything that is written in the books of the prophets.* ¹⁵I have the same hope in God that

these Jews have—the hope that all people, good and bad, will be raised from death. "This is why I always try to do what I believe is right before God and men.

¹⁴"I was away from Jerusalem, for many years. I went back there to bring money to my people and to give some offerings (*gifts*). "I was doing this when some Jews found me in the temple.* I had finished the cleansing (*washing*) ceremony.* I had not made any trouble; no people were gathering around me. "But some Jews from Asia* were there. They should be here, standing before you. If I have really done anything wrong, those Jews from Asia are the ones who should accuse me. They were there! "Ask these Jews here if they found any wrong in me when I stood before the Jewish council meeting in Jerusalem. "I did say one thing when I stood before them: I said, 'You are judging me today because I believe that people will rise from death!'"

¹⁵Felix already understood a lot about the Way of Jesus. He stopped the trial and said, "When commander Lysias comes here, I will decide about these things." ¹⁶Felix told the army officer* to keep Paul guarded. But he told the officer to give Paul some freedom and to let Paul's friends bring the things that Paul needed.

Paul Speaks to Felix and His Wife

¹⁷After a few days Felix came with his wife, Drusilla. She was a Jew. Felix asked for Paul to be brought to him. Felix listened to Paul talk about believing in Christ Jesus. ¹⁸But Felix became afraid when Paul spoke about things like living right, self-control, and the judgment that will come in the future. Felix said, "Go away now! When I have more time, I will call you." ¹⁹But Felix had another reason for talking with Paul. Felix hoped that Paul would pay him a bribe.* So Felix sent for Paul often and talked with him.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

Verses 6-8 Some Greek copies add 6b-8a: "And we wanted to judge him by our own law. 'But the officer Lysias came and used much force to take him from us. 'And Lysias commanded his people to come to you to accuse us."

synagogues Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

cleansing ceremony The special things Jews did to end the Nazirite vow.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

bribe Money to pay for Paul's freedom.

²²But after two years, Porcius Festus became governor. So Felix was no longer governor. But Felix left Paul in prison, because Felix wanted to do something to please the Jews.

Paul Asks to See Caesar

25 Festus became governor, and three days later he went from Caesarea to Jerusalem. ²The leading priests and the important Jewish leaders made charges against Paul before Festus. ³They asked Festus to do something for them; the Jews wanted Festus to send Paul back to Jerusalem. They had a plan to kill Paul on the way. ⁴But Festus answered, "No! Paul will be kept in Caesarea. I myself will go to Caesarea soon. ⁵Some of your leaders should go with me. They can accuse the man (*Paul*) there in Caesarea, if he has really done something wrong."

⁶Festus stayed in Jerusalem another eight or ten days. Then he went back to Caesarea. The next day Festus told the soldiers to bring Paul before him. Festus was seated on the judgment seat. ⁷Paul came into the room. The Jews who had come from Jerusalem stood around him. The Jews said that Paul had done many wrong things. But they could not prove any of these things. ⁸This is what Paul said to defend himself: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law, against the temple,* or against Caesar.*"

⁹But Festus wanted to please the Jews. So he asked Paul, "Do you want to go to Jerusalem? Do you want me to judge you there on these charges?"

¹⁰Paul said, "I am standing at Caesar's* judgment seat now. This is where I should be judged! I have done nothing wrong to the Jews; you know this is true. ¹¹If I have done something wrong, and the law says I must die, then I agree that I should die. I don't ask to be saved from death. But if these charges are not true, then no person can give me to these Jews. No! I want Caesar* to hear my case!"

¹²Festus talked about this with his advisers. Then he said, "You have asked to see Caesar,* so you will go to Caesar!"

Paul Before Herod Agrippa

¹³A few days later King Agrippa* and Bernice* came to Caesarea to visit Festus. ¹⁴They stayed there many days. Festus told the king about Paul's case. Festus said, "There is a man that Felix left in prison. ¹⁵When I went to Jerusalem, the leading priests and the older Jewish leaders there made charges against him. These Jews wanted me to order his death. ¹⁶But I answered, 'When a man is accused of doing something wrong, Romans don't give the man to other people to judge. First, the man must face the people who are accusing him. And he must be allowed to defend himself against their charges.' ¹⁷So these Jews came here to Caesarea, for the trial. And I did not waste time. The next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded that the man (*Paul*) be brought in. ¹⁸The Jews stood up and accused him. But the Jews did not accuse him of any bad crimes. I thought they would. ¹⁹The things they said were about their own religion and about a man named Jesus. Jesus died, but Paul said that he is still alive. ²⁰I did not know much about these things, so I did not ask questions. But I asked Paul, 'Do you want to go to Jerusalem and be judged there?' ²¹But Paul asked to be kept in Caesarea. He wants a decision from the Emperor (*Caesar**). So I commanded that Paul be held until I could send him to Caesar in Rome."

²²Agrippa* said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man, too."

Festus said, "Tomorrow you can hear him!"

²³The next day Agrippa* and Bernice* appeared. They dressed and acted like very important people. Agrippa and Bernice, the army leaders, and the important men of Caesarea went into the judgment room. Festus

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.
Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

Bernice Agrippa's sister. She was the oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

commanded the soldiers to bring Paul in. ²Festus said, "King Agrippa and all of you men gathered here with us, you see this man (*Paul*). All the Jewish people, here and in Jerusalem, have complained to me about him. When they complain about him, they shout that he should be killed. ³When I judged him, I could find nothing wrong. I found no reason to order his death. But he asked to be judged by Caesar.* So I decided to send him to Rome. ⁴But I don't really know what to tell Caesar that this man has done wrong. So I have brought him before all of you—especially you, King Agrippa. I hope that you can question him and give me something to write to Caesar. ⁵I think it is foolish to send a prisoner to Caesar, without making some charges against him."

Paul Before King Agrippa

26 Agrippa* said to Paul, "You may now speak to defend yourself."

Then Paul raised his hand[†] and began to speak. ²He said, "King Agrippa, I will answer all the charges that the Jews say against me. I think it is a blessing that I can stand here before you today and do this. ³I am very happy to talk to you, because you know much about all the Jewish customs and the things that the Jews argue about. Please listen to me patiently.

"All the Jews know about my whole life. They know the way I lived from the beginning in my own country and later in Jerusalem. ⁵These Jews have known me for a long time. If they want to, they can tell you that I was a good Pharisee.* And the Pharisees obey the laws of the Jewish religion more carefully than any other group of Jewish people. ⁶Now I am on trial because I hope for the promise that God made to our fathers (*ancestors*). ⁷This is the promise that all the twelve tribes (*family groups*) of our people hope to receive. For this hope the Jews serve God day and night. My

king, the Jews have accused me because I hope for this same promise! ⁸Why do you people think it is impossible for God to raise people from death?

⁹"When I was a Pharisee., even I thought I should do many things against the name of Jesus from Nazareth. ¹⁰And in Jerusalem I did many things against the saints* (*believers*). The leading priests gave me the power to put many of these people (*believers*) in jail. When the followers of Jesus were being killed, I agreed that it was a good thing. ¹¹In every synagogue,* I punished them. I tried to make them say bad things against* Jesus. I was so angry against these people (*believers*) that I went to other cities to find them and hurt them.

Paul Tells About Seeing Jesus

¹²"One time the leading priests gave me permission and the power to go to the city of Damascus. ¹³I was on the way to Damascus. It was noon. I saw a light from the sky. The light was brighter than the sun. The light shined all around me and the men who were traveling with me. ¹⁴We all fell to the ground. Then I heard a voice talking to me in the Jewish language.* The voice said, 'Saul, Saul, why are you doing these bad things to me? You are only hurting yourself by fighting me.' ¹⁵I said, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord said, 'I am Jesus. I am the One you are persecuting. ¹⁶Stand up! I have chosen you to be my servant. You will be my witness—you will tell people the things that you have seen about me today and the things that I will show you. This is why I have come to you today. ¹⁷I will not let your own people (*the Jews*) hurt you. And I will keep you safe from the non-Jewish people too. I am sending you to these people. ¹⁸You will show the people the Truth. The people will turn away from

saints The followers of Jesus are also called saints, which means "holy people."

synagogue Synagogues were buildings where Jews gathered to read and study the Scriptures.

say ... against Literally, "blaspheme," the same as saying they did not believe in Jesus.

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

raised his hand A sign to make the people listen.

Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

darkness (*sin*) to the light (*good*). They will turn away from the power of Satan, and they will turn to God. Then their sins can be forgiven. They can have a share with those people who have been made holy* by believing in me.”

Paul Tells About His Work

“Paul continued speaking: “King Agrippa,* after I had this vision* from heaven, I obeyed it. ²¹I began telling people that they should change their hearts and lives and turn back to God. I told the people to do things that show that they really changed their hearts. I told these things first to people in Damascus. Then I went to Jerusalem and to every part of Judea and told these things to the people there. I also went to the non-Jewish people. ²²This is why the Jews grabbed me and were trying to kill me in the temple.* ²³But God helped me, and he is still helping me today. With God’s help I am standing here today and telling all people the things I have seen. But I am saying nothing new. I am saying the same things that Moses and the prophets* said would happen. ²⁴They said that the Christ* would die and be the first to rise from death. Moses and the prophets said that the Christ would bring light to the Jewish people and to the non-Jewish people.”

Paul Tries to Persuade Agrippa

“While Paul was saying these things to defend himself, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are crazy! Too much study has made you crazy!”

“Paul said, “Most Excellent Festus, I am not crazy. The things I say are true. My words are not the words of a foolish man; I am serious. *King Agrippa* knows about these things. I can speak freely to him. I know that he has

heard about all of these things. Why? Because these things happened where all people could see. “King Agrippa,* do you believe the things the prophets* wrote? I know you believe!”

“King Agrippa said to Paul, “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so easily?”

“Paul said, “It is not important if it is easy or if it is hard; I pray to God that not only you but every person listening to me today could be saved and, be like me—except for these chains I have!”

King Agrippa, Governor Festus, Bernice,* and all the people sitting with them stood up ²⁵and left the room. They were talking to each other. They said, “This man should not be killed or put in jail; he has done nothing really bad!” ²⁶And Agrippa said to Festus, “We could let this man go free, but he has asked to see Caesar.*

Paul Sails for Rome

27 It was decided that we would sail for Italy. An army officer* named Julius guarded Paul and some other prisoners. Julius served in the emperor’s* army. ²We got on a ship and left. The ship was from the city of Adramyttium and was ready to sail to different places in Asia.* Aristarchus went with us. He was a man from the city of Thessalonica in Macedonia. ³The next day we came to the city of Sidon. Julius was very good to Paul. He gave Paul freedom to go visit his friends. These friends took care of Paul’s needs. ⁴We left the city of Sidon. We sailed close to the island of Cyprus because the wind was blowing against us. ⁵We went across the sea by Cilicia and Pamphylia. Then we came to the city of Myra in Lycia. ⁶In Myra the army officer* found a ship from the city of Alexandria. This ship was going to Italy. So he put us on it.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Agrippa Herod Agrippa II, great-grandson of Herod the Great.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

temple A building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Christ The “anointed one” (Messiah) or chosen of God.

Bernice King Agrippa’s sister. She was the oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

emperor The ruler (leader) of the Roman empire.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

⁷We sailed slowly for many days. It was hard for us to reach the city of Cnidus because the wind was blowing against us. We could not go any farther that way. So we sailed by the south side of the island of Crete near Salmone. ⁸We sailed along the coast, but the sailing was hard. Then we came to a place called Safe Harbors. The city of Lasea was near there.

⁹But we had lost much time. It was now dangerous to sail, because it was already after the Jewish day of fasting.* So Paul warned them, ¹⁰"Men, I can see that there will be much trouble on this trip. The ship and the things in the ship will be lost. Our lives may even be lost!" ¹¹But the captain and the owner of the ship did not agree with Paul. So the army officer* did not believe Paul. Instead, the officer believed what the captain and owner of the ship said. ¹²And that harbor (*Safe Harbors*) was not a good place for the ship to stay for the winter. So most of the men decided that the ship should leave there. The men hoped we could go to Phoenix. The ship could stay there for the winter. (Phoenix was a city on the island of Crete. It had a harbor which faced southwest and northwest.)

The Storm

¹³Then a good wind began to blow from the south. The men on the ship thought, "This is the wind we wanted, and now we have it!" So they pulled up the anchor. We sailed very close to the island of Crete. ¹⁴But then a very strong wind named the "Northeaster" came from across the island. ¹⁵This wind took the ship and carried it away. The ship could not sail against the wind. So we stopped trying and let the wind blow us. ¹⁶We went below a small island named Cauda. Then* we were able to bring in the lifeboat, but it was very hard to do. ¹⁷After the men took the lifeboat in, they tied ropes around the ship to hold the ship together. The men

were afraid that the ship would hit the sandbanks of Syrtis.* So they lowered the sail and let the wind carry the ship. ¹⁸The next day the storm was blowing us so hard that the men threw some things out of the ship.* ¹⁹A day later they threw out the ship's equipment. ²⁰For many days we could not see the sun or the stars. The storm was very bad. We lost all hope of staying alive—we thought we would die.

²¹The men did not eat for a long time. Then one day Paul stood up before them and said, "Men, I told you not to leave Crete. You should have listened to me. Then you would not have all this trouble and loss. ²²But now I tell you to be happy. None of you will die! But the ship will be lost. ²³Last night an angel came to me from God. This is the God I worship. I am his. ²⁴God's angel said, 'Paul, don't be afraid! You must stand before Caesar.* And God has given you this promise: He will save the lives of all those men sailing with you.' ²⁵So men, be happy! I trust in God. Everything will happen like his angel told me. ²⁶But we will crash on an island."

²⁷On the 14th night we were floating around in the Adriatic Sea.* The sailors thought we were close to land. ²⁸They threw a rope into the water with a weight on the end of it. They found that the water was 120 feet deep. They went a little farther and threw the rope in again. It was 90 feet deep. ²⁹The sailors were afraid that we would hit the rocks. So they threw four anchors into the water. Then they prayed for daylight to come. ³⁰Some of the sailors wanted to leave the ship. They lowered the lifeboat to the water. The sailors wanted the other men to think that they were throwing more anchors from the front of the ship. ³¹But Paul told the army officer* and the other soldiers, "If these men do not stay in the ship, then your lives cannot be saved!" ³²So the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat fall into the water.

day of fasting The day of Atonement, an important Jewish holy day in the fall of the year. This was the time of year that bad storms happened on the sea.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

Then While the island protected them from the wind.

Syrtis Shallow area in the sea near the Libyan coast.

out ... ship The men did this to make the ship lighter so that it would not sink easily.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Adriatic Sea The sea between Greece and Italy, including the central part of the Mediterranean Sea.

²³Just before dawn Paul began persuading all the people to eat something. He said, "For the past two weeks you have been waiting and watching. You have not eaten for 14 days. ²⁴Now I beg (ask) you to eat something. You need it to stay alive. None of you will lose even one hair off your heads." ²⁵After he said this, Paul took some bread and thanked God for it before all of them. He broke off a piece and began eating. ²⁶All the men felt better. They all started eating too. ²⁷(There were 276 people on the ship.) ²⁸We ate all we wanted. Then we began making the ship lighter by throwing the grain into the sea.

The Ship Is Destroyed

²⁹When daylight came the sailors saw land. But they did not know what land it was. They saw a bay with a beach. The sailors wanted to sail the ship to the beach if they could. ³⁰So they cut the ropes that were holding the rudders. Then they raised the front sail into the wind and sailed toward the beach. ³¹But the ship hit a sandbank. The front of the ship stuck there. The ship could not move. Then the big waves began to break the back of the ship to pieces.

³²The soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that none of the prisoners could swim away and escape. ³³But the army officer* (*Julius*) wanted to let Paul live. So he did not allow the soldiers to kill the prisoners. Julius told the people who could swim to jump into the water and swim to land. ³⁴The other people used wooden boards or pieces of the ship. And this is how all the people went to land. None of the people died.

Paul on the Island of Malta

28 When we were safe on land, we learned that the island was called Malta. ²It was raining and very cold. But the people who lived there were very good to us. They made a fire for us and welcomed all of us.

³Paul gathered a pile of sticks for the fire. Paul was putting the sticks on the fire. A poisonous snake came out because of the heat and bit Paul on the hand. ⁴The people living on the island saw the snake hanging from Paul's hand. They said, "This man must be a murderer! He did not die in the sea, but Justice* does not want him to live." ⁵But Paul shook the snake off into the fire. Paul was not hurt. ⁶The people thought that Paul would swell up or fall down dead. The people waited and watched Paul for a long time, but nothing bad happened to him. So the people changed their opinion of Paul. They said, "He is a god!"

⁷There were some fields around that same area. A very important man on the island owned these fields. His name was Publius. He welcomed us into his home. Publius was very good to us. We stayed in his house for three days. ⁸Publius' father was very sick. He had a fever and dysentery.* But Paul went to him and prayed for him. Paul put his hands on the man and healed him. ⁹After this happened, all the other sick people on the island came to Paul. Paul healed them too. ¹⁰¹¹The people on the island gave us many honors. We stayed there three months. When we were ready to leave, the people gave us the things we needed.

Paul Goes to Rome

We got on a ship from the city of Alexandria. The ship had stayed on the island of Malta during the winter. On the front of the ship was the sign for the twin gods.* ²We stopped at the city of Syracuse. We stayed in Syracuse three days and then left. ³We came to the city of Rhegium. The next day a wind began to blow from the southwest, so we were able to leave. A day later we came to the city of Puteoli. ⁴We found some brothers (*believers*) there. They asked us to stay with them a week. Finally, we came to Rome. ⁵The believers in Rome heard that we were there. They came out

Justice The people thought there was a god named Justice who would punish bad people.

dysentery A very bad sickness like diarrhea.

twin gods Statues of Castor and Pollux, Greek gods.

army officer A centurion, a Roman army officer who had authority over 100 soldiers.

to meet us at the Market of Appius* and at the Three Inns.* When Paul saw these believers, he felt better. Paul thanked God.

Paul in Rome

"Then we went to Rome. In Rome Paul was allowed to live alone. But a soldier stayed with Paul to guard him.

"Three days later Paul sent for some of the most important Jews. When they came together, Paul said, "My Jewish brothers, I have done nothing against our people (*the Jews*). I have done nothing against the customs of our fathers (*ancestors*). But I was arrested in Jerusalem and given to the Romans. "The Romans asked me many questions. But they could not find any reason why I should be killed. So they wanted to let me go free. "But the Jews there did not want that. So I had to ask to come to Rome, to have my trial before Caesar.* But I am not saying that my people (*the Jews*) have done anything wrong. "That is why I wanted to see you and talk with you. I am bound with this chain because I believe in the hope of Israel.*

"The Jews answered Paul, "We have received no letters from Judea about you. None of our Jewish brothers who have traveled from there (*Judea*) brought news about you or told us anything bad about you. "We want to hear your ideas. We know that people everywhere are speaking against this group (*Christians*)."

"Paul and the Jews chose a day for a meeting. On that day many more of these Jews met with Paul at his house. Paul spoke to them all day long. Paul explained the kingdom of God to them. Paul tried to persuade them to believe the things about Jesus. He used the law of Moses and the writings of the prophets* to do this. "Some of the Jews believed the things Paul said, but others did not believe. "They had an argument. The Jews were ready to leave, but

Paul said one more thing to them: "The Holy Spirit* spoke the truth to your fathers (*ancestors*) through Isaiah the prophet.* He said,

* 'Go to this people (*the Jews*) and tell them:

You will listen and you will hear,
but you will not understand!

You will look and you will see,
but you will not understand what you see!

" Yes, the hearts (*minds*) of these people (*the Jews*) are now hard.

These people have ears,
but they don't listen.

And these people refuse
to see the truth.

This has happened so that
these people will not
see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their minds.

This has happened so that they will not
turn to me to heal them.'

Isaiah 69:10

"I want you Jews to know that God has sent his salvation to the non-Jewish people. They will listen!" **

"Paul stayed two full years in his own rented house. He welcomed all people who came and visited him. "Paul preached about the kingdom of God. He taught about the Lord Jesus Christ. He was very bold (*brave*), and no one tried to stop him from speaking.

Market of Appius Town about 27 miles from Rome.

Three Inns Town about 30 miles from Rome.

Caesar The name given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

prophet Person who spoke for God. He often told things that would happen in the future.

Verse 29 Some late copies of Acts add verse 29: "After Paul said this, the Jews left. They were arguing very much with each other."

Romans

1 From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus. God called me to be an apostle.* I was chosen to tell God's Good News* to all people.

²God promised long ago to give this Good News to his people. God used his prophets* to promise this. That promise is written in the Holy Scriptures.* ^{3,4}The Good News is about God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. As a person, he was born from the family of David.* But through the Spirit* of holiness Jesus was shown to be God's Son. He was shown to be God's Son with great power by rising from death. ⁵Through Christ, God gave me the special work of an apostle.* God gave me this work to lead people of all nations to believe and obey God. And I do this work for Christ. ⁶And you people in Rome were also called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷This letter is to all of you in Rome that God has called to be his holy people.* You are people that God loves.

Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

A Prayer of Thanks

⁸First I want to say that I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. I thank God

because people everywhere in the world are talking about your great faith. ^{9,10}Every time I pray I always remember you. God knows this is true. God is the One I worship (*serve*) in my spirit by telling people the Good News* about his Son. I pray that I will be allowed to come to you. It will happen if God wants it. ¹¹I want very much to see you. I want to give you some spiritual gift to make you strong. ¹²I mean that I want us to help each other with the faith that we have. Your faith will help me, and my faith will help you. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I want you to know that I planned many times to come to you. But I have not been allowed to come to you. I wanted to come so that I could help you grow spiritually. I want to help you like I have helped the other non-Jewish people.

¹⁴I must serve all people—Greeks and non-Greeks, wise people and foolish people. ¹⁵That is why I want so much to preach the Good News* to you there in Rome.

¹⁶I am proud of the Good News. The Good News is the power God uses to save every person that believes—to save the Jews first, and also to save the non-Jews. ¹⁷The Good News shows how God makes people right with himself. God's way of making people right begins and ends with faith. Like the Scripture* says, "The person that is right with God by faith will live forever."*

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

prophets People who spoke for God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Spirit Probably the Holy Spirit.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure and belong only to God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"The person ... forever" Quote from Hab. 2:4.

All People Have Done Wrong

¹God's anger is shown from heaven. God is angry with all the evil and wrong things that people do against God. They have the truth, but by their evil lives they hide the truth. ²God shows his anger, because everything that is known about God has been made clear to them. Yes, God has clearly shown people everything that is known about him. ³There are things about God that people cannot see—his eternal power and all the things that make him God. But since the beginning of the world those things have been easy for people to understand. Those things are made clear in the things that God has made. So people have no excuse for the bad things they do. ⁴People knew God. But they did not give glory to God and they did not thank him. People's thinking became useless. Their foolish minds were filled with darkness (*sin*). ⁵People said they were wise, and they became fools. ⁶They gave up the glory of God who lives forever. People traded that glory for the worship of idols* made to look like earthly people. People traded God's glory for things that look like birds, animals, and snakes.

⁷People were full of sin, wanting only to do evil things. So God left them and let them go their sinful way. And so they became full of sexual sins, using their bodies wrongly with each other. ⁸Those people traded the truth of God for a lie. Those people worshiped and served things that were made. But people did not worship and serve the God who made those things. God should be praised forever. Amen.

⁹Because people did those things, God left them and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. Women stopped having natural sex with men. They started having sex with other women. ¹⁰In the same way, men stopped having natural sex with women. The men began wanting each other all the time. Men did shameful things with other men. And in their bodies they received the punishment for those wrong things they did.

¹¹People did not think it was important to have a true knowledge of God. So God left them and allowed those people to have their own worthless thinking. And so those people do the things that they should not do. ¹²Those people are filled with every kind of sin, evil, selfishness, and hatred. Those people are full of jealousy, murder, fighting, lying, and thinking the worst things about each other. Those people gossip ¹³and say evil things about each other. Those people hate God. They are rude and conceited and boast about themselves. Those people invent ways of doing evil. They don't obey their parents, ¹⁴they are foolish, they don't keep their promises, and they show no kindness or mercy to other people. ¹⁵Those people know God's law. They know that God's law says that people that live like this should die. But they continue to do these wrong things. And they also feel that people who do these things are doing right.

You Jews Also Are Sinful

2 If you think that you can judge those other people, then you are wrong. You too are guilty of sin. You judge those people, but you do the same bad things they do. So when you judge them, you are really judging yourself guilty. ³God judges the people that do those wrong things. And we know that God's judgment is right. ⁴You also judge the people that do those wrong things. But you do those wrong things too. So surely you understand that God will judge you. You will not be able to escape. ⁵God has been very kind to you. And he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change. But you think nothing of his kindness. Maybe you don't understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives. ⁶But you people are hard and stubborn. You refuse to change. So you are making your own punishment greater and greater. You will get that punishment on the day when God will show his anger. On that day people will see God's right judgments. ⁷God will reward or punish every person for the things that person has done. ⁸Some people live for God's glory,

idols Statues made from wood, stone, or metal that people worshipped like gods.

for honor, and for life that cannot be destroyed. Those people live for those things by always continuing to do good. God will give life forever to those people. ⁴But other people are selfish and refuse to follow truth. Those people follow evil. God will give those people his punishment and anger. ⁵God will give trouble and suffering to every person that does evil—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. ⁶But God will give glory, honor, and peace to every person that does good—to the Jews first and also to the non-Jews. ⁷God judges all people the same.

⁸People that have the law* and people that have never heard of the law are all the same when they sin. People that don't have the law and are sinners will be lost. And, in the same way, people that have the law and are sinners will be judged by the law. ⁹Hearing the law does not make people right with God. The law makes people right with God only if those people always obey everything the law says. ¹⁰(The non-Jews don't have the law. But when they freely do things that the law commands without even knowing the law, then they are the law for themselves. This is true even though they don't have the law. ¹¹They show that in their hearts they know what is right and wrong the same as the law commands. And those people also show this by the way they feel about right and wrong. Sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did wrong, and this makes them guilty. And sometimes their thoughts tell them that they did right, and this makes them not guilty.) ¹²All these things will happen on the day when God will judge the secret things inside of people. The Good News* that I tell people says that God will judge people through Christ Jesus.

The Jews and the Law

¹³What about you? You say you are a Jew. You trust in the law and boast that you are close to God. ¹⁴You know what God wants you

to do. And you know the things that are important, because you have learned the law. ¹⁵You think you are a guide for people that don't know the right way. You think you are a light for people that are in darkness (*sin*). ¹⁶You think you can show foolish people what is right. And you think you are a teacher for people that still need to learn. You have the law and so you think that you know everything and have all truth. ¹⁷You teach other people. So why don't you teach yourself? You tell people not to steal. But you yourselves steal. ¹⁸You say that people must not do the sin of adultery.* But you yourselves are guilty of that sin. You hate idols.* But you steal from temples.* ¹⁹You boast about God's law. But you bring shame to God by breaking his law. ²⁰It is written in the Scriptures*: "The non-Jews speak against God's name because of you Jews."*

²¹If you follow the law,* then your circumcision* has meaning. But if you break the law, then it is like you were never circumcised. ²²The non-Jews are not circumcised. But if they do what the law says, then it is like they were circumcised. ²³You Jews have the written law and circumcision, but you break the law. So the people that are not circumcised in their bodies, but still obey the law, will show that you people are guilty.

²⁴A person is not a true Jew if he is only a Jew in his physical body. True circumcision* is not only on the outside of the body. ²⁵A person is a true Jew only if he is a Jew inside. True circumcision is done in the heart. It is done by the Spirit,* not by the written law. And a person that is circumcised in the heart by the Spirit gets praise from God, not from people.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

idols The false gods that the non-Jewish people worship.

temples Places where people worship.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"The non-Jews ... Jews" Quote from Is. 52:5; Ez. 36:20.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

3 So, do Jews have anything that other people don't have? Is there anything special about being circumcised*? ²Yes, the Jews have many special things. The most important thing is this: God trusted the Jews with his teachings. ³It is true that some Jews were not faithful to God. But will that stop God from doing what he promised? ⁴No! God will continue to be true even when every person is false. Like the Scriptures* say:

"You will be proved right in your words,
and you will win when you are being
judged."

Psalms 51:4

⁵When we do wrong, that shows more clearly that God is right. So can we say that God does wrong when he punishes us? (I am using an idea that some people might have.) ⁶No! If God could not punish us, then God could not judge the world.

⁷A person might say, "When I lie it really gives God glory, because my lie shows God's truth. So why am I judged a sinner?" ⁸It would be the same to say, "We should do evil so that good will come." Many people criticize us and say that we teach those things. People that say those things are wrong, and they should be condemned.

All People Are Guilty

⁹So are we Jews better than other people? No! We have already said that Jews and non-Jews are the same. They are all guilty of sin. ¹⁰Like the Scriptures* say:

"There is no person without sin. None!

¹¹ There is no person that understands.
There is no person that really wants to
be with God.

¹² All people have turned away,
and all people have become worthless.

There is no person that does good.
None!"

Psalms 14:1-3

¹³ "People's mouths are like open graves;
they use their tongues for telling lies."

Psalms 5:9

"The things they say are like the poison
of snakes";

Psalms 140:3

¹⁴ "their mouths are full of cursing and
bitterness."

Psalms 10:7

¹⁵ "People are always ready to hurt and kill;

¹⁶ everywhere they go they cause ruin and
sadness.

¹⁷ People don't know the way of peace."

Isaiah 59:7-8

¹⁸ "They have no fear or respect for God."

Psalms 36:1

¹⁹These things the law* says are for the people that are under the law. This stops all Jewish, people from making excuses and brings the whole world (*Jews and non-Jews*) under God's judgment. ²⁰Why? Because no person can be made right with God by following the law. The law only shows us our sin.

How God Makes People Right

²¹But God has a way to make people right without the law. And God has now shown us that new way. The law and the prophets* told us about this new way. ²²God makes people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this for all people that believe in Christ. All people are the same. ²³All people have sinned and are not good enough for God's glory. ²⁴People are made right with God by his grace (*kindness*). This is a free gift. People are made right with God by being made free from sin through Jesus Christ. ²⁵God gave Jesus as a

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

law God's law. It is represented in the Old Testament.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

way to forgive people's sins through faith. God does this by the blood (*death*) of Jesus. This showed that God always does what is right and fair. God was right in the past when he was patient and did not punish people for their sins. ²And God gave Jesus to show today that God does what is right. God did this so that he could judge rightly and also make right any person that has faith in Jesus.

³So do we have a reason to boast about ourselves? No! And why not? It is the way of faith that stops all boasting, not the way of following the law. ⁴Why? Because a person is made right with God through faith, not through the things he has done to follow the law. This is what we believe. ⁵God is not only the God of the Jews. ⁶He is also the God of the non-Jews. ⁷There is only one God. He will make Jews right with him by their faith. And he will also make non-Jews right with him through their faith. ⁸So do we destroy the law by following the way of faith? No! Faith causes us to be what the law truly wants.

The Example of Abraham

4 So what can we say about Abraham,* the father of our people? What did he learn about faith? ¹If Abraham was made right by the things he did, then he had a reason to boast. But Abraham could not boast before God. ²The Scripture* says, "Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham's faith. That made Abraham right with God."³

⁴When a person works, his pay is not given to him as a gift. He earns the pay he gets. ⁵But a person cannot do any work that will make him right with God. So that person must trust in God. Then God accepts that person's faith (*trust*), and that makes him right with God. God is the One who makes even evil people right. ⁶David said the same thing. David said that a person is truly happy when God does not look at the things that person has done but accepts

him like a good person:

- ⁷ "People are truly blessed (*happy*)
when their wrongs are forgiven,
and when their sins are covered!
- ⁸ And when the Lord accepts a person like
he was without sin,
that person is truly blessed!"

Psalms 32:1-2

⁹Is this happiness only for those people that are circumcised* (*the Jews*)? Or is this happiness also for people that are not circumcised (*non-Jews*)? We have already said that God accepted Abraham's faith, and that faith made him right with God. ¹⁰So how did this happen? Did God accept Abraham* before or after he was circumcised? God accepted him before his circumcision. ¹¹Abraham was circumcised later to show that God accepted him. His circumcision was proof that he was right with God through faith before he was circumcised. So Abraham is the father of all people that believe but are not circumcised. Those people believe and are accepted like people that are right with God. ¹²And Abraham is also the father of people that have been circumcised. But it is not their circumcision that makes Abraham their father. He is their father only if they live following the faith that our father Abraham* had before he was circumcised.

God's Promise Received Through Faith

¹Abraham* and his descendants* received the promise that they would get the whole world. But Abraham did not receive that promise because he followed the law.* Abraham received that promise because he was right with God through his faith. ²If people could get the things that God promised by following the law, then faith is worthless. And God's promise to Abraham is worthless.

circumcised, circumcision To have the foreskin cut off. Done to every Jewish baby boy as a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

descendants All the people born in a person's family after that person dies.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

Jews Literally, "the circumcised people."

non-Jews Literally, "people that are not circumcised."

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"Abraham ... God" Quote from Gen. 15:6.

¹⁵Why? Because the law can only bring God's anger (when the law is not obeyed). But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey.

¹⁶So people get God's promise by having faith. This happens so that the promise can be a free gift. And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham's people can have that promise. The promise is not only for those people that live under the law (of Moses). The promise is for any person that lives with faith like Abraham. Abraham is the father of us all. ¹⁷Like it is written in the Scriptures,* "I have made you (Abraham) a father of many nations."* This is true before God. Abraham believed in God—the God who gives life to dead people and decides that things will happen that have not yet happened.

¹⁸There was no hope (that Abraham would have children). But Abraham believed God and continued hoping. And that is why he became the father of many nations. Like God told him, "You will have many descendants (children)."¹⁹ Abraham was almost 100 years old, so his body was much past the age for having children. Also, Sarah could not have children. Abraham thought about this. But his faith in God did not become weak. ²⁰Abraham never doubted that God would do the thing that God promised. Abraham never stopped believing. He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God. ²¹Abraham felt sure that God was able to do the thing that God promised. ²²So, "God accepted Abraham's faith. That made him right with God."²³ Those words ("God accepted Abraham's faith") were written not only for Abraham. ²⁴Those words were also written for us. God will also accept us because we believe. We believe in the One (God) that raised Jesus our Lord from death. ²⁵Jesus was given to die for our sins. And he was raised from death to make us right with God.

Right With God

5 We have been made right with God because of our faith. So we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through our faith, Christ has brought us into that blessing of God's grace (kindness) that we now enjoy. And we are very happy because of the hope we have of sharing God's glory. ³And we are also happy with the troubles we have. Why are we happy with troubles? Because we know that these troubles make us more patient. ⁴And this patience is proof that we are strong. And this proof gives us hope. ⁵And this hope will never disappoint us—it will never fail. Why? Because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. God gave us his love through the Holy Spirit.* That Holy Spirit was a gift to us from God.

⁶Christ died for us while we were still weak people. We were living against God, but at the right time, Christ died for us. ⁷Very few people will die to save the life of another person, even if that other person is a good person. If the person is a very good person, then someone might be willing to die for that person. ⁸But Christ died for us while we were still sinners. In that way God showed us that he loves us very much.

⁹We have been made right with God by Christ's blood (death). So through Christ we will surely be saved from God's anger. ¹⁰I mean that while we were God's enemies, God made friends with us through the death of his Son. So surely, now that we are God's friends, God will save us through his Son's life. ¹¹And not only will we be saved, but we are also very happy now. We are happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of Jesus that we are now God's friends.

Adam and Christ

¹²Sin came into the world because of what one man (Adam) did. And with sin came death. So this is why all people must die—because all

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"I ... nations" Quote from Gen. 17:5.

"You ... descendants" Quote from Gen. 15:5.

"God accepted ... God" Quote from Gen. 15:6.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

people sinned. ¹¹Sin was in the world before the law [of Moses]. But God does not make people guilty for sin if there is no law. ¹²But from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, all people had to die. Adam died because he sinned by not obeying God's command. But even those people that did not sin the way Adam sinned had to die.

Adam was like the One (*Christ*) who was coming in the future. ¹³But God's free gift is not like Adam's sin. Many people died because of the sin of that one man (*Adam*). But the grace (*kindness*) that people received from God was much greater. Many people received God's gift of life, by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁴After Adam sinned once, he was judged guilty. But the gift of God is different. God's free gift came after many sins. And the gift makes people right with God. ¹⁵One man sinned, and so death ruled all people because of that one man. But now some people accept God's full grace (*kindness*) and his great gift of being made right. Surely those people will have true life and rule through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁶So one sin [of Adam, brought the punishment of death, to all people. But in the same way, one good thing [that Christ did, makes all people right with God. And that brings true life for those people. ¹⁷One man (*Adam*) disobeyed God and many people became sinners. But in the same way, one man (*Christ*) obeyed God and many people will be made right. ¹⁸The law came to make people have more sin. But when people had more sin, God gave them more of his grace (*kindness*). ¹⁹Sin once used death to rule us. But God gave people more of his grace so that grace could rule by making people right with him. This brings life forever through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin but Alive in Christ

6 So do you think that we should continue sinning so that God will give us more and more grace (*kindness*)? ²No! We died to (*quit living*) our old sinful lives. So how can we continue living with sin? ³Did you forget that

all of us became part of Christ when we were baptized*? We shared his death in our baptism.* ⁴So when we were baptized, we were buried with Christ and shared his death. We were buried with Christ so that we could be raised up and, live a new life. This happened the same as Christ was raised from death by the wonderful power of the Father.

⁵Christ died, and we have been joined with Christ by dying too. So we will also be joined with him by rising from death like Christ rose from death. ⁶We know that our old life died with Christ on the cross. This happened so that our sinful selves would have no power over us. And then we would not be slaves to sin. ⁷Any person that has died is made free from sin's control (*power*).

⁸If we died with Christ, we know that we will also live with him. ⁹Christ was raised from death. And we know that he cannot die again. Death has no power over him now. ¹⁰Yes, when Christ died, he died to defeat the power of, sin one time—enough for all time. He now has a new life, and his new life is with God. ¹¹In the same way, you should see yourselves as being dead to the power of sin. And see yourselves as being alive for God through Christ Jesus.

¹²But don't let sin control you in your life here on earth. You must not be ruled by the things your sinful self makes you want to do. ¹³Don't offer the parts of your body to serve sin. Don't use your bodies as things to do evil with. But you should offer yourselves to God. Be like people that have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used for doing good. ¹⁴Sin will not be your master. Why? Because you are not under law. You now live under God's grace (*kindness*).

Slaves of Righteousness

¹⁵So what should we do? Should we sin because we are under grace (*kindness*) and not under law? No! ¹⁶Surely you know that when you give yourselves like slaves to obey someone, then you are really slaves of that

baptized, baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

person. The person you obey is your master. You can follow sin, or obey God. Sin brings spiritual death. But obeying God makes you right with him. ¹⁷In the past you were slaves to sin—sin controlled you. But thank God, you fully obeyed the things that were taught to you. ¹⁸You were made free from sin. And now you are slaves to goodness (*right living*). ¹⁹I explain this by using an example that people know. I explain it this way because it is hard for you to understand. In the past you offered the parts of your body to be slaves to sin and evil. You lived only for evil. In the same way now you must give yourselves to be slaves of goodness. Then you will live only for God.

²⁰In the past you were slaves to sin, and goodness (*right living*) did not control you. ²¹You did evil things. Now you are ashamed of those things. Did those things help you? No. Those things only bring spiritual death. ²²But now you are free from sin. You are now slaves of God. And this brings you a life that is only for God. And from that you will get life forever. ²³When people sin, they earn what sin pays—death. But God gives his people a free gift—life forever in Christ Jesus our Lord.

An Example from Marriage

7 Brothers and sisters, all of you understand the law of Moses. So surely you know that the law rules over a person only while he is alive. ²I will give you an example: A woman must stay married to her husband as long as he is alive. But if her husband dies, then she is made free from the law of marriage. ³But if that woman marries another man while her husband is still alive, the law says she is guilty of adultery.* But if the woman's husband dies, then that woman is made free from the law of marriage. So if that woman marries another man after her husband dies, she is not guilty of adultery.

⁴In the same way, my brothers and sisters, your old selves died and you became free from the law through the body of Christ. Now you belong to someone else. You belong to the One

(Christ) that was raised from death. We belong to Christ so that we can be used in service to God. ⁵In the past, we were ruled by our sinful selves. The law made us want to do sinful things. And those sinful things we wanted to do controlled our bodies, so that the things we did were only bringing us spiritual death. ⁶In the past, the law held us like prisoners. But our old selves died and we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way, not in the old way with the written rules. Now we serve God in the new way with the Spirit.*

Our Fight Against Sin

⁷You might think that I am saying that sin and the law* are the same thing. That is not true. But the law was the only way I could learn what sin means. I would never have known what it means to want something wrong. But the law said, "You must not want things that belong to other people."⁸ ⁹And sin found a way to use that command and make me want every kind of wrong thing. So sin came to me because of that command. But without the law, sin has no power. ¹⁰I was alive without the law before I knew the law. But when the law's command came to me, then sin began to live. ¹¹And I died spiritually, because of sin. The command was meant to bring life, but for me that command brought death. ¹²Sin found a way to fool me by using the command. Sin used the command to make me die spiritually.

¹³So the law is holy, and the command is holy and right and good. ¹⁴Does this mean that something that is good brought death to me? No! But sin used something that is good to bring death to me. This happened so that I could see what sin is really like. It happened to show that sin is something very, very bad. And the command was used to show this.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

law God's law. Here, it is the law of Moses.

"You ... people" Quote from Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

The Conflict in Man

"We know that the law* is spiritual. But I am not spiritual. Sin rules me like I am its slave. "I don't understand the things I do. I don't do the good, things I want to do. And I do the bad, things I hate to do. "And if I don't want to do the bad, things I do, then that means that I agree that the law is good. "But I am not really the one doing these bad, things. It is sin living in me that does these things. "Yes, I know that nothing good lives in me—I mean nothing good lives in the part of me that is earthly and sinful. I want to do the things that are good. But I don't do those things. "I don't do the good things that I want to do. I do the bad things that I don't want to do. "So if I do things I don't want to do, then it is not really me doing those things. It is sin living in me that does those bad things.

"So I have learned this rule: When I want to do good, evil is there with me. "In my mind, I am happy with God's law. "But I see another law working in my body. That law makes war against the law that my mind accepts. That other law working in my body is the law of sin, and that law makes me its prisoner. "This is terrible! Who will save me from this body that brings me death? "God, will save me, I thank him, for his salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So in my mind I am a slave to God's law. But in my sinful self I am a slave to the law of sin.

Life in the Spirit

8 So now people that are in Christ Jesus are not judged guilty. "Why am I not judged guilty? Because in Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit* that brings life made me free. It made me free from the law that brings sin and death. "The law* was without power because the law was made weak by our sinful selves. But God did what the law could not do. God sent his

own Son to earth with the same human life that other people use for sin. God sent his Son to be an offering to pay for sin. So God used a human life to condemn (destroy) sin. "God did this so that we could be right like the law said we must be. Now we don't live following our sinful selves. We live following the Spirit.

"People that live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But those people that live following the Spirit* are thinking about the things that the Spirit wants them to do. "If a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then there is spiritual death. But if a person's thinking is controlled by the Spirit, then there is life and peace. "Why is this true? Because if a person's thinking is controlled by his sinful self, then that person is against God. That person refuses to obey God's law. And really that person is not able to obey God's law. "Those people that are ruled by their sinful selves cannot please God.

"But you are not ruled by your sinful selves. You are ruled by the Spirit,* if that Spirit of God really lives in you. But if any person does not have the Spirit of Christ, then that person does not belong to Christ. "Your body will always be dead because of sin. But if Christ is in you, then the Spirit gives you life, because Christ made you right with God. "God raised Jesus from death. And if God's Spirit is living in you, then he will also give life to your bodies that die. God is the One who raised Christ from death. And he will give life to your bodies through his Spirit that lives in you.

"So, my brothers and sisters,, we must not be ruled by our sinful selves. We must not live the way our sinful selves want. "If you use your lives to do the wrong things your sinful selves want, then you will die spiritually. But if you use the Spirit's* help to stop doing the wrong things you do with your body, then you will have true, life.

"The true children of God are those people that let God's Spirit* lead them. "The Spirit that we received is not a spirit that makes us slaves again and causes us to fear. The Spirit that we have makes us children of God. And

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

with that Spirit we say, "Father, dear Father."¹⁶ And the Spirit himself joins with our spirits to say that we are God's children. ¹⁷If we are God's children, then we will get the blessings God has for his people. We will get these things from God. We will receive those blessings together with Christ. But we must suffer like Christ suffered. Then we will have glory like Christ has glory.

We Will Have Glory in the Future

¹⁸We have sufferings now. But the sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us. ¹⁹Everything that God made is waiting with excitement for the time when God will show the world who his children are. The whole world wants very much for that to happen. ²⁰Everything that God made was changed to be like it was worth nothing. It did not want to change, but God decided to change it. But there was this hope: ²¹That everything God made would be made free from ruin (*decay*). There was hope that everything God made would have the freedom and glory that belong to God's children.

²²We know that everything God made has been waiting until now in pain like a woman ready to give birth to a child. ²³Not only the world, but we also have been waiting with pain inside us. We have the Spirit* as the first part of God's promise. So we are waiting for God to finish making us his own children. I mean we are waiting for our bodies to be made free. ²⁴We were saved, and we have this hope. If we can see what we are waiting for, then that is not really hope. People don't hope for something they already have. ²⁵But we are hoping for something that we don't have yet. We are waiting for it patiently.

²⁶Also, the Spirit* helps us. We are very weak, but the Spirit helps us with our

weakness. We don't know how to pray like we should. But the Spirit himself speaks to God for us. The Spirit begs God for us. The Spirit speaks to God with deep feelings that words cannot explain. ²⁷God can see what is in people's hearts. And God knows what is in the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit speaks to God for his people in the way that God wants.

²⁸We know that in everything God works for the good of those people that love him. These are the people God called (*chose*), because that was his plan. ²⁹God knew those people before he made the world. And God decided that those people would be like his Son (*Jesus*). Then Jesus would be the firstborn* of many brothers and sisters. ³⁰God planned for those people to be like his Son. And he called (*chose*) those people. God called those people and made them right with him. And God gave his glory to those people that he made right.

God's Love in Christ Jesus

³¹So what should we say about this? If God is with us, then no person can defeat us. ³²God will do anything for us. God even let his own Son suffer for us. God gave his Son for us all. So with Jesus now, God will surely give us all things. ³³Who can accuse the people that God has chosen? No one! God is the One who makes his people right. ³⁴Who can say that God's people are guilty? No one! Christ Jesus died for us, but that is not all. He was also raised from death. And now he is at God's right side and is begging God for us. ³⁵Can anything separate us from Christ's love? No! Can trouble separate us from Christ's love? No! Can problems or persecution* separate us from Christ's love? No! If we have no food or clothes, will that separate us from Christ's love? No! Will danger or even death separate us from Christ's love? No! ³⁶Like it is written in the Scriptures*:

Father, dear Father Literally, "Abba, Father." Jewish children called their fathers "Abba," a name that was used like the English word "daddy."

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, He does God's work among people in the world.

firstborn This probably means that Christ was the first in God's family to share God's glory.

persecution Being hurt or bothered by Christ's enemies.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"For you (*Christ*) we are in danger of death all the time.
People think we are worth no more than sheep to be killed."

Psalms 44:22

"But in all these things we have full victory through God who showed his love for us."¹² Yes, I am sure that nothing can separate us from God's love. Not death, not life, not angels, not ruling spirits, nothing now or nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, or anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God and the Jewish People

9 I am in Christ and I am telling you the truth. I don't lie. My feelings are ruled by the Holy Spirit.* And those feelings tell me that I am not lying: "I have great sorrow and always feel much sadness for the Jewish people." They are my brothers and sisters, my earthly family. I wish I could help them. I would even have a curse on me and cut myself off from Christ if that would help them. "They are the people of Israel.* Those people (*the Jews*) are God's chosen children. Those people have the glory of God and the agreements that God made between himself and his people. God gave them the law of Moses, and the right way of worship. And God gave his promises to those people (*the Jews*). Those people are the descendants* of our great fathers (*ancestors*). And they are the earthly family of Christ. Christ is God over all things. Praise him forever!" Amen.

"Yes, I feel sorry for the Jewish people." I don't mean that God failed to keep his promise to them. But only some of the people of Israel

(*the Jews*) are truly God's people.*¹ And only some of Abraham's* descendants* are true children of Abraham (*God's people*). This is what God said to Abraham: "Isaac will be your only legal son."² This means that not all of Abraham's descendants are God's true children. Abraham's true children are those people that become God's children because of the promise God made to Abraham. God's promise to Abraham was like this: "At the right time I will come back, and Sarah will have a son."³

⁴ And that is not all. Rebecca also had sons. And those sons had the same father. He is our father (*ancestor*) Isaac.⁵⁻¹² But before the two sons were born, God told Rebecca, "The older son will serve the younger."⁶ This was before the boys had done anything good or bad. God said this before they were born so that the boy God chose would be chosen because of God's own plan. He was chosen because he was the one God wanted to call, not because of anything the boys did.¹³ Like the Scripture* says, "I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau."¹⁴

¹⁵ So what should we say about this? Is God not fair? We cannot say that.¹⁶ God said to Moses, "I will show mercy to the person that I want to show mercy to. I will show pity to the person that I want to show pity to."¹⁷ So God will choose the person he decides to show mercy to. And his choice does not depend on what people want or try to do.¹⁸ In the Scripture* God says to Pharaoh*: "I made you king so you could do this for me. I wanted to show my power in you. I wanted my name to be announced in all the world."¹⁹ So God shows mercy to the people he wants to show mercy to. And God makes the people stubborn that he wants to make stubborn.

God's people Literally, "Israel," the people God chose to bring his blessings to the world.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

"Isaac ... son" Quote from Gen. 21:12.

"At ... son" Quote from Gen. 18:10,14.

"The older ... younger" Quote from Gen. 25:23.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"I ... Esau" Quote from Mal. 1:2-3.

"I will ... to" Quote from Ex. 33:19.

Pharaoh The title of the king of Egypt.

"I made ... world" Quote from Ex. 9:16.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

descendants All the people born in a person's family after that person dies.

Christ ... forever This can also mean, "May God, who rules over all things, be praised forever!"

¹⁹So one of you will ask me: "If God controls the things we do, then why does God blame us for our sins?" ²⁰Don't ask that. You are only people. And people have no right to question God. A clay jar does not question the man that made it. The jar does not say, "Why did you make me like this?" ²¹The man that makes the jar can make anything he wants to make. He can use the same clay to make different things. He can make one thing for special purposes and another thing for daily use.

²²It is the same way with what God has done. God wanted to show his anger and to let people see his power. But God endured patiently those people he was angry with—people that were ready to be destroyed. ²³God waited with patience so that he could make known his rich glory. God wanted to give that glory to the people that receive his mercy. God has prepared these people to have his glory. ²⁴We are those people. We are the people God called (*chose*). God called us from the Jews and from the non-Jews. ²⁵Like the Scripture* says in the book of Hosea:

"The people that are not mine—
I will say that they are my people.
And the people that I did not love—
I will say that they are the people
I love."

Hosea 2:23

²⁶ "And in the same place that God said,
'You are not my people'—
in that place they will be called
sons of the living God."

Hosea 1:10

²⁷And Isaiah cries out about Israel*:

"There are so many people of Israel
that they are like the grains of sand by
the sea. But only a few of those people
will be saved. ²⁸Yes, the Lord will
quickly finish judging the people on the
earth."^{*}

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.
Israel The Jewish nation (people).

"There are ... earth" Quote from Is. 10:22-23.

²⁹It is like Isaiah said:

"The Lord has all power. The Lord
saved some of his people for us. If he
had not done that, then we would now be
like Sodom,* and we would now be like
Gomorrah."^{**}

³⁰So what does all this mean? It means this:
That the non-Jews were not trying to make
themselves right with God. But they were made
right with God. They became right because of
their faith. ³¹And the people of Israel* tried to
follow a law to make themselves right with
God. But they did not succeed. ³²Why not?
Because they tried to make themselves right by
the things they did. They did not trust in God to
make them right. They fell over the stone that
makes people fall. ³³The Scripture* talks about
that stone:

"Look, I put in Zion* a stone
that will make people fall.
It is a rock that will make people sin.
But the person that trusts in that rock
will never be made ashamed."

Isaiah 28:16

10 Brothers and sisters, the thing I want
most is for all the Jews to be saved.
That is my prayer to God. ²I can say this about
the Jews: They really try to follow God. But
they don't know the right way. ³They did not
know the way that God makes people right
with him. And they tried to make themselves
right in their own way. So they did not accept
God's way of making people right. ⁴Christ
ended the law so that every person that believes
in him is made right with God.

⁵Moses writes about being made right by
following the law. Moses says, "A person that
wants to find life by following these things (*the
law*) must do the things the law says."^{*} ⁶But
this is what the Scripture* says about being
made right through faith: "Don't say to

Sodom, Gomorrah Cities where evil people lived. God
punished them by destroying their cities.

"The Lord ... Gomorrah" Quote from Is. 1:9.

Zion Another name for Jerusalem, city of God's people.

"A person ... says" Quote from 1 cv. 18:5.

yourself, 'Who will go up into heaven?'* (That means, 'Who will go up to heaven to get Christ and bring him down to earth?') "And don't say, 'Who will go down into the world below?'"* (That means, "Who will go down to get Christ and bring him up from death?") 'This is what the Scripture says: "God's teaching is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart."* That teaching is the teaching of faith that we tell people. ⁹If you use your mouth to say, "Jesus is Lord," and if you believe in your mind that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. ¹⁰Yes, we believe with our hearts, and so we are made right with God. And we use our mouths to say that we believe, and so we are saved. ¹¹Yes, the Scripture* says, "Any person who believes in him (*Christ*) will not be ashamed."* ¹²That Scripture* says "any person" because there is no difference between Jew and non-Jew. The same Lord is the Lord of all people. The Lord gives many blessings to all people that trust in him. ¹³Yes, the Scripture says, "Every person that trusts in the Lord will be saved."*

¹⁴But before people can trust in the Lord for help, they must believe in him. And before people can believe in the Lord, they must hear about him. And for people to hear about the Lord, another person must tell them. ¹⁵And before a person can go and tell them, that person must be sent. It is written, "Beautiful are the feet of those people that come to tell good news."*

¹⁶But not all the Jews, accepted that good news. Isaiah said, "Lord, who believed the things we told them?"* ¹⁷So faith comes from hearing the Good News.* And people hear the Good News, when a person tells them about Christ.

Verses 6-8 Quotes from Deut. 30:12-14.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"Any ... ashamed" Quote from Is. 28:16.

"Every person ... saved" Quote from Joel 2:32.

"Beautiful ... news" Quote from Is. 52:7.

"Lord ... them" Quote from Is. 53:1.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

"But I ask, "Did people not hear the Good News,?" Yes, they heard—like the Scripture* says:.

"Their voices went out
all around the world.
Their words went everywhere
in the world."

Psalms 19:4

"Again I ask, "Did the people of Israel* not understand?" Yes, they did understand. First, Moses says this for God:.

"I will use a people that is
not really a nation
to make you jealous.
I will use a nation that does
not understand
to make you angry."

Deuteronomy 32:21

"Then Isaiah is bold enough to say this for God:.

"The people that were
not looking for me—
those people found me.
I showed myself to people that
did not ask for me."

Isaiah 65:1

²¹God said this through Isaiah about the non-Jewish people,. But about the Jewish people God says, "All day long I have waited for those people, but they refuse to obey and refuse to follow me."*

God Has Not Forgotten His People

11 So I ask, "Did God throw out his people?" No! I myself am an Israelite (*Jew*). I am from the family of Abraham,* from the family group of Benjamin. ²God chose the Israelites to be his people before they were born,. And God did not throw out those people. Surely you know what the Scripture* says

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

"All day ... me" Quote from Is. 65:2.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

about Elijah.* The Scripture tells about Elijah praying to God against the people of Israel. Elijah said, "Lord, the people have killed your prophets* and destroyed your altars.* I am the only prophet still living. And the people are trying to kill me now."* "But what answer did God give Elijah? God said, "I have kept for myself 7,000 men that still worship me. These 7,000 men have not given worship to Baal.*"

³It is the same now. There are a few people that God has chosen by his grace (*kindness*).⁴ And if God chose his people by grace, then it is not the things they have done that made them God's people. If they could be made God's people by the things they did, then God's gift of grace would not really be a gift.

⁵So this is what has happened: The people of Israel (*the Jews*) tried to be right with God. But they did not succeed. But the people God chose did become right with him. The other people became hard and refused to listen to God. *Like it is written in the Scriptures,*

"God caused the people to
not understand.

Isaiah 29:10

God closed their eyes so that
they could not see the truth,
and God closed their ears so that
they could not hear the truth.
This continues until now."

Deuteronomy 29:4

⁶And David says:

"Let those people be caught and trapped
at their own feasts.

Let those people fall and be punished.

¹⁰ Let their eyes be closed so they
cannot see the truth.
And let them be troubled forever."

Psalms 69:22-23

Elijah A prophet who lived about 850 B.C.

prophets People who spoke for God.

altars An altar is a place where sacrifices are offered.

"Lord ... now" Quote from 1 Kings 19:10, 14.

Baal The name of a false god.

"I ... Baal" Quote from 1 Kings 19:18.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

¹¹So I ask: When the Jews fell, did that fall destroy them? No! But their mistake brought salvation to the non-Jews. This happened to make Jews jealous. ¹²The Jews' mistake brought rich blessings for the world. And what the Jews lost brought rich blessings for the non-Jewish people. So surely the world will get much richer blessings when enough Jews become the kind of people God wants.

¹³Now I am speaking to you people that are not Jews. I am an apostle* to the non-Jews. So while I have that work, I will do the best I can. ¹⁴I hope I can make my own people (*the Jews*) jealous. That way, maybe I can help some of them to be saved. ¹⁵God turned away from the Jews. When that happened, God became friends with the other people in the world. So when God accepts the Jews, then surely that will bring to people life after death.

¹⁶If the first piece of bread is offered to God, then the whole loaf is made holy. If the roots of a tree are holy, then the tree's branches are holy too.

¹⁷It is like, some of the branches from an olive tree have been broken off, and the branch of a wild olive tree has been joined to that first tree. You non-Jews are the same as that wild branch, and you now share the strength and life of the first tree (*the Jews*). ¹⁸So don't boast about those branches that were broken off. You have no reason to boast. Why? You don't give life to the root. The root gives life to you. ¹⁹You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I could be joined to their tree." ²⁰That is true. But those branches were broken off because they did not believe. And you continue to be part of the tree only because you believe. Don't be proud, but be afraid. ²¹If God did not let the natural branches of that tree stay, then he will not let you stay if you don't believe.

²²So you see that God is kind, but he can also be very strict. God punishes those people that stop following him. But God is kind to you, if you continue following in his kindness. If you don't continue following him, you will

apostle Man Jesus chose to represent him in a special way.

be cut off from the tree.²¹ And if the Jews will believe in God again, then God will accept the Jews back again. God is able to put them back where they were.²² It is not natural for a wild branch to become part of a good tree. But you non-Jews are like a branch cut from a wild olive tree. And you were joined to a good olive tree. But those Jews are like a branch that grew from the good tree. So surely they can be joined to their own tree again.

²³ I want you to understand this secret truth, brothers and sisters. This truth will help you understand that you don't know everything. The truth is this: Part of Israel* has been made stubborn. But that will change when enough non-Jews have come to God.²⁴ And that is how all Israel will be saved. It is written in the Scriptures,*

"The Savior will come from Zion*;
He will take away all evil from
the family of Jacob.*"

²⁵ And I will make this agreement
with those people
when I take away their sins."

Isaiah 59:20-21; 27:9

²⁶ The Jews refuse to accept the Good News,* so they are God's enemies. This has happened to help you non-Jews. But the Jews are still God's chosen people. So God loves them very much. God loves them because of the promises he made to, their fathers.²⁷ God never changes his mind about the people he calls and the things he gives them. And God never takes back his call to the people.²⁸ At one time you refused to obey God. But now you have received mercy, because those people (*the Jews*) refused to obey.²⁹ And now the Jews refuse to obey, because God showed mercy to you. But this happened so that they can also receive mercy from God.³⁰ All people have refused to obey God. God has put all people

together as people that don't obey him, so that God can show mercy to all people.

Praise to God

³¹ Yes, God's riches are very great! God's wisdom and knowledge have no end! No person can explain the things God decides. No person can understand God's ways.³² Like the Scripture* says,

"Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who is able to give God advice?"

Isaiah 40:13

³³ "Who has ever given God anything?
God owes nothing to any person."

Job 41:11

³⁴ Yes, God made all things. And everything continues through God and for God. To God be the glory forever! Amen.

Give Your Lives to God

12 So brothers and sisters, I beg you to do something. God has shown us great mercy. So offer your lives as a living sacrifice* to God. Your offering must be only for God and will be pleasing to him. This offering of yourselves is the spiritual way for you to worship (*serve*) God.² Don't change yourselves to be like the people of this world. But be changed inside yourselves with a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide and accept what God wants for you. You will be able to know what things are good and pleasing to God and what things are perfect.

³ God has given me a special gift. That is why I have something to say to every person among you. Don't think that you are better than you really are. You must see yourself like you really are. Decide what you are by the kind of faith God has given you. ⁴ Each one of us has one body, and that body has many parts. These parts don't all do the same thing. ⁵ In the same way, we are many people, but in Christ we are all one body. We are the parts of that body.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Zion Another name for Jerusalem, city of God's people.

Jacob Father of the twelve family groups of Israel.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

And each part of that body belongs to all the other parts. ⁶We all have different gifts. Each gift came because of the grace (*kindness*) that God gave us. If a person has the gift of prophecy,* then that person should use that gift with the faith he has. ⁷If a person has the gift of serving, then that person should serve. If a person has the gift of teaching, then that person should teach. ⁸If a person has the gift of comforting other people, then that person should comfort. If a person has the gift of giving to help other people, then that person should give freely. If a person has the gift of being a leader, then that person should work hard when he leads. If a person has the gift of showing kindness to other people, then that person should do that with joy.

⁹Your love must be real. Hate the things that are evil. Do only the things that are good.

¹⁰Love each other in a way that you feel close to each other like brothers and sisters. You should want to give your brothers and sisters more honor than you want for yourself. ¹¹Don't be lazy when you need to be working for the Lord. Be spiritually excited about serving him. ¹²Be happy because you have hope. Be patient when you have troubles. Pray all the time. ¹³Share with God's people that need help. Look for people that need help, and welcome those people into your homes.

¹⁴Say only good things to those people that do bad things to you. Say good things to them and don't curse them. ¹⁵When other people are happy, you should be happy with them. And when other people are sad, you should be sad with them. ¹⁶Live together in peace with each other. Don't be proud. Be willing to be friends with people who are not important to other people. Don't be conceited.

¹⁷If someone does wrong to you, don't pay him back by doing wrong to him. Try to do the things that all people think are good. ¹⁸Do the best you can to live in peace with all people. ¹⁹My friends, don't try to punish people when they do wrong to you. Wait for God to punish

them with his anger. It is written: "I am the One who punishes; I will pay people back,"* says the Lord. ²⁰But you should do this: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink. In this way you will make that person ashamed.**" ²¹Don't let evil defeat you. You should defeat evil by doing good.

13 All of you must obey the government rulers. Every person who rules was given the power to rule by God. And all the people that rule now were given that power by God. ²So the person that is against the government is really against something God has commanded. People that are against the government cause themselves to be punished. ³People that do right don't have to fear the rulers. But those people that do wrong must fear the rulers. Do you want to be free from fearing the rulers? Then you should do right. If you do right, then the rulers will praise you. ⁴A ruler is God's servant to help you. But if you do wrong, then be afraid. The ruler has the power to punish, and he will use that power. He is God's servant to punish people that do wrong. ⁵So you must obey the government. You should obey because you might be punished if you don't obey. And you should also obey because you know that is the right thing to do.

⁶And this is why you pay taxes too. Those rulers are working for God and give all their time to the work of ruling. ⁷Give all people what you owe them. If you owe them any kind of tax, then pay it. Show respect to the people you should respect. And show honor to the people you should honor.

Loving Other People Is the Only Law

¹Don't owe people anything. But you will always owe love to each other. The person that loves other people has obeyed all the law.* ²Why do I say this? Because the law says,

"I ... back" Quote from Deut. 32:35.

you ... ashamed Literally, "you will pour burning coals on his head." People in Old Testament times often put ashes on their heads to show they were sad or sorry.

"If ... ashamed" Quote from Prov. 25:21-22.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

gift of prophecy The ability that God gives a person to speak for him.

"You must not do the sin of adultery*, you must not murder anyone, you must not steal anything, you must not want things that belong to other people."* All these commandments and all other commandments are really only one rule: "Love other people the same as you love yourself."* "Love doesn't hurt other people. So loving is the same as obeying all the law.*

"I say these things because you know that we live in an important time. Yes, it is now time for you to wake up from your sleep. Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. "The "night"* is almost finished. The "day"* is almost here. So we should stop doing things that belong to darkness (*sin*). We should prepare ourselves with the things that belong to light (*good*). "Let us live in a right way, like people that belong to the day. We should not have wild and wasteful parties. We should not be drunk. We should not do sexual sins or sin in any way with our bodies. We should not cause arguments and trouble or be jealous. "But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't think about how to satisfy your sinful self and the bad things you want to do.

Don't Criticize Other People

14 Don't refuse to accept into your group a person that is weak in faith. And don't argue with that person about his different ideas. "One person believes that he can eat any kind of food* he wants. But if another person's faith is weak, then that person believes he can eat only vegetables. "The person that knows that he can eat any kind of food must not feel that he is better than the person that eats only vegetables. And the person that eats only vegetables must not decide that the person that

eats all foods is wrong. God has accepted that person. "You cannot judge another person's servant. His own master decides if he is doing right or wrong. And the Lord's servant will be right, because the Lord is able to make him right.

"One person might believe that one day is more important than another. And another person might believe that every day is the same. Each person should be sure about his own beliefs in his own mind. "The person that thinks one day is more important than other days is doing that for the Lord. And the person that eats all kinds of food is doing that for the Lord. Yes, he gives thanks to God for that food. And the person that refuses to eat some foods does that for the Lord. And he gives thanks to God. "Yes, we all live for the Lord. We don't live or die for ourselves. "If we live, we are living for the Lord. And if we die, we are dying for the Lord. So living or dying, we belong to the Lord.

"That is why Christ died and rose from death to live again. Christ did this so that he could be Lord (*ruler*) over people that have died and people that are living. "So why do you judge your brother in Christ? And why do you think that you are better than your brother? We will all stand before God, and he will judge us all. "Yes, it is written in the Scriptures*:

"Every person will bow before me;
every person will say that I am God.
As surely as I live, these things will
happen, says the Lord (God)."

Isaiah 45:23

"So each of us will have to explain to God about his life.

Don't Cause Other People to Sin

"So we should stop judging each other. We must decide not to do anything that will make a brother or sister weak or fall into sin. "I am in the Lord Jesus. And I know that there is no food that is wrong to eat. But if a person believes that something is wrong, then that

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

"You ... people" Quote from Ex. 20:13-15, 17.

"Love ... yourself" Quote from Lev. 19:18.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

night Used as a symbol of the sinful world we live in.

day Used as a symbol of the good time that is coming.

any ... food The Jewish law said there were some foods Jews should not eat. When Jews became Christians, some of them did not understand they could now eat all foods.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

thing is wrong for him. ¹⁴"If you hurt your brother's faith because of something you eat, then you are not really following the way of love. Don't destroy a person's faith by eating something that he thinks is wrong. Christ died for that person. ¹⁵"Don't allow something that you think is good to become something that other people say is evil. ¹⁶"In the kingdom of God, eating and drinking are not important. In the kingdom of God, the important things are these: living right with God, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁷"Any person who serves Christ by living this way is pleasing God. And that person will be accepted by other people.

¹⁸"So let us try as hard as we can to do the things that make peace. And let us try to do the things that will help each other. ¹⁹"Don't let the eating of food destroy the work of God. All food is right to eat. But it is wrong for a person to eat something that makes another person fall into sin. ²⁰"It is better not to eat meat or drink wine if that makes your brother or sister fall into sin. It is better not to do anything that will make your brother or sister sin.

²¹Your beliefs about these things should be kept secret between yourself and God. A person is blessed (*happy*) if he can do the things he thinks are right without feeling guilty. ²²"But if a person eats something without being sure that it is right, then that person makes himself wrong. Why? Because that person did not believe that it was right. And if a person does anything without believing that it is right, then it is sin.

15 We are strong with faith. So we should help the people who are weak. We should help those people with their weaknesses. We should not try to please ourselves. ²Each of us should please other people. We should do this to help them. We should try to help them be stronger in faith. ³Even Christ did not live trying to please himself. It was like the Scriptures* said about him: "Those people

that insulted you have also insulted me."* ⁴Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those things were written so that we could have hope. That hope comes from the patience and strength that the Scriptures give us. ⁵Patience and strength come from God. And I pray that God will help you all agree together the way Christ Jesus wants. ⁶"Then you will all be joined together. And all together you will give glory (*praise*) to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Christ accepted you. So you should accept each other. This will bring glory to God. ⁸I tell you that Christ became a servant of the Jews to show that what God promises is true. Christ did this to prove that God will do the things he promised the Jewish fathers. ⁹Christ also did this so that the non-Jews could give glory to God for the mercy he gives to them. It is written in the Scriptures.*:

"So I will give thanks to you among the
non-Jewish people;
I will sing praise to your name."

Psalms 118:49

¹⁰The Scripture* also says,

"You non-Jews should be happy
together with God's people."

Deuteronomy 32:43

¹¹The Scripture* also says,

"Praise the Lord all you non-Jews;
all people should praise the Lord."

Psalms 117:1

¹²And Isaiah says,

"A person will come from Jesse's
family.*

That person will come to rule over the
non-Jews;
and the non-Jews will have hope
because of that person."

Isaiah 11:10

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"Those ... me" Quote from Ps. 69:9.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Jesse's family Jesse was the father of David, king of Israel. Jesus was from their family.

¹¹I pray that the God who gives hope will fill you with much joy and peace while you trust in him. Then you will have more and more hope, and it will flow out of you by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

Paul Talks About His Work

¹²My brothers and sisters,, I am sure that you are full of good. I know that you have all the knowledge you need and that you are able to teach each other. ¹³But I have written to you very openly about some things that I wanted you to remember. I did this because God gave me this special gift: ¹⁴to be a minister of Christ Jesus. God made me a minister to help the non-Jewish people. I served God by teaching his Good News.* I did this so that the non-Jewish people could be an offering that God would accept. Those people are made holy* for God by the Holy Spirit.*

¹⁵So I am proud of the things I have done for God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶I will not talk about anything I did myself. I will talk only about the things that Christ has done with me in leading the non-Jewish people to obey God. They have obeyed God because of the things I have said and done. ¹⁷And they obeyed God because of the power of the miracles* and the great things they saw, and because of the power of the Holy Spirit.* I preached the Good News* from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum. And so I have finished that part of my work. ¹⁸I always want to preach the Good News in places where people have never heard of Christ. I do this because I don't want to build on the work that another person has already started. ¹⁹But it is written in the Scriptures,*:

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy A holy person is pure, belongs only to God, and does only the things that God wants.

miracles Amazing things done by the power of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"Those people that were not told about him (*the Christ*) will see, and those people that have not heard about him will understand."

Isaiah 52:15

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

²⁰That is why many times I was stopped from coming to you.

²¹Now I have finished my work in these areas here. And for many years I have wanted to visit you. ²²So I will visit you when I go to Spain. Yes, I hope to visit you while I am traveling to Spain, and I will stay and enjoy being with you. Then you can help me on my trip. ²³Now I am going to Jerusalem to help God's people. ²⁴Some of God's people in Jerusalem are poor. (The believers in, Macedonia and Achaia were happy to give. They gave to help those people in Jerusalem. ²⁵The believers in, Macedonia and Achaia were happy to do this. And really they should help those believers in Jerusalem. They should help because they are non-Jews and have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings. So they should use the things they have to help the Jews. They owe this to the Jews. ²⁶I must be sure that the poor people in Jerusalem get all this money that has been given for them. After I finish this work, then I will leave for Spain. While I am traveling to Spain, I will stop and visit you. ²⁷I know that when I visit you, I will bring you Christ's full blessing.

²⁸Brothers and sisters,, I beg you to help me in my work by praying to God for me. Do this because of our Lord Jesus and the love that the Holy Spirit* gives us. ²⁹Pray that I will be saved from the non-believers in Judea. And pray that this help I bring to Jerusalem will please God's people there. ³⁰Then, if God wants me to, I will come to you. I will come with joy, and together you and I will have a time of rest. ³¹The God that gives peace be with you all. Amen.

Paul Has Some Final Things to Say

16 I want you to know that you can trust our sister in Christ, Phoebe. She is a special helper* in the church in Cenchreae. ²I ask you to accept her in the Lord. Accept her the way God's people should. Help her with anything she needs from you. She has helped me very much, and she has helped many other people too.

³Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila. They work together with me in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their own lives to save my life. I am thankful to them, and all the non-Jewish churches are thankful to them. ⁵Also, say hello to the church that meets at their house.

Say hello to my dear friend Epaphroditus. He was the first person to follow Christ in Asia.* ⁷Say hello to Mary. She worked very hard for you. ⁸Say hello to Andronicus and Junias. They are my relatives, and they were in prison with me. They are some of God's most important workers.* They were believers in Christ before I was. ⁹Say hello to Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. ¹⁰Say hello to Urbanus. He is a worker together with me for Christ. And say hello to my dear friend Stachys. ¹¹Say hello to Apelles. He was tested and proved that he truly loves Christ. Say hello to all those people that are in the family of Aristobulus. ¹²Say hello to Herodion, my relative. Say hello to all the people in the family of Narcissus that belong to the Lord. ¹³Say hello to Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Those women work very hard for the Lord. Say hello to my dear friend Persis. She has also worked very hard for the Lord. ¹⁴Say hello to Rufus. He is a special person in the Lord. Say hello to his mother. She has been a mother to me also. ¹⁵Say hello to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and all the brothers in Christ, that are with them. ¹⁶Say hello to Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas. And say hello to all the saints (believers) with them. ¹⁷When you see

each other, say hello with a holy kiss. All of Christ's churches (groups of believers) say hello to you.

¹⁸Brothers and sisters, I ask you to be very careful of those people that cause people to be against each other. Be very careful of those people that upset other people's faith. Those people are against the true teaching you learned. Stay away from those people. ¹⁹People like that are not serving our Lord Christ. They are only doing things to please themselves. They use fancy talk and say nice things to fool the minds of people that don't know about evil. ²⁰All the believers have heard that you obey. So I am very happy because of you. But I want you to be wise about the things that are good. And I want you to know nothing about things that are evil.

²¹The God that brings peace will soon defeat Satan (the devil) and give you power over him.

The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus be with you.

²²Timothy, a worker together with me, says hello to you. Also Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater (these are my relatives) say hello to you.

²³I am Tertius, and I am writing these things that Paul says. I say hello to you in the Lord.

²⁴Gaius is letting me and the whole church here use his home. He also says hello to you. Erastus and our brother Quartus say hello to you. Erastus is the city treasurer here. ²⁵

²⁶Glory to God. God is the One who can make you strong in faith. God can use the Good News* that I teach to make you strong. That is the Good News about Jesus Christ that I tell people. That Good News is the secret truth that God has made known. That secret truth was hidden since the beginning. ²⁷But that secret truth has now been shown to us. And that truth has been made known to all people. It has been made known by the things the prophets* wrote. This is what God commanded. And that secret

special helper Literally, "deacon," a Greek word meaning "servant." See 1 Tim. 3:11.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

most important workers Literally, "important among (or to) the apostles."

Verse 24 Some Greek copies add verse 24: "The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen."

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

truth has been made known to all people, so that they can believe and obey God. God lives forever. "Glory forever to the only wise God through Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 Corinthians

1 From Paul. I was called (*chosen*) to be an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I was called because that is what God wanted.

Also from Sosthenes, our brother in Christ.

²To the church of God in Corinth, to those people that have been made holy* in Christ Jesus. You were called to be God's holy people. You were called with all the people everywhere that trust in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

³Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

⁴I always thank my God for you because of the grace (*kindness*) that God has given you through Christ Jesus. ⁵In Jesus you have been blessed in every way. You have been blessed in all your speaking and all your knowledge. ⁶The truth about Christ has been proved in you. ⁷So you have every gift from God while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to come again. ⁸Jesus will keep you strong always until the end. He will keep you strong, so that there will be no wrong in you on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. ⁹God is faithful. He is the One who has called you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Problems in the Church at Corinth

¹⁰I beg you brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I beg that all of you agree with each other, so that there will be no divisions among you. I beg that you be completely joined together by having the same kind of thinking and the same purpose. ¹¹My brothers and sisters, some people from Chloe's family told me about you. I heard that there are arguments among you. ¹²This is what I mean: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another person says, "I follow Apollos"; another person says, "I follow Cephas (*Peter*)"; and another person says, "I follow Christ."

¹³Christ cannot be divided into different groups.¹⁴ Did Paul die on the cross for you? No! Were you baptized* in the name of Paul? No! ¹⁵I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁶I am thankful, because now no one can say that you people were baptized in my name. ¹⁷(I also baptized the family of Stephanas. But I don't remember that I myself baptized any others.) ¹⁸Christ did not give me the work of baptizing people. Christ gave me the work of telling the Good News.* But Christ sent me to tell the Good News without using words of worldly wisdom. If I used worldly wisdom to tell the Good

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News of God's love to the world.

holy A holy person is pure, belongs only to God, and does only the things that God wants.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

News, then the cross* of Christ would lose its power.

God's Power and Wisdom In Christ

¹⁸The teaching about the cross seems foolish to those people that are lost. But to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹It is written in the Scriptures,*:

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise people.

I will make the intelligence of the intelligent people worth nothing."

Isaiah 29:14

²⁰Where is the wise person? Where is the educated person? Where is the philosopher* of this time? God has made the wisdom of the world foolish. ²¹This is what God with his wisdom wanted: The world did not know God through the world's own wisdom. So God used the message* that sounds foolish to save the people that believe it. ²²The Jews ask for miracles* as proofs. The Greeks want wisdom. ²³But we preach this: Christ was killed on a cross. This is a big problem to the Jews. And it seems foolish to the non-Jews. ²⁴But Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God to those people that God has called (*chosen*)—Jews and Greeks (*non-Jews*). ²⁵Even the foolishness of God is wiser than men. Even the weakness of God is stronger than men.

²⁶Brothers and sisters,, God called (*chose*) you. Think about that! And not many of you were wise in the way the world judges wisdom. Not many of you had great influence. Not many of you came from important families. ²⁷But God chose the foolish things of the world to give shame to the wise people. God chose the weak things of the world to give shame to the

strong people. ²⁸And God chose what the world thinks is not important. He chose what the world hates and thinks is nothing. God chose these to destroy what the world thinks is important. ²⁹God did this so that no man can boast before him. ³⁰It is God that has made you part of Christ Jesus. Christ has become wisdom for us from God. Christ is the reason we are right with God and have freedom from sin; Christ is the reason we are holy.* ³¹So, like the Scripture* says, "If a person boasts, that person should boast only in the Lord."*

The Message About Christ on the Cross

2 Dear brothers and sisters,, when I came to you, I told you the truth of God. But I did not use fancy words or great wisdom. ²¹I decided that while I was with you I would forget about everything except Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. ²²When I came to you, I was weak and shook with fear. ²³My teaching and my speaking were not with wise words that persuade people. But the proof of my teaching was the power that the Spirit* gives. ²⁴I did this so that your faith would be in God's power, not in the wisdom of a man.

God's Wisdom

¹We teach wisdom to people that are mature. But this wisdom we teach is not from this world. It is not the wisdom of the rulers of this world. Those rulers are losing their power. ²But we speak God's secret wisdom. This wisdom has been hidden from people,. God planned this wisdom for our glory. He planned it before the world began. ³None of the rulers of this world understood this wisdom. If they had understood it, then they would not have killed the Lord of glory on a cross. ⁴But like it is written in the Scriptures,*:

cross Paul uses the cross as a picture of the gospel, the story of Christ's death to pay for people's sins. The cross (Christ's death) was God's way to save people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

philosopher A person who studies and talks about his own ideas and the ideas of other people.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

miracles Amazing things done by the power of God.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"If ... Lord" Quote from Jer. 9:24.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no person has imagined
what God has prepared for those people
that love him."

Isaiah 64:4

¹⁰But God has shown us these things
through the Spirit.*

The Spirit knows all things. The Spirit even knows the deep secrets of God. ¹¹It is like this: No person knows the thoughts that another person has. Only that person's spirit that lives inside him knows those thoughts. It is the same with God. No one knows the thoughts of God. Only the Spirit of God knows those thoughts. ¹²We did not receive the spirit of the world. But we received the Spirit that is from God. We received this Spirit so that we can know the things that God has given us. ¹³When we speak these things, we don't use words taught to us by the wisdom that men have. We use words taught to us by the Spirit. We use spiritual words to explain spiritual things. ¹⁴A person that is not spiritual does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. That person thinks that those things are foolish. That person cannot understand the things of the Spirit, because those things can only be judged spiritually. ¹⁵But the spiritual person is able to make judgments about all things. Other people cannot judge that person. The Scripture* says:.

¹⁶ "Who knows the mind of the Lord?
Who can tell the Lord what to do?"

Isaiah 40:13

But we have the mind of Christ.

Following Men Is Wrong

3 Brothers and sisters,, in the past I could not talk to you like I talk to spiritual people. I had to talk to you like worldly people-like babies in Christ. ²The teaching I gave you was like milk, not solid food. I did

this because you were not ready for solid food. And even now you are not ready for solid food. ³You are still not spiritual people. You have jealousy and arguing among you. This shows that you are not spiritual. You are acting the same as people of the world. ⁴One of you says, "I follow Paul," and another person says, "I follow Apollos." When you say things like that, you are acting like worldly people.

⁵Is Apollos important? No! Is Paul important? No! We are only servants of God who helped you believe. Each one of us did the work God gave us to do. ⁶I planted the seed (*teaching*) and Apollos watered it. But God is the One who made the seed grow. ⁷So the person that plants is not important, and the person that waters is not important. Only God is important, because he is the One who makes things grow. ⁸The person that plants and the person that waters have the same purpose. And each person will be rewarded for his own work. ⁹We are workers together for God. And you are like a farm that belongs to God.

And you are a house that belongs to God. ¹⁰Like an expert builder I built the foundation* of that house. I used the gift that God gave me to do this. Other people are building on that foundation. But each person should be careful how he builds. ¹¹The foundation has already been built. No person can build any other foundation. The foundation that has already been built is Jesus Christ. ¹²A person can build on that foundation, using gold, silver, jewels, wood, grass, or straw. ¹³But the work that each person does will be clearly seen, because the Day* will make it plain. That Day will appear with fire, and the fire will test every man's work. ¹⁴If the building that a person puts on the foundation still stands, then that person will get his reward. ¹⁵But if that person's building is burned up, then he will suffer loss. The person will be saved, but it will be like he escaped from a fire.

¹⁶You should know that you yourselves are God's temple (*house*). God's Spirit* lives in

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.

Day The day Christ will come to judge all people.

you. ⁷If any person destroys God's temple, then God will destroy that person. Why? Because God's temple is holy.* You yourselves are God's temple.

⁸Don't fool yourselves. If any person among you thinks that he is wise in this world, then he should become a fool. Then that person can become truly wise. ⁹Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. It is written [in the Scriptures],* "He (God) catches the wise (smart) people when they use their sneaky ways."* ¹⁰It is also written [in the Scriptures], "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise people. He knows that their thoughts are worth nothing."* ¹¹So you should not boast about men. All things are yours: ¹²Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (Peter); the world, life, death, the present, and the future—all these things are yours. ¹³And you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.

Apostles of Christ

4 This is what people should think about us: We are servants of Christ. We are the people that God has trusted with his secret truths. ²A person that is trusted with something must show that he is worthy of that trust. ³I don't care if I am judged by you. And I don't care if I am judged by any human court. I don't even judge myself. ⁴I don't know of any wrong that I have done. But that does not make me innocent (without guilt). The Lord is the One who judges me. ⁵So don't judge before the right time; wait until the Lord comes. He will shine light on the things that are hidden in darkness. He will make known the secret purposes of people's hearts. Then God will give every person the praise he should get.

⁶Brothers and sisters, I have used Apollos and myself as examples for you in these things. I did this so that you could learn from us the meaning of the words, "Follow only what is written [in the Scriptures].*" Then you will not

be proud of one man and hate another. ⁷Who says that you are better than other people? Everything you have was given to you. So, if everything you have was given to you, then why do you boast like you got those things by your own power?

⁸You think, you have everything you need. You think, you are rich. You think, you have become kings without us. I wish you really were kings! Then we could be kings together with you. ⁹But it seems to me that God has given me and the other apostles* the last place. We are like men condemned to die [with all the people watching]. We are like a show for the whole world to see—angels and people. ¹⁰We are fools for Christ. But you think, you are very wise in Christ. We are weak, but you think, you are strong. People give you honor, but they don't honor us. ¹¹Even now we still don't have enough to eat or drink, and we don't have enough clothes. We often get beatings. We have no homes. ¹²We work hard with our own hands [to feed ourselves]. People curse us, but we speak a blessing for them. People persecute* us, and we accept it. ¹³People say bad things about us, but we say good things to them. At this time people still treat us like we are the world's garbage—the dirt of the earth.

¹⁴I am not trying to make you feel ashamed. But I am writing these things to give you a warning like you were my own dear children. ¹⁵You may have 10,000 teachers in Christ, but you don't have many fathers. Through the gospel* I became your father in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶So I beg you to please be like me. ¹⁷That is why I am sending Timothy to you. He is my son in the Lord. I love Timothy, and he is faithful. He will help you remember the way I live in Christ Jesus. That way of life is what I teach in all the churches everywhere.

¹⁸Some of you have become boasters. You boast, thinking that I will not come to you again. ¹⁹But I will come to you very soon. I will come, if the Lord wants me to. Then I will see

holy Something holy belongs only to God and should be used only for the things God wants.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"He ... ways" Quote from Job 5:13.

"The Lord ... nothing" Quote from Ps. 94:11.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

persecute To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

gospel The "Good News" that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

what these boasters can do, not what they can say. ²⁰I will want to see this because the kingdom of God is not talk but power. ²¹Which do you want:

That I come to you with punishment, or that I come with love and gentleness?

A Moral Problem in the Church

5 People are really saying that there is sexual sin among you. And it is such a bad kind of sexual sin that it does not happen even among those people that don't know God. People say that a man there has his father's wife. ²And still you are proud of yourselves! You should have been filled with sadness. And the man that did that sin should be put out of your group. ³My body is not there with you, but I am with you in spirit. And I have already judged the man who did that sin. I judged him the same as I would if I were really there. ⁴Come together in the name of our Lord Jesus. I will be with you in spirit, and you will have the power of our Lord Jesus with you. ⁵Then give this man to Satan (*the Devil*), so that his sinful self* will be destroyed. Then his spirit can be saved on the day of the Lord.

⁶Your proud boasting is not good. You know the saying, "Just a little yeast* makes the whole batch of dough rise." ⁷Take out all the old yeast (*sin*), so that you will be a new batch of dough. You really are *Passover*, bread* without yeast. Yes, Christ, our Passover lamb,* has already been killed. ⁸So let us eat our Passover meal, but not with the bread that has, the old yeast. That old yeast is the yeast of sin and wrong doing. But let us eat the bread that has no yeast. This is the bread of goodness and truth.

⁹I wrote to you in my letter that you should not associate with people that sin sexually.

sinful self Or, "body." Literally, "flesh."

yeast Used here as a symbol of evil or bad influence.

Passover bread The special bread without yeast that the Jews ate at their Passover meal every year. Paul means that Christians are free from sin like the Passover bread was free from yeast.

Passover lamb Jesus was a sacrifice for his people, like a lamb killed for the Jewish Passover Feast.

¹⁰But I did not mean that you should not associate with the sinful people of this world. Those people of the world do sin sexually, or they are selfish and cheat each other, or they worship idols (*false gods*). To get away from those people you would have to leave this world. ¹¹I am writing to tell you that the person you must not associate with is this: any person that calls himself a brother in Christ but sins sexually, or is selfish, or worships idols, or talks bad to people, or gets drunk, or cheats people. Don't even eat with a person like that.

¹²It is not my business to judge those people that are not part of the church (*group of believers*). God will judge those people. But you must judge the people that are part of the church. The Scripture* says, "Take the evil person out of your group."¹³

Judging Problems Between Christians

6 When one of you has something against another person, why do you go to the judges in the law courts? Those people are not right with God. So why do you let those people decide who is right? You should be ashamed! Why don't you let God's people decide who is right? ²Surely you know that God's people will judge the world. So if you will judge the world, then surely you are able to judge small things like this. ³You know that in the future we will judge angels. So surely we can judge things in this life. ⁴So if you have those disagreements that must be judged, why do you take those things to people who are not part of the church? Those people mean nothing to the church. ⁵I say this to shame you. Surely there is some person in your group wise enough to judge a complaint between two brothers (*believers*)! ⁶But now one brother goes to court against another brother. You let men that are not believers judge their case!

⁷The lawsuits that you have against each other show that you are already defeated. It would be better for you to let someone do wrong against you! It would be better for you

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"Take ... group" Quote from Deut. 22:21, 24.

to let someone cheat you! ⁸But you yourselves do wrong and cheat! And you do this to your own brothers, in Christ.!

⁹⁻¹⁰Surely you know that the people that do wrong will not get God's kingdom. Don't be fooled. These people will not get God's kingdom: people that sin sexually, people that worship idols,* people that do the sin of adultery,* men that let other men use them for sex or that have sex with other men, people that steal, people that are selfish, people that get drunk, people that say bad things to other people, and people that cheat. ¹¹In the past, some of you were like that. But you were washed clean, you were made holy,* and you were made right with God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Use Your Bodies for God's Glory

¹²"All things are allowed for me." But not all things are good. "All things are allowed for me." But I will not let anything be my master.

¹³"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach for food." Yes. But God will destroy them both. The body is not for sexual sin. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. "By God's power God raised the Lord Jesus, from death. God will also raise us from death.

¹⁵Surely you know that your bodies are parts of Christ himself. So I must never take the parts of Christ and join those parts to a prostitute*! ¹⁶It is written in the Scriptures,*: "The two people will become one."* So you should know that a person that (sexually) joins himself with a prostitute becomes one with her in body. ¹⁷But the person who joins himself with the Lord is one with the Lord in spirit.

¹⁸So run away from sexual sin. Every other sin that a person does is outside his body. But the person that sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹You should know that your body is

a temple (*house*) for the Holy Spirit.* The Holy Spirit is in you. You have received the Holy Spirit from God. You don't own yourselves.

²⁰You were bought by God, at a price. So honor God with your bodies.

About Marriage

7 Now I will discuss, the things you wrote to me about. It is good for a man not to marry. ²But sexual sin is a danger. So each man should have his own wife. And each woman should have her own husband. ³The husband should give his wife all that she should have as his wife. And the wife should give her husband all that he should have as her husband. ⁴The wife does not have power over her own body. Her husband has the power over her body. And the husband does not have power over his own body. His wife has the power over his body. ⁵Don't refuse to give your bodies to each other. But you might both agree to stay away from sex, for a time. You might do this so that you can give your time to prayer. Then come together again. This is so that Satan (*the Devil*) cannot tempt you in your weakness. ⁶I say this to give you permission to be separated for a time. It is not a command. ⁷I wish all people were like me. But each person has his own gift from God. One person has one gift, another person has another gift.

⁸Now for the people who are not married and for the widows* I say this: It is good for them to stay single like me. ⁹But if they cannot control their bodies, then they should marry. It is better to marry than to burn with sexual desire.

¹⁰Now I give this command for the married people. (The command is not from me; it is from the Lord.) A wife must not leave her husband. ¹¹But if a wife leaves her husband she must not marry again. Or she should go back together with her husband. Also the husband must not divorce his wife.

idols False gods that the non-Jewish people worshiped.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

prostitute A woman paid by men for sexual sin.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"The two ... one" Quote from Gen. 2:24.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

¹²For all the other people I say this (I am saying these things, not the Lord): A brother in Christ, might have a wife who is not a believer. If she will live with him, then he must not divorce her. ¹³And a woman might have a husband who is not a believer. If he will live with her, then she must not divorce him. ¹⁴The husband who is not a believer is made holy through his believing wife. And the wife who is not a believer is made holy through her believing husband. If this were not true, then your children would not be clean. But now your children are holy.

¹⁵But if the person who is not a believer decides to leave, let that person leave. When this happens, the brother or sister in Christ, is free. God called us to a life of peace. ¹⁶Wives, maybe you will save your husband; and husbands, maybe you will save your wife. You don't know now what will happen later.

Live as God Called You

¹⁷But each person should continue to live the way God has given him to live—the way you were when God called you. This is a rule I make in all the churches. ¹⁸If a man was already circumcised* when he was called, then he should not change his circumcision.* If a man was without circumcision when he was called, then he should not be circumcised. ¹⁹It is not important if a person is circumcised or not circumcised. The important thing is obeying God's commands. ²⁰Each person should stay the way he was when God called him. ²¹If you were a slave when God called you, don't let that bother you. But if you can be free, then become free. ²²The person who was a slave when the Lord called him is free in the Lord. That person belongs to the Lord. In the same way, the person who was free when he was called is now Christ's slave. ²³You people were bought at a price. So don't become slaves of men. ²⁴Brothers and sisters, in your new life with God each one of you should continue the way you were when you were called.

Questions About Getting Married

²⁵Now I write about people who are not married.* I have no command from the Lord about this. But I give my opinion. And I can be trusted, because the Lord has given me mercy. ²⁶This is a time of trouble. So I think that it is good for you to stay the way you are (*not married*). ²⁷If you have a wife, then don't try to become free from her. If you are not married, then don't try to find a wife. ²⁸But if you decide to marry, that is not a sin. And it is not a sin for a girl that has never married to get married. But those people who marry will have trouble in this life. I want you to be free from this trouble.

²⁹Brothers and sisters, this is what I mean: We don't have much time left. So starting now, people who have wives should use their time to serve the Lord, like they don't have wives. ³⁰People who are sad should live like they are not sad. People who are happy should live like they are not happy. People who buy things should live like they own nothing. ³¹People who use the things of the world should live like those things are not important to them. You should live like this, because this world, the way it is now, will soon be gone.

³²I want you to be free from worry. A man who is not married is busy with the Lord's work. He is trying to please the Lord. ³³But a man who is married is busy with things of the world. He is trying to please his wife. ³⁴He must think about two things—pleasing his wife and pleasing the Lord. A woman who is not married or a girl who has never married is busy with the Lord's work. She wants to give herself fully—body and soul—to the Lord. But a married woman is busy with things of the world. She is trying to please her husband. ³⁵I am saying these things to help you. I am not trying to limit you. But I want you to live in the right way. And I want you to give yourselves fully to the Lord without giving your time to other things.

³⁶A man might think that he is not doing the right thing with his virgin* daughter, if she is almost past the best age to marry. So he might

circumcised, circumcision To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

people ... married Literally, "virgins."
virgin A pure girl who is not married.

think that marriage is necessary. He should do what he wants. He should let them marry. It is no sin. "But another man might be more sure in his mind. There may be no need for marriage, so that he is free to do what he wants. If this person has decided in his own heart to keep his virgin *unmarried*, then he is doing the right thing. "So the person who gives his virgin daughter, in marriage does right. And the person who does not give his virgin daughter, in marriage does better.*

"A woman must stay with her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, the woman is free to marry any man she wants. But she must marry in the Lord. "The woman is happier if she does not marry again. This is my opinion, and I believe that I have God's Spirit.*

About Food Offered to Idols

8 Now I will write, about meat that is sacrificed* to idols.* We know that "we all have knowledge." "Knowledge" puffs you up full of pride. But love makes you help, others grow stronger. "The person who thinks he knows something does not yet know anything like he should. "But the person who loves God is known by God.

"So, this is what I say, about eating meat: We know that an idol* is really nothing in the world. And we know that there is only one God. "It's really not important if there are things called gods, in heaven or on earth. (And there are many things that people call, "gods"

Verses 36-38 Another possible translation is: "A person might think that he is not doing the right thing with his virgin (*the girl he is engaged to*). The girl might be almost past the best age to marry. So the man might feel that he should marry her. He should do what he wants. They should get married. It is no sin. "But another person might be more sure in his mind. There may be no need for marriage, so he is free to do what he wants. If this person has decided in his own heart to keep his virgin *unmarried*, then he is doing the right thing. "So the person who marries his virgin does right. And the person who does not marry does better."

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

sacrificed Killed and offered as a gift to show worship.

idol(s) The false gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

and "lords.") "But for us there is only one God. He is our Father. All things came from him and we live for him. And there is only one Lord. He is Jesus Christ. All things were made through Jesus, and we also have life through him.

"But not all people know this. Some people have had the habit of worshiping idols* until now. So now when those people eat meat, they still feel like it belongs to an idol. They are not sure that it is right to eat this meat. So when they eat it, they feel guilty. "But food will not make us closer to God. Refusing to eat does not make us less pleasing to God. And eating does not make us better.

"But be careful with your freedom. Your freedom may make those people who are weak in faith fall into sin. "You have understanding (*knowledge*), so you might feel free to, eat in an idol's temple.* A person who is weak in faith might see you eating there. This will encourage him to eat meat sacrificed* to idols too. But he really thinks it is wrong. "So this weak brother is ruined (*destroyed*) because of your knowledge. And Christ died for this brother. "When you sin against your brothers and sisters in Christ, like this and you hurt them by causing them to do things they feel are wrong, then you are also sinning against Christ. "So if the food I eat makes my brother fall into sin, then I will never eat meat again. I will stop eating meat, so that I will not make my brother sin.

9 I am a free man! I am an apostle*! I have seen Jesus our Lord! You people are an example of, my work in the Lord. "Other people may not accept me as an apostle. But surely you accept me as an apostle. You people are proof that I am an apostle in the Lord.

"Some people want to judge me. So this is the answer I give them: "We have the right to eat and drink, don't we? "We have the right to bring a believing wife with us when we travel, don't we? The other apostles* and the Lord's brothers and Cephas all do this. "And are Barnabas and I the only ones that must work to

idol's temple Place for worship of a false god.

apostle(s) Men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

earn our living? ⁷No soldier ever serves in the army and pays his own salary. No person ever plants a garden of grapes without eating some of the grapes himself. No person takes care of a flock of sheep without drinking some of the milk himself.

⁸These things are not only what men think. God's law says the same things. ⁹Yes, it is written in the law of Moses: "When a work animal is being used to separate grain, don't cover its mouth and stop it from eating the grain."^{*} When God said this, was he thinking only about work animals? No. ¹⁰He was really talking about us. Yes, that Scripture^{*} was written for us. The person that plows and the person that separates the grain should hope (*expect*) to get some of the grain for their work. ¹¹We planted spiritual seed among you. So we should be able to harvest (*get*) from you some things for this life. Surely that is not asking too much. ¹²Other men have this right to get things from you. So surely we have this right too. But we don't use this right. No, we endure everything ourselves so that we will not stop anyone from obeying, the Good News^{*} of Christ. ¹³Surely you know that people that work at the temple^{*} get their food from the temple. And people that serve at the altar^{*} get part of what is offered at the altar. ¹⁴It is the same with people that preach the Good News. The Lord has commanded that those people that preach the Good News should get their living from this work.

¹⁵But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not trying to get these things. That is not my purpose for writing this to you. I would rather die than to have my reason for boasting taken away. ¹⁶Preaching the Good News^{*} is not my reason for boasting. Preaching the Good News is my duty—something I must do. It will be bad for me if I don't preach the Good News.

¹⁷If I preach the Good News because it is my own choice, then I deserve a reward. But I have no choice. I must preach the Good News. I am only doing the duty that was given to me. ¹⁸So what reward do I get? This is my reward: that when I preach the Good News I can offer it freely. In this way I don't use the right (to be paid), that I have in preaching, the Good News.

¹⁹I am free. I belong to no man. But I make myself a slave to all people. I do this to help save as many people as I can. ²⁰To the Jews I became like a Jew. I did this to help save the Jews. I myself am not ruled by the law.^{*} But to people that are ruled by the law I became like a person who is ruled by the law. I did this to help save those people that are ruled by the law. ²¹To those that are without the law I became like a person that is without the law. I did this to help save those people that are without the law. (But really, I am not without God's law—I am ruled by Christ's law.) ²²To the people that are weak, I became weak so that I could help save them. I have become all things to all people. I did this so that I could save people in any way possible. ²³I do all these things because of the Good News.^{*} I do these things so that I can share in the blessings of, the Good News.

²⁴You know that in a race all the runners run. But only one runner gets the prize. So run like that. Run to win! ²⁵All people that compete in the games use strict training. They do this so that they can win a crown (*reward*). But that crown is an earthly thing that lasts only a short time. But our crown (*reward*) will continue forever. ²⁶So I run like a person that has a goal. I fight like a boxer that is hitting something—not just the air. ²⁷It is my own body that I hit. I make it my slave. I do this so that I myself will not be rejected (*thrown out by God*) after I preached to other people.

Don't Be like the Jews

10 Brothers and sisters, I want you to know what happened to our ancestors that followed Moses. They were all under the

"When ... grain" Quote from Deut. 25:4.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

temple Special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

altar A stone table in the temple used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

law Probably the Jewish law—the law of Moses.

cloud, and they all walked through the sea. ⁷Those people were all baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ⁸They all ate the same spiritual food. ⁹And they all drank the same spiritual drink. They drank from that spiritual rock that was with them. That rock was Christ. ¹⁰But God was not pleased with most of those people. They were killed in the desert.

¹¹And these things that happened are examples for us. These examples should stop us from wanting evil things like those people did. ¹²Don't worship idols* like some of those people did. It is written in the Scriptures,* "The people sat down to eat and drink. The people stood up to dance."¹³ ¹⁴We should not do sexual sins like some of those people did. In one day 23,000 of them died because of their sin. ¹⁵We should not test the Lord like some of those people did. They were killed by snakes because they tested the Lord. ¹⁶And don't complain like some of those people did. Those people were killed by the angel that destroys.

¹⁷The things that happened to those people are examples. And those things were written to be warnings for us. We live in a time when all those past histories have come to their end. ¹⁸So the person that thinks he is standing strong should be careful that he doesn't fall. ¹⁹The only temptations that you have are the same temptations that all people have. But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to endure it.

²⁰So, my dear friends, stay away from worshiping idols.* ²¹I am speaking to you like you are intelligent people; judge for yourselves what I say. ²²The cup of blessing* that we give thanks for is a sharing in the blood (death) of Christ, isn't it? And the bread that we break is a sharing in the body of Christ, isn't it? ²³There is

one loaf of bread. And we are many people. But we all share from that one loaf. So we are really one body.

²⁴Think about the people of Israel (*the Jews*). Those people that eat the sacrifices* share in the altar,* don't they? ²⁵I don't mean that the food sacrificed to an idol* is something important. And I don't mean that an idol is anything at all. No! ²⁶But I say that the things people sacrifice to idols, are offered to demons,* not to God. And I don't want you to share anything with demons. ²⁷You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too. You cannot share in the Lord's table and the table of demons too. ²⁸Do we want to make the Lord jealous? Are we stronger than he is? No!

Use Your Freedom for God's Glory

²⁹"All things are allowed." Yes. But not all things are good. "All things are allowed." Yes. But some things don't help others grow stronger. ³⁰No person should try to do the things that will help only himself. He should try to do what is good for other people.

³¹Eat any meat that is sold in the meat market. Don't ask questions about the meat, to see if it is something you think is wrong to eat. ³²You can eat it, "because the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord."³³

³⁴A person that is not a believer might invite you to eat with him. If you want to go, then eat anything that is put before you. Don't ask questions to see if it is something you think is wrong to eat. ³⁵But if a person tells you, "That food was offered to idols,"³⁶ then don't eat that food. Don't eat it because you don't want to hurt the faith of the person that told you and because eating that meat is something that people think is wrong. ³⁷I don't mean that you think it is wrong. But the other person might think it is wrong. That is the only reason I would not eat the meat. My own freedom

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

idol(s) False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"The people ... dance" Quote from Ex. 32:6.

cup of blessing The cup of wine that Christians thank God for and drink at the Lord's Supper.

sacrifices Animals killed and offered as gifts to God.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

"because ... Lord" Quote from Ps. 24:1; 50:12; 89:11.

should not be judged by what another person thinks. ²⁰I eat the meal with thankfulness. So I don't want to be criticized because of something I thank God for.

²¹So if you eat or if you drink or if you do anything, do it for the glory of God. ²²Never do anything that might make other people do wrong—Jews, Greeks (*non-Jews*), or God's church. ²³I do the same thing. I try to please everybody in every way. I am not trying to do what is good for me. I try to do what is good for the most people. I do this so that they can be saved.

11 Follow my example, like I follow the example of Christ.

Being Under Authority

¹I praise you because you remember me in all things. You follow closely the teachings that I gave you. ²But I want you to understand this: The head (*authority*) of every man is Christ. And the head of a woman is the man.* And the head of Christ is God. ³Every man that prophesies* or prays with his head covered brings shame to his head. ⁴But every woman that prays or prophesies should have her head covered. If her head is not covered, then she brings shame to her head. Then she is the same as a woman that has her head shaved. ⁵If a woman does not cover her head, then it is the same as cutting off all her hair. But it is shameful for a woman to cut off her hair or to shave her head. So she should cover her head. ⁶But a man should not cover his head. Why? Because he is made like God and is God's glory. But woman is man's glory. ⁷Man did not come from woman. Woman came from man. ⁸And man was not made for woman. Woman was made for man. ⁹So that is why a woman should have her head covered with something to show that she is under authority. And also she should do this because of the angels.

¹¹But in the Lord the woman is important to the man, and the man is important to the woman. ¹²This is true because woman came

from man, but also man is born from woman. Really, everything comes from God. ¹³Decide this for yourselves: Is it right for a woman to pray to God without something on her head? ¹⁴Even nature itself teaches you that wearing long hair is shameful for a man. ¹⁵But wearing long hair is a woman's honor. Long hair is given to the woman to cover her head. ¹⁶Some people may still want to argue about this. But we and the churches of God don't accept what those people are doing.

The Lord's Supper

¹⁷In the things I tell you now I don't praise you. Your meetings hurt you more than they help you. ¹⁸First, I hear that when you meet together as a church you are divided. And I believe some of this. ¹⁹(It is necessary for there to be differences among you. That is the way to make it clear which ones of you are really doing right.) ²⁰When you all come together, you are not really eating the Lord's Supper.* ²¹Why? Because when you eat, each person eats without waiting for the others. Some people don't get enough to eat, while other people have so much that they become drunk. ²²You can eat and drink in your own homes! It seems that you think God's church (*people*) is not important. You embarrass those people that are poor. What should I tell you? Should I praise you for doing this? I don't praise you.

²³The teaching that I gave you is the same teaching that I received from the Lord: On the night when Jesus was given to be killed, he took bread ²⁴and gave thanks for it. Then he divided the bread and said, "This is my body; it is for you. Do this to remember me." ²⁵In the same way, after they ate, Jesus took the cup of wine. Jesus said, "This wine shows the new agreement from God to his people. This new agreement begins with my blood (*death*). When you drink this, do it to remember me." ²⁶Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you make known the Lord's death until he comes.

the man This could also mean "her husband."
prophesies Speaks or teaches things from God.

Lord's Supper The meal Jesus told his followers to eat to remember him. See Lk. 22:14-20.

²⁷So if a person eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is not worthy of it, then that person is sinning against the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸Every person should look into his own heart before he eats the bread and drinks the cup. ²⁹If a person eats the bread, and drinks the cup, without recognizing the body, then that person is judged guilty by eating and drinking. ³⁰That is why many in your group are sick and weak. And many have died. ³¹But if we judged ourselves in the right way, then God would not judge us. ³²But when the Lord judges us, he punishes us to show us the right way. He does this so that we will not be condemned with the other people in the world.

³³So, my brothers and sisters,, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. ³⁴If a person is too hungry, then he should eat at home. Do this so that your meeting together will not bring God's judgment on you. I will tell you what to do about the other things when I come.

Gifts from the Holy Spirit

12 Now, brothers and sisters,, I want you to understand about spiritual gifts. ²You remember the lives you lived before you were believers. You let yourselves be influenced and led away to worship idols*—things that have no life. ³So I tell you that no person that is speaking with the help of God's Spirit says, "Jesus be cursed." And no person can say, "Jesus is Lord," without the help of the Holy Spirit.*

⁴There are different kinds of spiritual gifts; but they are all from the same Spirit.* ⁵There are different ways to serve; but all these ways are from the same Lord. ⁶And there are different ways that God works in people; but all these ways are from the same God. God works in us all to do everything. ⁷Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person. The

Spirit gives this to each person to help other people. ⁸The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. And the same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge. ⁹The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And that one Spirit gives another person gifts of healing. ¹⁰The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles,* to another person the ability to prophesy,* to another person the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit* gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages, and to another person the ability to interpret those languages. ¹¹One Spirit, the same Spirit, does all these things. The Spirit decides what to give each person.

The Body of Christ

¹²A person's body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Yes, there are many parts to a body, but all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that too: ¹³Some of us are Jews and some of us are Greeks (*non-Jews*); some of us are slaves and some of us are free. But we were all baptized* into one body through one Spirit.* And we were all given* the one Spirit.

¹⁴And a person's body has more than one part. It has many parts. ¹⁵The foot might say, "I am not a hand. So I don't belong to the body." But saying this would not stop the foot from being a part of the body. ¹⁶The ear might say, "I am not an eye. So I don't belong to the body." But saying this would not make the ear stop being a part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, then the body would not be able to hear. If the whole body were an ear, then the body would not be able to smell anything. ^{18,19}If each part of the body were the same part, then there would be no body. But truly God put the parts in the body like he wanted them. He made a place for each one of them. ²⁰And so there are many parts, but only one body.

idols False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

prophesy To speak or teach things from God.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

given Literally, "given to drink."

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the foot, "I don't need you!" ²²No! Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are really very important. ²³And the parts of the body that we think are not worth very much are the parts that we give the most care to. And we give special care to the parts of the body that we don't want to show. ²⁴The more beautiful parts of our body don't need this special care. But God put the body together and gave more honor to the parts that need it. ²⁵God did this so that our body would not be divided. God wanted the different parts to care the same for each other. ²⁶If one part of the body suffers, then all the other parts suffer with it. Or if one part of our body is honored, then all the other parts share its honor too.

²⁷All of you together are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of that body. ²⁸And in the church God has given a place first to apostles,* second to prophets,* and third to teachers. Then God has given a place to those people that do miracles,* those people that have gifts of healing, those people that can help others, those people that are able to lead, and those people that can speak in different kinds of languages. ²⁹Not all people are apostles. Not all people are prophets. Not all people are teachers. Not all people do miracles. ³⁰Not all people have gifts of healing. Not all people speak in different kinds of languages. Not all people interpret those languages. ³¹But you should truly want to have the greater gifts of the Spirit.*

Love

And now I will show you the best way of all.

13 I may speak in different languages of men or even angels. But if I don't have love, then I am only a noisy bell or a ringing

cymbal. ²I may have the gift of prophecy*; I may understand all the secret things of God, and know everything; and I may have faith so great that I can move mountains. But even with all these things, if I don't have love, then I am nothing. ³I may give everything I have to feed people. And I may even give my body as an offering, to be burned. But I gain nothing by doing these things if I don't have love.

⁴Love is patient, and love is kind. Love is not jealous, it does not boast, and it is not proud. ⁵Love is not rude, love is not selfish, and love does not become angry easily. Love does not remember wrongs done against it. ⁶Love is not happy with evil, but love is happy with the truth. ⁷Love patiently accepts all things. Love always trusts, always hopes, and always continues strong.

⁸Love never ends. There are gifts of prophecy,* but they will be ended. There are gifts of speaking in different kinds of languages, but those gifts will end. There is the gift of knowledge, but it will be ended. ⁹These things will end, because this knowledge and these prophecies we have are not complete (*not perfect*). ¹⁰But when perfection comes, the things that are not complete will end. ¹¹When I was a child, I talked like a child; I thought like a child; I made plans like a child. When I became a man, I stopped those childish ways. ¹²It is the same with us. Now we see like we are looking into a dark mirror. But at that time, in the future, we shall see clearly. Now I know only a part. But at that time I will know fully, like God has known me. ¹³So these three things continue: faith, hope, and love. And the greatest of these is love.

Use Spiritual Gifts to Help the Church

14 Love is the thing you should try for. And you should truly want to have the spiritual gifts. And the gift you should want most is to be able to prophesy.* ²I will explain why: A person that has the gift of speaking in a different language is not speaking to people.

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

prophets People who speak for God.

miracles Amazing works done by the power of God.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophecy Speaking or teaching things from God.

prophecy To speak or teach things from God.

He is speaking to God. No one understands that person—he is speaking secret things through the Spirit.* ³But a person that prophesies is speaking to people. He gives people strength, encouragement, and comfort. ⁴The person that speaks in a different language is helping only himself. But the person that prophesies is helping the whole church. ⁵I would like all of you to have the gift of speaking in different languages. But more, I want you to prophesy. The person that prophesies is greater than the person that can only speak in different languages. But the person speaking in different languages is the same as the person that prophesies if he can also interpret those languages. Then the church can be helped by what he says.

⁶Brothers and sisters, will it help you if I come to you speaking in different languages? No! It will help you only if I bring you a new truth or some knowledge, or some prophecy,* or some teaching. ⁷It is the same as with non-living things that make sounds—like a flute or a harp. If the different musical notes are not made clear, then you can't understand what song is being played. Each note must be played clearly for you to be able to understand the tune. ⁸And in a war, if the trumpet does not sound clearly, then the soldiers will not know it is time to prepare for fighting. ⁹It is the same with you. The words you speak with your tongue must be clear. If you don't speak clearly, then no person can understand what you are saying. You will be talking to the air! ¹⁰It is true that there are many kinds of speech in the world. And they all have meaning. ¹¹So if I don't understand the meaning of what a person says to me, then I think that he talks strange, and he thinks that I talk strange. ¹²It is the same with you. You want spiritual gifts very much. So try most to have those things that help the church grow stronger.

¹³So the person that has the gift of speaking in a different language should pray that he can

also interpret the things he says. ¹⁴If I pray in a different language, then my spirit is praying, but my mind does nothing. ¹⁵So what should I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. ¹⁶You might be praising God with your spirit. But a person there without understanding cannot say "Amen*" to your prayer of thanks. Why? Because he does not know what you are saying. ¹⁷You may be thanking God in a good way, but the other person is not helped.

¹⁸I thank God that my gift of speaking in different kinds of languages is greater than any of yours. ¹⁹But in the church meetings I would rather speak five words that I understand than thousands of words in a different language. I would rather speak with my understanding, so that I can teach other people.

²⁰Brothers and sisters, don't think like children. In evil things be like babies. But in your thinking you should be like full grown people. ²¹It is written in the Scriptures*:

"Using people that speak different kinds of languages and using the lips of foreigners, I will speak to these people; but even then these people will not obey me."

Isaiah 28:11-12

That is what the Lord says.

²²So the gift of speaking in different languages is a proof for people that don't believe, not for people that believe. And prophecy* is for people that believe, not for people that don't believe. ²³Suppose the whole church meets together and you all speak in different languages. If some people come in that are without understanding or don't believe, then those people will say you are crazy. ²⁴But suppose you are all prophesying* and a person comes in that does not believe or a person without understanding comes in. If you are all

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophecy A message from God.

Amen When a person says, "Amen," it means he agrees with the things that were said.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Prophecy (ing) To speak or teach things from God.

prophesying, then that person's sin will be shown to him, and he will be judged by all the things you say. ²⁵The secret things in that person's heart will be made known. So that person will bow down and worship God. He will say, "Truly, God is with you."

Your Meetings Should Help the Church

²⁶So, brothers and sisters, what should you do? When you meet together, one person has a song, another person has a teaching, another person has a new truth from God, another person speaks in a different language, and another person interprets that language. The purpose of all these things should be to help the church grow strong. ²⁷When you meet together, if any person speaks to the group in a different language, then it should be only two or not more than three people that do this. And they should speak one after the other. And another person should interpret what they say. ²⁸But if there is no interpreter, then any person that speaks in a different language should be quiet in the church meeting. That person should speak only to himself and to God.

²⁹And only two or three prophets* should speak. The others should judge what they say. ³⁰And if a message from God comes to another person that is sitting, then the first speaker should stop. ³¹You can all prophesy* one after the other. In that way all the people can be taught and encouraged. ³²The spirits of prophets are under the control of the prophets themselves. ³³God is not a God of confusion but a God of peace.

³⁴Women should keep quiet in the church meetings. This is the same as in all the churches of God's people. Women are not allowed to speak. They must be under control. This is also what the law of Moses says. ³⁵If there is something the women want to know, then they should ask their own husbands at home. It is shameful for a woman to speak in the church meeting. ³⁶Did God's teaching come from you? No! Or are you the only ones that have received that teaching? No!

prophets People who speak or teach things from God.
prophesy(ing) To speak or teach things from God.

³⁷If any person thinks that he is a prophet* or that he has a spiritual gift, then that person should understand that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. ³⁸If that person does not know this, then he is not known by God.

³⁹So my brothers and sisters, you should truly want to prophesy.* And don't stop people from using the gift of, speaking in different languages. ⁴⁰But everything should be done in a way that is right and orderly.

The Good News About Christ

15 Now, brothers and sisters, I want you to remember the Good News* I told you about. You received this message, and you continue strong in it. ²You are saved by this message. But you must continue believing the things I told you. If you don't do that, then you believed for nothing.

³I gave you the message that I received. I told you the most important things: that Christ died for our sins, like the Scriptures* say; that Christ was buried and was raised to life on the third day, like the Scriptures say; and that Christ showed himself to Peter and then to the twelve apostles* together. ⁴After that, Christ showed himself to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time. Most of these brothers are still living today. But some have died. ⁵Then Christ showed himself to James and later to all the apostles again. ⁶Last of all, Christ showed himself to me—like to a person not born at the normal time. ⁷All the other apostles are greater than I am. This is because I persecuted* the church of God. That is why I am not even good enough to be called an apostle. ⁸But, because of God's grace (gift), that is what I am. And his grace that he gave me was not wasted. I worked harder than all the other apostles. (But I was not really the one working. It was God's grace that was with me.)

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.
Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
persecuted To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

¹¹So then, it is not important, if I preached to you, or if the other apostles preached to you—we all preach the same thing, and this is what you believed.

We Will Be Raised from Death

¹²It is preached that Christ was raised from death. So why do some of you say that people will not be raised from death? ¹³If people will never be raised from death, then Christ has never been raised from death. ¹⁴And if Christ has never been raised, then our preaching is worth nothing. And your faith is worth nothing. ¹⁵And also we will be guilty of lying about God. Why? Because we have preached about God by saying that he raised Christ from death. And if people are not raised from death, then God never raised Christ from death. ¹⁶If dead people are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised from death, then your faith is for nothing; you are still guilty of your sins. ¹⁸And also those people in Christ who have already died are lost. ¹⁹If our hope in Christ is only for this life here on earth, then people should feel more sorry for us than for anyone else.

²⁰But Christ has truly been raised from death—the first one of all those believers, who are asleep in death. ²¹Death happens to people because of what one man (*Adam*) did. But the rising from death also happens because of one man (*Christ*). ²²In Adam all of us die. In the same way, in Christ all of us will be made alive again. ²³But every man will be raised to life in the right order. Christ was first to be raised. Then when Christ comes again, the people who belong to Christ will be raised to life. ²⁴Then the end will come. Christ will destroy all rulers, authorities, and powers. Then Christ will give the kingdom to God the Father. ²⁵Christ must rule until God puts all enemies under Christ's control. ²⁶The last enemy to be destroyed will be death. ²⁷The Scripture* says, "God put all things under his control." ²⁸When it says that

"all things" are put under him (*Christ*), it is clear that this does not include God himself. God is the one putting everything under Christ's control. ²⁹After everything has been put under Christ, then the Son (*Christ*) himself will be put under God. God is the One who put all things under Christ. Christ will be put under God, so that God will be the complete ruler over everything.

³⁰If people will never be raised from death, then what will people do who are baptized* for those who have died? If dead people are never raised, then why are people baptized for them?

³¹And what about us? Why do we put ourselves in danger every hour? ³²I die every day. That is true, brothers, the same as it is true that I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³³If I fought wild animals in Ephesus only for human reasons, to satisfy my own pride, then I have gained nothing. If people are not raised from death then, "Let us eat and drink, because tomorrow we die."*

³⁴Don't be fooled: "Bad friends will ruin good habits." ³⁵Come back to your right way of thinking and stop sinning. Some of you don't know God. I say this to shame you.

What Kind of Body Will We Have?

³⁶But some person may ask, "How are dead people raised? What kind of body will they have?" ³⁷Those are stupid questions. When you plant something, it must die in the ground, before it can live and grow. ³⁸And when you plant something, the thing you plant does not have the same "body" that it will have later. The thing you plant is only a seed, maybe wheat or something else. ³⁹But God gives it a body that he has planned for it. And God gives each kind of seed its own body. ⁴⁰All things made of flesh (*bodies*) are not the same kind of flesh: People have one kind of flesh (*body*), animals have another kind, birds have another kind, and fish have another kind. ⁴¹Also there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the

control Literally, "feet."

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"God ... control" Quote from Ps. 8:6.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

"Let ... die" Quote from Is. 22:13; 56:12.

beauty of the heavenly bodies is one kind. The beauty of the earthly bodies is another kind. "The sun has one kind of beauty, the moon has another kind of beauty, and the stars have another. And each star is different in its beauty.

"It is the same with the dead people who are raised to life. The body that is "planted" will ruin and decay. But that body is raised to a life that cannot be destroyed. "When the body is "planted," it is without honor. But it is raised in glory. When the body is "planted," it is weak. But when it is raised, it has power. "The body that is "planted" is a physical body. When it is raised, it is a spiritual body.

There is a physical body. So there is also a spiritual body. "It is written in the Scriptures,*: "The first man (Adam) became a living thing.*" But the last Adam (Christ) became a spirit that gives life. "The spiritual man did not come first. It was the physical man, that came first; then came the spiritual. "The first man came from the dust of the earth. The second man (Christ) came from heaven. "People belong to the earth. They are like that first man of earth. But those people who belong to heaven are like that man of heaven. "We were made like that man of earth. So we will also be made like that man of heaven.

"I tell you this, brothers and sisters: Flesh and blood (a physical body) cannot have a part in the kingdom of God. A thing that will ruin cannot have a part in something that never ruins. "But listen, I tell you this secret: We will not all die, but we will all be changed. "It will only take the time of a second. We will be changed as quickly as an eye blinks. This will happen when the last trumpet blows. The trumpet will blow and those believers, who have died will be raised to live forever. And we also, will all be changed. "This body, that will ruin must clothe itself with something that will never ruin. And this body, that dies must clothe itself with something that will never die. "So this body, that ruins will clothe itself with that which never ruins. And this body that dies

will clothe itself with that which never dies. When this happens, then this Scripture* will be made true:

"Death is swallowed (defeated) in victory."

Isaiah 25:8

³⁵ "Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your power to hurt?"

Hosea 13:14

"Death's power to hurt is sin. And the power of sin is the law. "But we thank God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

"So my dear brothers and sisters, stand strong. Don't let anything change you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord. You know that your work in the Lord is never wasted.

The Collection for Other Believers

16 Now I will write, about the collection of money, for God's people. Do the same thing that I told the Galatian churches to do: "On the first day of every week each one of you should save as much money as you can from what you are blessed with. You should put this money in a special place and keep it there. Then you will not have to gather your money after I come. "When I come I will send some men to take your gift to Jerusalem. These men will be the men that you all agree should go. I will send them with letters of introduction. "If it seems good for me to go also, then those men will go with me.

Paul's Plans

"I plan to go through Macedonia. So I will come to you after I go through Macedonia. "Maybe I will stay with you for a time. I might even stay all winter. Then you can help me on my trip, wherever I go. "I don't want to come see you now, because I would have to leave to go to other places. I hope to stay a longer time with you if the Lord allows it. "But I will stay

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
(thing Literally, "soul.")

"The first ... thing" Quote from Gen. 2:7.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

at Ephesus until Pentecost.* ⁹I will stay here, because a good opportunity for a great and growing work has been given to me now. And there are many people working against it.

¹⁰Timothy might come to you. Try to make him feel comfortable with you. He is working for the Lord the same as I am. ¹¹So none of you should refuse to accept Timothy. Help him on his trip in peace, so that he can come back to me. I am expecting him to come back with the brothers.

¹²Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly encouraged him to visit you with the other brothers. But he was sure that he did not want to go now. But when he has the opportunity, he will go to you.

Paul Ends his Letter

¹³Be careful. Continue strong in the faith. Have courage, and be strong. ¹⁴Do everything in love.

¹⁵You know that Stephanas and his family were the first believers in Achaia. They have

given themselves to the service of God's people. I ask you, brothers and sisters,, ¹⁶to follow the leading of people like these, and any other person that works and serves with them.

¹⁷I am happy that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus have come. You are not here, but they have filled your place. ¹⁸They have given rest to my spirit and to yours. You should recognize the value of men like these.

¹⁹The churches in Asia* say hello to you. Aquila and Priscilla say hello to you in the Lord. Also the church that meets in their house says hello to you. ²⁰All the brothers and sisters, here say hello to you. Give each other a holy kiss when you meet.

²¹I am Paul, and I am writing this greeting with my own hand.

²²If any person does not love the Lord, then let that person be separated from God—lost forever!

Come, O Lord!*

²³The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Pentecost Jewish festival (50 days after Passover) celebrating the harvest of wheat.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

Come O Lord This translates the Aramaic words "marana tha."

2 Corinthians

1 From Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Also from Timothy our brother in Christ.

To the church of God that lives in Corinth and to all of God's people in the whole country of Achaia:

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul Gives Thanks to God

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the Father who is full of mercy. He is the God of all comfort. ⁴He comforts us every time we have trouble, so that we can comfort other people any time they have trouble. We can comfort them with the same comfort that God gives us. ⁵We share in the many sufferings of Christ. In the same way, much comfort comes to us through Christ. ⁶If we have troubles, those troubles are for your comfort and salvation. If we have comfort, it is for your comfort. This helps you to patiently accept the same sufferings that we have. ⁷Our hope for you is strong. We know that you share in our sufferings. So we know that you also share in our comfort.

⁸Brothers and sisters,, we want you to know about the trouble we suffered in the country of Asia.* We had great burdens there. The burdens were greater than our own strength. We even gave up hope for life. ⁹Truly

in our own hearts we believed that we would die. But this happened so that we would not trust in ourselves. It happened so that we would trust in God, who raises people from death.

¹⁰God saved us from these great dangers of death. And God will continue to save us. We have put our hope in him, and he will continue to save us. ¹¹And you can help us with your prayers. Then many people will give thanks for us—that God blessed us because of their many prayers.

The Change in Paul's Plans

¹²This is what we are proud of, and I can say with all my heart that it is true: In all the things we have done in the world, we have done everything with an honest and pure heart from God. And this is even more true in the things we have done with you. We did this by God's grace (*kindness*), not by the kind of wisdom the world has. ¹³The only things we write to you are things that you can read and understand. And I hope that you will always understand, ¹⁴like you have already understood some things about us. I hope that you will understand that you can be proud of us, like we will be proud of you on the day our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

¹⁵I was very sure of all this. That is why I made plans to visit you first. Then you could be blessed twice. ¹⁶I planned to visit you on my way to Macedonia. Then I planned to visit you again on my way back. I wanted to get help from you for my trip to Judea. ¹⁷Do you think that I made those plans without really thinking?

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for selling the Good News to the world.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

Or maybe you think I make plans like the world makes plans, so that I say, "Yes, yes," and at the same time I say, "No, no."

¹⁰But if you can believe God, then you can believe that what we tell you is never both "Yes" and "No." ¹¹The Son of God, Jesus Christ, that Silas and Timothy and I preached to you was not "Yes" and "No." In Christ it has always been "Yes." ¹²The "Yes" to all of God's promises is in Christ. And that is why we say "Amen" through Christ to the glory of God. ¹³And God is the One who makes you and us strong in Christ. God gave us his special blessing. ¹⁴He put his mark on us to show that we are his. And he put his Spirit* in our hearts to be a guarantee—a proof that he will give us what he promised.

¹⁵I tell you this, and I ask God to be my witness that this is true: The reason I did not come back to Corinth was that I did not want to punish or hurt you. ¹⁶I don't mean that we are trying to control your faith. You are strong in faith. But we are workers with you for your own happiness.

2 So I decided that my next visit to you would not be another visit to make you sad. ²If I make you sad, then who will make me happy? Only you can make me happy—you that I made sad. ³I wrote you a letter for this reason: so that when I came to you I would not be made sad by those people who should make me happy. I felt sure of all of you. I felt sure that all of you would share my joy. ⁴When I wrote to you before, I was very troubled and unhappy in my heart. I wrote with many tears. I did not write to make you sad. I wrote so that you could know how much I love you.

Forgive the Person Who Did Wrong

⁵A person in your group has caused sadness. He caused this sadness not to me, but to all of you—I mean he caused sadness to all in some way. (I don't want to make it sound

worse than it really is.) ⁶The punishment that most of your group gave him is enough for him. ⁷But now you should forgive him and comfort him. This will keep him from having too much sadness and giving up completely. ⁸So I beg you to show him that you love him. ⁹This is why I wrote to you. I wanted to test you and see if you obey in everything. ¹⁰If you forgive a person, then I also forgive that person. And what I have forgiven—if I had anything to forgive—I forgave it for you, and Christ was with me. ¹¹I did this so that Satan (*the Devil*) would not win anything from us. We know very well what Satan's plans are.

Paul's Anxiety In Troas

¹²I went to Troas to preach the Good News* of Christ. The Lord gave me a good opportunity there. ¹³But I had no peace because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-bye and went to Macedonia.

Victory Through Christ

¹⁴But thanks be to God. God always leads us in victory through Christ. God uses us to spread his knowledge everywhere like a sweet-smelling perfume. ¹⁵Our offering to God is this: We are the sweet smell of Christ among people who are being saved and among people who are being lost. ¹⁶To the people who are being lost, we are the smell of death that brings death. But to the people who are being saved, we are the smell of life that brings life. So who is good enough to do this work? ¹⁷We don't sell the word of God for a profit like many other people do. No! But in Christ we speak in truth before God. We speak like men sent from God.

Servants of God's New Agreement

3 Are we starting to boast about ourselves again? Do we need letters of introduction to you or from you, like some other people? ²You yourselves are our letter. That letter is written on our hearts. It is known and read by

Amen To say "Amen" means to agree strongly.
gave ... blessing Literally, "anointed us."

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

all people. ³You show that you are a letter from Christ that he sent through us. This letter is not written with ink but with the Spirit* of the living God. It is not written on stone tablets.* It is written on human hearts.

⁴We can say these things, because through Christ we feel sure before God. ⁵I don't mean that we are able to say that we can do anything good, ourselves. It is God who makes us able to do all that we do. ⁶God made us able to be servants of a new agreement (from God to his people). This new agreement is not a written law. It is of the Spirit.* The written law brings death, but the Spirit gives life.

The New Agreement Brings Greater Glory

⁷The service that brought death (*the law*) was written with words on stone.* It came with God's, glory. Moses' face was so bright with glory that the people of Israel (*the Jews*) could not continue looking at his face. And that glory later disappeared. ⁸So surely the service that brings the Spirit* has even more glory. ⁹This is what I mean: That service (*the law*) judged people guilty of sin, but it had glory. So surely the service that makes people right with God, has much greater glory. ¹⁰That old service, had glory. But it really loses its glory when it is compared to the much greater glory of this new service. ¹¹If that service, that disappeared came with glory, then this service, that continues forever has much greater glory.

¹²We have this hope, so we are very brave. ¹³We are not like Moses. He put a covering over his face. Moses covered his face so that the people of Israel (*the Jews*) would not see it. The glory (*brightness*) was disappearing, and Moses did not want them to see it end. ¹⁴But their minds were closed—they could not understand. Even today that same covering hides the meaning when they (*the Jews*) read the old testament. That covering has not been removed. It is taken away only through Christ.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

stone, stone tablets Meaning the law that God gave to Moses, which was written on stone tablets (Ex. 24:12; 25:16).

¹⁵But even today, when these people read the law of, Moses, there is a covering over their minds. ¹⁶But when a person changes and follows the Lord, that covering is taken away. ¹⁷The Lord is the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And our faces are not covered. We all show the Lord's glory. We are being changed to be like him. This change in us brings more and more glory. This glory comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Spiritual Treasure in Clay Jars

4 God, with his mercy, gave us this work to do. So we don't give up. ²But we have turned away from secret and shameful ways. We don't use trickery, and we don't change the teaching of God. No! We teach the truth plainly. This is how we show people who we are. And this is how they can know in their hearts what kind of people we are before God. ³The Good News* that we preach may be hidden. But it is hidden only to those people who are lost. ⁴The ruler* of this world (*the devil*) has blinded the minds of people who don't believe. They cannot see the light (*truth*) of the Good News—the Good News about the glory of Christ. Christ is the One who is exactly like God. ⁵We don't preach about ourselves. But we preach that Jesus Christ is Lord; and we preach that we are your servants for Jesus. ⁶God once said, "The light will shine out of the darkness!" And this is the same God who made his light shine in our hearts. He gave us light by letting us know the glory of God that is in the face of Christ.

⁷We have this treasure from God. But we are only like clay jars that hold the treasure. This shows that this great power is from God, not from us. ⁸We have troubles all around us, but we are not defeated. We often don't know what to do, but we don't give up. ⁹We are persecuted, but God does not leave us. We are hurt sometimes, but we are not destroyed. ¹⁰We have the death of Jesus in our own bodies. We

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

The ruler Literally, "The god."

carry this death so that the life of Jesus can also be seen in our bodies (*lives*). ¹¹"We are alive, but for Jesus we are always in danger of death. This happens to us so that the life of Jesus can be seen in our bodies that die. ¹²So death is working in us, but life is working in you.

¹³"It is written in the Scriptures,* "I believed, so I spoke."¹⁴ Our faith is like that too. We believe, and so we speak. ¹⁵God raised the Lord Jesus from death. And we know that God will also raise us with Jesus. God will bring us together with you, and we will stand before him. ¹⁶All these things are for you. And so the grace (*kindness*) of God is being given to more and more people. This will bring more and more thanks to God for his glory.

Living by Faith

¹⁶That is why we never become weak. Our physical body is becoming older and weaker, but our spirit inside us is made new every day. ¹⁷We have small troubles for a while now, but those troubles are helping us gain an eternal glory. That eternal glory is much greater than the troubles. ¹⁸So we think about the things we cannot see, not what we see. The things we see continue only a short time. And the things we cannot see will continue forever.

5 We know that our body,—the tent we live in here on earth—will be destroyed. But when that happens, God will have a home for us to live in. It will not be a home made by men. It will be a home in heaven that will continue forever. ²But now we are tired of this body. We want God to give us our heavenly home. ³It will clothe us and we will not be naked. ⁴While we live in this tent (*body*), we have burdens and we complain. We don't want to be naked. We want to be clothed with our heavenly home. Then this body that dies will be fully covered with life. ⁵This is what God made us for. And he has given us the Spirit* to be a guarantee—a proof—that he will give us this

new life.

⁶So we always have courage (*confidence*). We know that while we live in this body, we are away from the Lord. ⁷We live by what we believe, not by what we can see. ⁸So I say that we have confidence. And we really want to be away from this body and be at home with the Lord. ⁹Our only goal is to please God. We want to please him when we are living here in our body, or there with the Lord. ¹⁰We must all stand before Christ to be judged. Each person will get what he should. Each person will be paid for the things he did—good or bad—when he lived in the earthly body.

Helping People Become God's Friends

¹¹We know what it means to fear the Lord. So we try to help people accept the truth. God knows what we really are. And I hope that in your hearts you know us too. ¹²We are not trying to prove ourselves to you again. But we are telling you about ourselves. We are giving you reasons to be proud of us. Then you will have an answer for those people who are proud about things that can be seen. Those people don't care about what is in a person's heart. ¹³If we are crazy, then it is for God. If we have our right mind, then it is for you. ¹⁴The love of Christ controls us. Why? Because we know that One (*Christ*) has died for all people. So all have died. ¹⁵Christ died for all people so that the people who live would not continue to live for themselves. He died for them and was raised from death so that those people would live for him.

¹⁶From this time on we don't think of any person like the world thinks of people. It is true that in the past we thought of Christ like the world thinks. But we don't think that way now. ¹⁷If any person is in Christ, then that person is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new! ¹⁸All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself. And God gave us the work of bringing people into peace with him. ¹⁹I mean that God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold people guilty for their sins. And he gave

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"I ... spoke" Quote from Ps. 116:10.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

us this message of peace (to tell people).²⁰ So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is like God is calling to people through us. We speak for Christ when we beg you to be at peace with God.²¹ Christ had no sin. But God made him become sin. God did this for us, so that in Christ we could become right with God.

6 We are workers together with God. So we beg you: Don't let the grace (*kindness*) that you received from God be for nothing.¹ God says,

"I heard you at the right time,
and I gave you help on the
day of salvation."

Isaiah 49:8

I tell you that the "right time" is now. The "day of salvation" is now.

³We don't want people to find anything wrong with our work. So we do nothing that will be a problem to other people. ⁴But in every way we show that we are servants of God: in accepting many hard things, in troubles, in difficulties, and in great problems. ⁵We are beaten and thrown into prison. People become upset and fight us. We work hard, and sometimes we get no sleep or food. ⁶We show that we are servants of God, by our understanding, by our patience, by our kindness, and by living pure. ⁷We show this, by the Holy Spirit,* by true love, ⁸by speaking the truth, and by God's power. We use our right living to defend ourselves against everything. ⁹Some people honor us, but other people shame us. Some people say good things about us, but other people say bad things. Some people say we are liars, but we speak the truth. ¹⁰To some people we are not known (*not important*), but we are well known. We seem to be dying, but look! We continue to live. We are punished, but we are not killed. ¹¹We have much sadness, but we are always rejoicing. We are poor, but we are making many people rich in faith. We have nothing, but really we have everything.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

¹²We have spoken freely to you people in Corinth. We have opened our hearts to you. ¹³Our feelings of love for you have not stopped. It is you that have stopped your feelings of love for us. ¹⁴I speak to you like you are my children. Do the same as we have done—open your hearts also.

Warning About Living with Non-Christians

¹⁵You are not the same as those people who don't believe. So don't join yourselves to them. Good and bad don't belong together. Light and darkness cannot have fellowship (*sharing*). ¹⁶How can Christ and Belial (*the devil*) have any agreement? What can a believer have together with a non-believer? ¹⁷God's temple* cannot have any agreement with idols.* And we are the temple of the living God. Like God said:

"I will live with them
and walk with them,
I will be their God,
and they will be my people."

Leviticus 26:11-12

- ¹⁸ "So come away from those people
and separate yourselves from them,
says the Lord.
Touch nothing that is not clean,
and I will accept you."

Isaiah 52:11

- ¹⁹ "I will be your father,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord All-Powerful."

2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8

7 Dear friends, we have these promises from God. So we should make ourselves pure-free from anything that makes our body or our soul unclean. We should try to become perfect in the way we live, because we respect God.

God's temple The place where people worship and serve God. Here it means a Christian's body.

idols False gods made from wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

Paul's Joy

²Open your hearts to us. We have not done wrong to any person. We have not ruined the faith of, any person, and we have not cheated any person. ³I do not say this to blame you. I told you before that we love you so much that we would live or die with you. ⁴I feel very sure of you. I am very proud of you. You give me much courage. And in all of our troubles I have great joy.

⁵When we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. We found trouble all around us. We had fighting on the outside and fear on the inside. ⁶But God comforts people who are troubled. And God comforted us when Titus came. ⁷We were comforted by his coming and also by the comfort that you gave him. Titus told us about your wish to see me. He told us that you are very sorry for the things you did. And Titus told me about your great care for me. When I heard this, I was much happier.

⁸Even if the letter I wrote you made you sad, I am not sorry I wrote it. I know that letter made you sad, and I was sorry for that. But it made you sad only for a short time. ⁹Now I am happy. My happiness is not because you were made sad. I am happy because your sorrow made you change your hearts. You became sad like God wanted. So you were not hurt by us in any way. ¹⁰Being sorry like God wants makes a person change his heart and life. This leads a person to salvation, and we cannot be sorry for that. But the kind of sorrow the world has will bring death. ¹¹You had the kind of sorrow God wanted you to have. Now see what that sorrow has brought you: That sorrow has made you very serious. It made you want to prove that you were not wrong. It made you angry and afraid. It made you want to see me. It made you care. It made you want the right thing to be done. You proved that you were not guilty in any part of that problem. ¹²I wrote that letter, but not because of the one who did the wrong. And it was not written because of the person who was hurt. But I wrote that letter so that you could see, before God, the great care that you have for us. ¹³That is why we were comforted.

We were very comforted. And we were even happier to see that Titus was so happy. All of you made him feel good. ¹⁴I boasted to Titus about you. And you showed that I was right. Everything that we said to you was true. And you have proved that the things that we boasted about to Titus are true. ¹⁵And his love for you is stronger when he remembers that you were all ready to obey. You welcomed him with respect and fear. ¹⁶I am very happy that I can trust you fully.

Christian Giving

8 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace (*kindness*) that God gave the churches (*groups of believers*) in Macedonia. ²Those believers have been tested by great troubles. And they are very poor people. But they gave much because of their great joy. ³I can tell you that they gave as much as they were able. Those believers gave even more than they could afford. They did this freely. No person told them to do this. ⁴But they asked us again and again—they begged us to let them share in this service for God's people. ⁵And they gave in a way that we did not expect: They gave themselves to the Lord and to us before they gave their money. This is what God wants. ⁶So we asked Titus to help you finish this special work of grace (*kindness*). Titus is the one who started this work. ⁷You are rich in everything—in faith, in speaking, in knowledge, in truly wanting to help, and in the love you learned from us. And so we want you to also be rich in this gift of giving.

⁸I am not commanding you to give. But I want to see if your love is true love. I do this by showing you that other people really want to help. ⁹You know the grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus Christ. You know that Christ was rich with God, but for you he became poor. Christ did this so that you could become rich by his becoming poor.

¹⁰This is what I think you should do: Last year you were the first to want to give. And you were the first that gave. ¹¹So now finish the work that you started. Then your "doing" will be equal to your "wanting to do." Give from

what you have. ¹²If you want to give, then your gift will be accepted. Your gift will be judged by what you have, not by what you don't have. ¹³We don't want you to have troubles while other people are comforted. We want everything to be equal. ¹⁴At this time you have plenty. These things you have can help other people to have the things they need. Then later, when they have plenty, they can help you to have the things you need. Then all will be equal. ¹⁵Like it is written in the Scriptures, *

"The person that gathered much
did not have too much,
and the person that gathered little
did not have too little."

Exodus 16:18

Titus and His Companions

¹⁶I thank God because he gave Titus the same love for you that I have. ¹⁷Titus accepted the things we asked him to do. He wanted very much to go to you. This was his own idea. ¹⁸We are sending with Titus the brother who is praised by all the churches (*groups of believers*). This brother is praised because of his service in the gospel. ¹⁹Also, this brother was chosen by the churches to go with us when we carry this gift (*the money*). We are doing this service to bring glory to the Lord and to show that we really want to help.

²⁰We are being careful so that no person will criticize us about the way we are caring for this large gift. ²¹We are trying to do what is right. We want to do what the Lord accepts as right and also what people think is right.

²²Also, we are sending with them our brother who is always ready to help. He has proved this to us in many ways. And he wants to help even more now because he has much faith in you.

²³Now about Titus—he is my partner. He is working together with me to help you. And about the other brothers—they are sent from the churches (*groups of believers*), and they bring

glory to Christ. ²⁴So show these men that you really have love. Show them why we are proud of you. Then all the churches can see it.

Help for Fellow Christians

9 I really don't need to write to you about this help for God's people. ²I know that you want to help. I have been boasting about this to the people in Macedonia. I have told them that you people in Achaia were ready to give since last year. And your wanting to give has made most of the people here ready to give also. ³But I am sending the brothers to you. I don't want our boasting about you in this to be for nothing. I want you to be ready like I said you would be. ⁴If any of the people from Macedonia come with me, and they find that you are not ready, then we will be ashamed. We will be ashamed that we were so sure of you. (And you will be ashamed too!) ⁵So I thought that I should ask these brothers to go to you before we come. They will finish making ready the gift you promised. Then the gift will be ready when we come, and it will be a gift you wanted to give—not a gift that you hated to give.

⁶Remember this: The person who plants little will harvest only a little. But the person who plants much will harvest much. ⁷Each person should give what he has decided in his heart to give. A person should not give if it makes him sad. And a person should not give if he thinks he is forced to give. God loves the person who gives happily. ⁸And God can give you more blessings than you need. Then you will always have plenty of everything. You will have enough to give to every good work. ⁹It is written in the Scriptures, *

"He gives generously to the poor;
his kindness will continue forever."

Psalms 112:9

¹⁰God is the One who gives seed to the person who plants. And he gives bread for food. And God will give you (spiritual) seed and make your seed grow. He will make a great harvest from your goodness (*giving*). ¹¹God will make you rich in every way so that you can always

give freely. And your giving through us will make people give thanks to God. "This service that you do helps the needs of God's people. But that is not all your service does. It is also bringing more and more thanks to God. "This service you do is a proof of your faith. People will praise God because of this. They will praise God because you follow the gospel* of Christ—the gospel you say you believe. People will praise God because you freely share with them and with all people. "And when those people pray, they will wish they could be with you. They will feel this because of the great grace (*kindness*) that God gave you. "Thanks be to God for his gift that is too wonderful to explain.

Paul Defends His Ministry

10 I am Paul, and I am begging you. I beg you with the gentleness and the kindness of Christ. Some people say that, I am humble when I am with you, and brave when I am away. "Some people think that we live in a worldly way. I plan to be very bold against those people when I come. I beg you that when I come I will not need to use that same boldness with you. "We do live in the world. But we don't fight in the same way that the world fights. "We fight with weapons that are different from the weapons the world uses. Our weapons have power from God. These weapons can destroy the enemy's, strong places. We destroy people's, arguments. "And we destroy every proud thing that raises itself against the knowledge of God. And we capture (*catch*) every thought and make it give up and obey Christ. "We are ready to punish any person there who does not obey. But first we want you to obey fully.

"You must look at the facts before you. If a person feels sure that he belongs to Christ, then he must remember that we belong to Christ the same as that person. "It is true that we boast freely about the authority (*power*) the Lord gave us. But he gave us this power to

strengthen you, not to hurt you. So I will not be ashamed of that boasting we do. "I don't want you to think that I am trying to scare you with my letters. "Some people say, "Paul's letters are powerful and sound important. But when he is with us, he is weak. And his speaking is nothing." "Those people should know this: We are not there with you now, so we say these things in letters. But when we are there with you, we will show the same power that we show in our letters.

"We don't dare to put ourselves in the same group with those people who think that they are very important. We don't compare ourselves to them. They use themselves to measure themselves, and they judge themselves by what they themselves are. This shows that they know nothing. "But we will not boast about things outside the work that was given us to do. We will limit our boasting to the work that God gave us. But this work includes our work with you. "We are not boasting too much. We would be boasting too much if we had not already come to you. But we have come to you. We came to you with the Good News* of Christ. "We limit our boasting to the work that is ours. We don't boast in the work other people have done. We hope that your faith will continue to grow. We hope that you will help our work to grow much larger. "We want to tell the Good News in the areas beyond your city. We don't want to boast about work that has already been done in another man's area. "But, "The person who boasts should boast in the Lord." "It is not the person who says that he is good who is accepted. It is the person that the Lord thinks is good who is accepted.

Paul and the False Apostles

11 I wish you would be patient with me even when I am a little foolish. But you are already patient with me. "I feel jealousy for you. And this jealousy is a jealousy that comes from God. I promised to give you to Christ. Christ must be your only husband. I

want to give you to Christ to be his pure bride.*
⁹But I am afraid that your minds will be led away from your true and pure following of Christ. This might happen the same as Eve was tricked (*fooled*) by the snake (*the devil*) with his evil ways. *You are very patient with any person who comes to you and preaches things about Jesus that are different from the things we told you. You are very willing to accept a spirit or a gospel that is different from the Spirit* and gospel* that you received from us. So you should be patient with me.,

¹⁰I don't think that those "great apostles" are any better than I am. *It is true that I am not a trained speaker. But I do have knowledge. We have shown this to you clearly in every way.

¹¹I preached God's Good News* to you without pay. I humbled myself to make you important. Do you think that was wrong? *I accepted pay from other churches. I took their money so that I could serve you. *If I needed something when I was with you, I did not trouble any of you. The brothers who came from Macedonia gave me all that I needed. I did not allow myself to be a burden to you in any way. And I will never be a burden to you.
¹²No person in Achaia* will stop me from boasting about that. I say this with the truth of Christ in me. *And why do I not burden you? Do you think it is because I don't love you? No. God knows that I love you.

¹³And I will continue doing what I am doing now. I will continue this because I want to stop those people from having a reason to boast. They would like to say that the work they boast about is the same as ours. *These people are not true apostles.* They are workers who lie. And they change themselves to make people think they are apostles of Christ. *That does not surprise us. Why? Even Satan (*the devil*)

changes himself to make people think he is, an angel of light.*
¹⁴So it does not surprise us if Satan's servants make themselves look like servants who work for what is right. But in the end those people will be paid (*punished*) for the things they do.

Paul Tells About His Sufferings

¹⁵I tell you again: No person should think that I am a fool. But if you think that I am a fool, then accept me like you accept a fool. Then I can boast a little too. *I boast because I feel sure of myself. But I am not talking like the Lord would talk. I am boasting like a fool.
¹⁶Many people are boasting about their lives in the world. So I will boast too. *You are wise, so you will gladly be patient with fools! *I know you will be patient, because you are even patient with a person who forces you to do things and uses you! You are patient with people that trick you, or think they are better than you, or hit you in the face! *It is shameful to me to say this, but we were too "weak" to do those things to you,!

But if any person is brave enough to boast, then I also will be brave and boast. (I am talking like a fool.) *Are those people Hebrews*? I am too. Are they Israelites*? I am too. Are they from Abraham's* family? I am too. *Are those people serving Christ? I am serving him more. (I am crazy to talk like this.) I have worked much harder than those people. I have been in prison more often. I have been hurt more in beatings. I have been near death many times. *Five times the Jews have given me their punishment of 39 hits with a whip. *Three different times I was beaten with rods. One time I was almost killed with rocks. Three times I was in ships that were wrecked, and one of those times I spent the night and the next day in the sea. *I have traveled many, many times.

bride Literally, "virgin."

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

gospel Same as Good News.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Achaia The southern part of Greece where Corinth was.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

angel of light Messenger from God. The devil fools people so that they think he is from God.

Hebrews A name for the Jews that some Jews were very proud of.

Israelites The Jewish people. They were from the twelve sons of Jacob, who is also called Israel.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

And I have been in danger from rivers, from thieves, from my own people (*the Jews*), and from people who are not Jews. I have been in danger in cities, in places where no people live, and on the sea. And I have been in danger with people who say they are brothers, but are really not brothers. ²¹I have done hard and tiring work, and many times I did not sleep. I have been hungry and thirsty. Many times I have been without food. I have been cold and without clothes. ²²And there are many other problems. One of these is the care I have for all the churches. I worry about them every day. ²³I feel weak every time another person is weak. I feel upset (*angry*) inside myself every time another person is led into sin.

²⁴If I must boast, then I will boast about the things that show that I am weak. ²⁵God knows that I am not lying. He is the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he is to be praised forever. ²⁶When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas wanted to arrest me. So he put guards around the city. ²⁷But some friends put me in a basket. Then they put the basket through a hole in the wall and lowered me down. So I escaped from the governor.

A Special Blessing in Paul's Life

12 I must continue to boast. It won't help, but I will talk now about visions* and revelations* from the Lord. ²I know a man in Christ who was taken up to the third heaven. This happened 14 years ago. I don't know if the man was in his body or out of his body. But God knows. ³And I know that this man was taken up to paradise.* I don't know if he was in his body or away from his body. But he heard things which he is not able to explain. He heard things that no man is allowed to tell. ⁴I will boast about a man like that. But I will not boast about myself. I will boast only about my weaknesses. ⁵But if I wanted to boast about

myself, I would not be a fool. I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I won't boast about myself. Why? Because I don't want people to think more of me than what they see me do or hear me say.

⁶But I must not become too proud of the wonderful things that were shown to me. So a painful problem* was given to me. That problem is an angel from Satan (*the devil*). It is sent to beat me and keep me from being too proud. ⁷I begged the Lord three times to take this problem away from me. ⁸But the Lord said to me, "My grace (*kindness*) is enough for you. When you are weak, then my power is made perfect in you." So I am very happy to boast about my weaknesses. Then Christ's power can live in me. ⁹So I am happy when I have weaknesses. I am happy when people say bad things to me. I am happy when I have hard times. I am happy when people treat me badly. And I am happy when I have problems. All these things are for Christ. And I am happy with these things, because when I am weak, then I am truly strong.

Paul's Love for the Christians in Corinth

¹I have been talking like, a fool. But you made me do it. You people are the ones who should say good things about me. I am worth nothing, but those "great apostles" are not worth any more than I am! ²When I was with you, I did the things that prove that I am an apostle*—I did signs, wonders, and miracles.* I did these things with much patience. ³So you received everything that the other churches have received. Only one thing was different: I was not a burden to you. Forgive me for this!

⁴I am now ready to visit you the third time. And I will not be a burden to you. I don't want any of the things you own. I only want you. Children should not have to save things to give to their parents. Parents should save to give to their children. ⁵So I am happy to give

visions A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

revelations A revelation is an opening up (making known) of truth that was hidden.

paradise A place where good people go when they die.

painful problem Literally, "thorn in the flesh."

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

signs, wonders, miracles Powerful works from God that men cannot do without God's help.

everything I have for you. I will even give myself for you. If I love you more, will you love me less?

¹⁷It is clear that I was not a burden to you. But you think that, I was tricky and used lies to catch you. ¹⁸Did I cheat you by using any of the men I sent to you? No! You know I didn't. ¹⁹I asked Titus to go to you. And I sent our brother with him. Titus did not cheat you, did he? No! You know that Titus and I did the same things and with the same spirit.

²⁰Do you think that we have been defending ourselves to you all this time? No. We say these things in Christ. And we say these things before God. You are our dear friends. And everything that we do is to make you stronger. ²¹I do this because I am afraid that when I come you will not be what I want you to be. And I am afraid that I will not be what you want me to be. I am afraid that in your group, there may be arguing, jealousy, anger, selfish fighting, evil talk, gossip, pride, and confusion. ²²I am afraid that when I come to you again, my God will make me humble before you. I may be saddened by many of you who have sinned. I may be saddened because those people have not changed their hearts to be sorry for their evil lives, for their sexual sins, and for the shameful things they have done.

Final Warnings and Greetings

13 I will come to you again. This will be the third time. And remember, "For every complaint there must be two or three people to say that they know it is true."^a ²When I was with you the second time, I gave a warning to those people who had sinned. Now I am away from you, and I give a warning to all the other people who have sinned. When I come to you again, I will punish you for your

sin. ³You want proof that Christ is speaking through me. (My proof is that, Christ is not weak in punishing you. But Christ is powerful among you. ⁴It is true that Christ was weak when he was killed on the cross. But he lives now by God's power. And it is true that we are weak in Christ. But for you we will be alive in Christ by God's power.

⁵Look closely at yourselves. Test yourselves to see if you are living in the faith. You know that Christ Jesus is in you. But if you fail the test (*if you find that you are not living in the faith*), then Christ is not living in you. ⁶But I hope you will see that we have not failed the test. ⁷We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. It is not important that people see that we have passed the test. But it is important that you do what is right, even if people think that we have failed the test. ⁸We cannot do things that are against the truth. We can only do things that are for the truth. ⁹We are happy to be weak, if you are strong. And we pray that you will grow stronger and stronger. ¹⁰I am writing these things while I am not with you. I am writing so that when I come I will not have to use my power to punish you. The Lord gave me that power to use to make you stronger, not to destroy you.

¹¹Now, brothers and sisters, I say good-bye. Try to be perfect. Do the things I have asked you to do. Agree in your minds with each other, and live in peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹²Give each other a holy kiss when you greet each other. ¹³All of God's holy people say hello to you.

¹⁴The grace (*kindness*) of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship (*sharing*) of the Holy Spirit^a be with you all.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

^a"For ... true" Quote from Deut. 19:15.

Galatians

1 From Paul, an apostle.* I was not chosen to be an apostle by men. I was not sent from men. No! It was Jesus Christ and God the Father who made me an apostle. God is the One who raised Jesus from death.

²This letter is also from all the brothers in Christ, who are with me.

To the churches (*groups of believers*) in Galatia.*

³I pray that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ will be good to you and give you peace. 'Jesus gave himself for our sins. Jesus did this to free us from this evil world we live in. This is what God the Father wanted. 'The glory belongs to God forever and ever. Amen.

There Is Only One True Gospel

⁴A short time ago God called you to follow him. He called you through his grace (*kindness*) that came through Christ. But now I am amazed at you people! You are already turning away and believing a different gospel. 'Really, there is no other true gospel.* But some people are confusing you. They want to change the gospel of Christ. 'We told you the true gospel. So if we ourselves or even an angel from heaven tells you a different gospel, he should be condemned! 'I said this before. Now I say it again: You have already accepted the true

gospel. If any person tells you another way to be saved, he should be condemned!

⁵Now do you think I am trying to make people accept me? No! God is the One I am trying to please. Am I trying to please men? If I wanted to please men, I would not be a servant of Jesus Christ.

Paul's Authority Is from God

⁶Brothers, I want you to know that the gospel* I preached to you was not made by men. ⁷I did not get the gospel from men. No man taught me the gospel. Jesus Christ gave it to me. He showed me the gospel that I should tell people.

⁸You have heard about my past life. I was in the Jewish religion. I persecuted the church of God very much. I tried to destroy the church (*believers*). ⁹I was becoming a leader in the Jewish religion. I did better than most other Jews my own age. I tried harder than anyone else to follow the old rules. These rules were the customs we got from our ancestors.

¹⁰But God had special plans for me even before I was born. So God called me with his grace (*kindness*). God wanted me ¹¹to tell the Good News* about his Son (*Jesus*) to the non-Jewish people. So God showed (*taught*) me about his Son. When God called me, I did not get advice or help from any man. ¹²I did not go to see the apostles* in Jerusalem. These men were apostles before I was. But, without waiting, I went away to Arabia. Later I went back to the city of Damascus.

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

Galatia Probably the area where Paul began churches on his first missionary trip. See Acts 13 and 14.

gospel, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

¹⁸Three years later I went to Jerusalem; I wanted to meet Peter.* I stayed with Peter 15 days. ¹⁹I met no other apostles*—only James, the brother of the Lord (*Jesus*). ²⁰God knows that these things I write are not lies. ²¹Later I went to the areas of Syria and Cilicia.

²²In Judea the churches (*groups of believers*) in Christ had never met me before. ²³They had only heard this about me: "This man was persecuting us. But now he is telling people about the same faith that he once tried to destroy." ²⁴These believers praised God because of me.

The Other Apostles Accepted Paul

2 After 14 years, I went to Jerusalem again. I went with Barnabas, and I took Titus with me. ²I went because God showed me that I should go. I went to those men who were the leaders of the believers. When we were alone, I told these men the gospel* I preach to the non-Jewish people. I wanted these men to understand my work, so that my past work and the work I do now would not be wasted. ³Titus was with me. Titus is a Greek (*non-Jew*). But these leaders did not force even Titus to be circumcised.* We needed to talk about these problems, because some false brothers had come into our group secretly. They came in like spies to find out about the freedom we have in Christ Jesus. ⁴But we did not agree with anything those false brothers wanted! We wanted the truth of the gospel to continue for you.

⁵Those men who seemed to be important did not change the gospel* I preach. (It doesn't matter to me if they were "important" or not. To God all men are the same.) ⁶But these leaders saw that God had given me a special work, the same as Peter.* God gave Peter the

work of telling the Good News* to the Jews. But God gave me the work of telling the Good News to the non-Jewish people. ⁷God gave Peter the power to work as an apostle.* Peter is an apostle for the Jewish people. God gave me the power to work as an apostle too. But I am an apostle for the people who are not Jews. ⁸James, Peter, and John seemed to be the leaders. They saw that God had given me this special grace (*gift*). So they accepted Barnabas and me. Peter, James, and John said, "Paul and Barnabas, we agree that you should go to the people who are not Jews. We will go to the Jews." ⁹They asked us to do only one thing—to remember to help the poor people. And this was something that I really wanted to do.

Paul Shows that Peter Was Wrong

¹⁰Peter came to Antioch. He did something that was not right. I was against Peter, because he was wrong. ¹¹This is what happened: When Peter first came to Antioch, he ate and associated with the non-Jewish people. But then some Jewish men were sent from James. When these Jewish men came, Peter stopped eating with the non-Jewish people. Peter separated himself from the non-Jews. He was afraid of the Jews who believe that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised.* ¹²So Peter was a hypocrite.* The other Jewish believers joined with Peter. So they were hypocrites too. Even Barnabas was influenced by the things these Jewish believers did. ¹³I saw what these Jews did. They were not following the truth of the gospel.* So I spoke to Peter in a way that all the other Jews could hear what I said. This is what I said: "Peter, you are a Jew. But you don't live like a Jew. You live like the non-Jewish people. So why do you now force the non-Jewish people to live like Jews?"

¹⁴We Jews were not born as non-Jews and sinners. We were born as Jews. ¹⁵We know that a person is not made right with God by

Peter The text says "Cephas," the Jewish name for Peter. He was one of Jesus' twelve apostles.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

gospel, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

hypocrite(s) Bad people that act like they are good.

following the law.* No! It is trusting in Jesus Christ that makes a person right with God. So we have put our faith in Christ Jesus, because we wanted to be made right with God. And we are right with God because we trusted in Christ—not because we followed the law. (This is true, because no person can be made right with God by following the law.)

¹⁷We Jews came to Christ to be made right with God. So it is clear that we were sinners too. Does this mean that Christ makes us sinners? No! ¹⁸But I would really be wrong to begin teaching again those things (*the law*) that I gave up. ¹⁹I stopped living for the law. It was the law that killed me. I died to the law so that I can now live for God. I (*my old life*) was killed on the cross with Christ. ²⁰So the life that I live now is not really me—it is Christ living in me. I still live in my body, but I live by faith in the Son of God (*Jesus*). Jesus is the One who loved me. He gave himself to save me. ²¹This gift is from God, and it is very important to me. Why? Because if the law could make us right with God, then Christ did not have to die.

God's Blessing Comes Through Faith

3 You people in Galatia were told very clearly about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. But you were very foolish. You let someone trick you. ²Tell me this one thing: How did you receive the Holy Spirit*? Did you receive the Spirit by following the law*? No! You received the Spirit because you heard the Good News,* and believed it. ³You began your life in Christ, with the Spirit. Now do you try to continue it by your own power? That is foolish. ⁴You have experienced many things. Were all those experiences wasted? I hope they were not wasted! ⁵Does God give you the Spirit because you follow the law? No! Does God

work miracles* among you because you follow the law? No! God gives you his Spirit and works miracles among you because you heard the Good News, and believed it.

⁶The Scriptures* say, the same thing about Abraham. ⁷"Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham's faith. That made Abraham right with God."⁸ ⁹So you should know that the true children of Abraham are the people who have faith. ¹⁰The Scriptures told what would happen in the future. These writings said that God would make the non-Jewish people right through their faith. This Good News* was told to Abraham before, like the Scripture says: "God will use you, Abraham, to bless all the people on earth."¹¹ ¹²Abraham believed this. Because Abraham believed, he was blessed. (It is the same today.) All people who believe are blessed the same as Abraham was blessed. ¹³But people who depend on following the law to make them right, are under a curse. Why? Because the Scriptures* say, "A person must do all the things that are written in the law.* If he does not always obey, then that person is under a curse!" ¹⁴So it is clear that no person can be made right with God by the law. (The Scriptures say,) "The person who is right with God by faith will live forever."¹⁵ ¹⁶The law does not use faith; it uses a different way. The law says, "A person who wants to find life by following these things (*the law*) must do the things the law says."¹⁷ ¹⁸The law put a curse on us. But Christ took away that curse. He changed places with us. Christ put himself under that curse. It is written in the Scriptures, "When a person's body is put (*hung*) on a tree,* that person is under a curse."¹⁹ ²⁰Christ did this so that God's blessing could be given to all people. God promised this blessing to Abraham. The blessing comes through Jesus

Miracle(s) Powerful works or great things done by the power of God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Abraham ... God Quote from Gen. 15:6.

"God ... earth" Quote from Gen. 12:3.

put ... tree Deut. 21:22-23 says that when a person was killed for doing wrong, his body was hung on a tree to show shame. Paul means that the cross of Jesus was like that.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

gospel, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Christ. Jesus died, so that we could have the Holy Spirit* that God promised. We receive this promise by believing.

The Law and the Promise

"Brothers and sisters, let me give you an example: Think about an agreement that one person makes with another person. After that agreement is made official, no person can stop that agreement or add anything to it. And no person can ignore that agreement. "God made promises to Abraham* and his Descendant.* God did not say, "and to your descendants." That would mean many people. But God said, "and to your Descendant." That means only one person; that person is Christ. "This is what I mean: God gave an agreement to Abraham. God promised to do the things that he told Abraham. The law* came 430 years later. The law does not change God's promise to Abraham. "Can following the law give us the things God promised? No! If we could receive those things by following the law, then it is not God's promise that brings us those things. But God freely gave his blessings, to Abraham through the promise God made.

"So what was the law* for? The law was given to show the wrong things people do. The law continued until the special Descendant of Abraham came. God's promise was about this Descendant (Christ). The law was given through angels. The angels used Moses, for a mediator* to give the law to men. "But a mediator is not needed when there is only one side, and God is only one.

The Purpose of the Law of Moses

"Does this mean that the law* is against God's promises? No! If there was a law that could give men life, then we could be made

right by following the law. "But this is not true, because the Scriptures* showed that all people are bound by sin. Why did the Scriptures do this? So that the promise would be given to people through faith. The promise is given to people who believe in Jesus Christ.

"Before this faith came, we were all held prisoners by the law. We had no freedom until God showed us the way of faith that was coming. "So the law was our master until Christ came. After Christ came, we could be made right with God through faith. "Now the way of faith has come. So we don't live under the law now.

"You were all baptized* into Christ. So you were all clothed with Christ. This shows that you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. "Now, in Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek (non-Jew). There is no difference between slaves and free men. There is no difference between male and female. You are all the same in Christ Jesus. "You belong to Christ. So you are Abraham's* descendants. You get all of God's blessings because of the promise that God made to Abraham.

4 I want to tell you this: While the heir* is still a child, he is no different from a slave. It doesn't matter that the heir owns everything. Why? "Because while he is a child, he must obey the people who are chosen to care for him. But when the child reaches the age his father set, he is free. "It is the same for us. We were once like children. We were slaves to the useless rules of this world. "But when the right time came, God sent his Son. God's Son was born from a woman. God's Son lived under the law.* "God did this so that he could buy the freedom of the people who were under the law. God's purpose was to make us his children.

"You are God's children. That is why God

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Descendant Literally, "seed."

law The law of Moses.

mediator A person who helps one person talk to or give something to another person.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

baptized A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

heir A person who gets his father's things when his father dies.

sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts. The Spirit* cries out, "Father, dear Father."* "So now you are not a slave like before. You are God's child. God will give you the things he promised, because you are his child.

Paul's Love for the Galatian Christians

"In the past you did not know God. You were slaves to gods that were not real. "But now you know the true God. Really, it is God who knows you. So why do you turn back to those weak and useless rules you followed before? Do you want to be slaves to those things again? "You still follow the teaching of the law about special days, months, seasons, and years. "I am afraid for you. I fear that my work for you has been wasted.

"Brothers and sisters,, I was like you; so please become like me. You were very good to me before. "You remember why I came to you the first time. It was because I was sick. That was when I preached the Good News* to you. "My sickness was a burden to you. But you did not show hate for me. You did not make me leave. You welcomed me like I was an angel from God. You accepted me like I was Jesus Christ himself! "You were very happy then. Where is that joy now? I remember that you wanted to do anything possible to help me,. You would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if that were possible. "Now am I your enemy because I tell you the truth?

"Those people* are working hard to persuade you. But this is not good for you. Those people want to persuade you to turn against us. They want you to follow only them and no other people. "It is good for people to show interest in you, but only if their purpose is

good. This is always true. It is true when I am with you and when I am away. "My little children, again I feel pain for you like a mother feels when she gives birth. I will feel this until you truly become like Christ. "I wish I could be with you now. Then maybe I could change the way I am talking to you. Now I don't know what to do about you.

The Example of Hagar and Sarah

"Some of you people still want to be under the law of Moses,. Tell me, do you know what the law says? "The Scriptures* say that Abraham* had two sons. The mother of one son was a slave woman. The mother of the other son was a free woman. "Abraham's son from the slave woman was born in the normal human way. But the son from the free woman was born because of the promise God made to Abraham,.

"This true story makes a picture for us. The two women are like the two agreements (covenants) between God and men. One agreement is the law that God made on Mount Sinai.* The people who are under this agreement are like slaves. The mother named Hagar is like that agreement. "So Hagar is like Mount Sinai in Arabia. She is a picture of the earthly Jewish city of Jerusalem. This city is a slave, and all its people (the Jews) are slaves to the law,. "But the heavenly Jerusalem that is above is like the free woman. This is our mother. "It is written in the Scriptures*:

"Be happy, woman who cannot have children!
You never gave birth.
Shout and cry with joy!
You never felt the pain of giving birth.
The woman who is alone* will have more children than the woman who has a husband."

Isaiah 54:1

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Father, dear Father Literally, "Abba, Father." Jewish children called their fathers "Abba," a name that means "daddy."

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Those people The false teachers who were bothering the believers in Galatia (Gal. 1:7).

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Mount Sinai Mountain in Arabia where God gave his laws to Moses (Ex. 19 and 20).

woman ... alone This means her husband has left her.

²²"One son of Abraham,* was born in the normal way. Abraham's other son (*Isaac*) was born by the power of the Spirit,* because of God's promise. My brothers and sisters, you are also children of promise like Isaac was then. The son who was born in the normal way treated the other son (*Isaac*) badly. It is the same today. ²³But what does the Scripture* say? "Throw out the slave woman and her son! The son of the free woman will receive everything his father has. But the son of the slave woman will receive nothing."²⁴ ²⁵So, my brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman. We are children of the free woman.

Keep Your Freedom

5 We have freedom now. Christ made us free. So stand strong. Don't change and go back into the slavery of the law. ²Listen! I am Paul. I tell you that if you go back to the law, by being circumcised,* then Christ is no good for you. ³Again, I warn every man: If you allow yourselves to be circumcised, then you must follow all the law. ⁴If you try to be made right with God through the law, then your life with Christ is finished—you have left God's grace (*kindness*). ⁵But we hope to be made right with God through faith. We are waiting for this with the Spirit's help. ⁶When a person is in Christ Jesus, it is not important if he is circumcised or not. The important thing is faith—the kind of faith that works through love.

⁷You were running a good race. You were obeying the truth. Who persuaded you to stop following the true way? ⁸That persuasion does not come from the One (*God*) who chose you. ⁹Be careful! "Just a little yeast makes the whole batch of dough rise"—a small thing can make a big problem. ¹⁰I trust in the Lord that you will not believe those different ideas. Some

person is confusing you with those ideas. That person will be punished, whoever he is.

¹¹My brothers and sisters, I don't teach that people must be circumcised.* If I do teach circumcision,* then why am I still being persecuted? If I still taught that people must be circumcised, then my preaching about the cross would not be a problem. ¹²I wish those people who are bothering you would add castration* to their circumcision.

¹³My brothers and sisters, God called you to be free. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to do the things that please your sinful self. But serve each other with love. ¹⁴The whole law* is made complete in this one command: "Love other people like you love yourself."¹⁵ ¹⁶If you continue hurting each other and tearing each other apart, be careful! You will completely destroy each other.

The Spirit and Human Nature

¹⁷So I tell you: Live by following the Spirit.* Then you will not do the evil things your sinful selves want. ¹⁸Our sinful selves want things that are against the Spirit. The Spirit wants things that are against our sinful selves. These two different things are against each other. So you don't do the things you really want to do. ¹⁹But if you let the Spirit lead you, then you are not under the law.*

²⁰The wrong things our sinful self does are clear: being sexually unfaithful, not being pure, doing sexual sins, ²¹worshipping false gods, doing witchcraft,* hating, making trouble, having jealousy, being very angry, being selfish, making people mad at each other, making divisions, ²²having envy, being drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, and doing other things like this. I warn you now like I

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"Throw ... nothing" Quote from Gen. 21:10.

circumcised To receive the mark of circumcision.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

castration To cut off part of the male sex organs. Paul uses this word because it is like "circumcision." Paul shows that he is very upset with the false teachers.

law God's law. It is represented in the law of Moses.

"Love ... yourself" Quote from Lev. 19:18.

witchcraft Using magic or the power of Satan.

warned you before: The people who do these things will not be in God's kingdom. ²²But the Spirit* gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. There is no law that can say these things are wrong. ²⁴Those people who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified (*killed*) their own sinful selves. They have given up their old selfish feelings and the evil things they wanted to do. ²⁵We get our new life from the Spirit. So we should follow the Spirit. ²⁶We must not be vain (*conceited*). We must not make trouble with each other. And we must not be jealous of each other.

Help Each Other

6 Brothers and sisters,, a person in your group might do something wrong. You people who are spiritual should go to the person who is sinning. You should help to make him right again. You should do this in a gentle way. But be careful! You might be tempted to sin, too. ²Help each other with your troubles. When you do this, you truly obey the law of Christ. ³If a person thinks that he is important when he is really not important, he is only fooling himself. ⁴A person should not compare himself with other people. Each person should judge his own actions. Then he can be proud for what he himself has done. ⁵Each person must accept his own responsibility.

⁶The person who is learning the teaching of God should share all the good things he has with the person who is teaching him.

Life Is Like Planting a Field

⁷Don't be fooled: You cannot cheat God. A person harvests only the things he plants.* ⁸If a person plants (*lives*) to satisfy his sinful self, then his sinful self will bring him eternal death.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does the work of God among people in the world.

harvests ... plants Paul uses these words about farming to show that life is like a farmer planting a field. A farmer will get from the field only what he plants.

But if a person plants to please the Spirit,* he will get eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life, at the right time. We must not give up! ¹⁰When we have the opportunity to do good to any person, we should do it. But we should give special attention to the people that are in the family of believers (*the church*).

Paul Ends His Letter

¹¹I am writing this myself. See what big letters I use. ¹²Some men are trying to force you to be circumcised.* They do these things so that other people (*the Jews*) will accept them. Those men fear that they will be persecuted if they follow only the cross of Christ* (*the gospel*). ¹³Those men who are circumcised don't obey the law* themselves. But they want you to be circumcised. Then they can boast about what they forced you to do. ¹⁴I hope I will never boast about things like that. The cross (*death*) of our Lord Jesus Christ is my only reason for boasting. Through Jesus' death on the cross the world is dead* to me; and I am dead to the world. ¹⁵It is not important if a person is circumcised or not circumcised. The important thing is being the new people God has made. ¹⁶Peace and mercy to the people who follow this rule—to all of God's people.

¹⁷So don't give me any more trouble. I have scars on my body. These scars show* that I belong to Christ Jesus.

¹⁸My brothers and sisters,, I pray that the grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus Christ will be with your spirits. Amen.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

cross of Christ Paul uses the cross as a picture of the gospel, the story of Christ's death to pay for men's sins.

law The law of Moses.

is dead Literally, "has been crucified."

These scars show Many times Paul was beaten by people who were against him because he was teaching about Christ. The scars were from these beatings.

Ephesians

1 From Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

To God's holy people* living in Ephesus, believers in Christ Jesus.

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ, God has given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. ⁴In Christ, God chose us before the world was made. God chose us in love to be his holy people*—people without blame before him. ⁵And before the world was made, God decided to make us his own children through Jesus Christ. That was what God wanted to do. That pleased him. ⁶And this brings praise to God because of his wonderful grace (*kindness*). God gave that grace to us freely. He gave us that grace in Christ, the One he loves. ⁷In Christ we are made free by Christ's blood (*death*). We have forgiveness of sins because of God's rich grace. ⁸God gave us that grace fully and freely. God, with full wisdom and understanding, ⁹let us know his secret plan. This was what God wanted. And he planned to do it through Christ. ¹⁰God's goal was to finish his plan when the right time came. God planned that all things in heaven and on earth be joined together with Christ as the head.

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

holy people God's people are called *holy* because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

¹¹In Christ we were chosen to be God's people. God had already planned for us to be his people, because that is what God wanted. And God is the One who makes everything agree with what he decides and wants. ¹²We are the first people who hoped in Christ. And we were chosen so that we would bring praise to God's glory. ¹³It is the same with you people. You heard the true teaching—the Good News* about your salvation. When you heard that Good News, you believed in Christ. And in Christ, God put his special mark on you by giving you the Holy Spirit* that he promised. ¹⁴That Holy Spirit is the guarantee that we will get the things God promised for his people. This will bring full freedom to those people who belong to God. The goal of all this is to bring praise to God's glory.

Paul's Prayer

¹⁵⁻¹⁶That is why I always remember you in my prayers and always thank God for you. I have always done this since the time I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people. ¹⁷I always pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ—to the glorious Father. I pray that he will give you a spirit that will make you wise with the knowledge of God—the knowledge that he has shown you. ¹⁸I pray that you will have greater understanding in your

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

heart. Then you will know the hope that God has chosen us to have. You will know that the blessings God has promised his holy people* are rich and glorious. ¹⁹And you will know that God's power is very great for us who believe. That power is the same as the great strength ²⁰that God used to raise Christ from death. God put Christ at his right side in the heavenly places. ²¹God made Christ more important than all rulers, authorities, powers, and kings. Christ is more important than anything that has power in this world or in the next world. ²²God put everything under Christ's power. And God gave him to be the head (*ruler*) over everything for the church. ²³The church is Christ's body. The church is filled with Christ. He makes everything complete in every way.

From Death to Life

2 In the past your spiritual lives were dead because of your sins and the things you did wrong against God. ²Yes, in the past you lived doing those sins. You lived the way the world lives. You followed the ruler of the evil powers over the earth. That same spirit is now working in those people who refuse to obey God. ³In the past all of us lived like those people. We lived trying to please our sinful selves. We did all the things our bodies and minds wanted. We were *evil* people. We should have suffered God's anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

⁴But God's mercy is very great, and God loved us very much. ⁵We were *spiritually* dead. We were dead because of the things we did wrong against God. But God gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God's grace (*kindness*). ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavenly places. God did this for us who are in Christ Jesus. ⁷God did this so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace. God shows that grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸I mean that you are saved by grace. And you got that grace by believing.

holy people God's people are called *holy* because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

You did not save yourselves. It was a gift from God. ⁹No! You are not saved by the things you have done. So no person can boast that he saved himself. ¹⁰God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would do good things. God had already planned those good things for us. God had planned for us to live our lives doing those good things.

One In Christ

¹¹You were born non-Jews. You are the people the Jews call "uncircumcised.*" Those Jews who call you "uncircumcised" call themselves "circumcised.*" (Their circumcision* is only something they themselves do on their bodies.) ¹²Remember that in the past you were without Christ. You were not citizens of Israel.* And you did not have the agreements* with the promise (that God made to his people). You had no hope, and you did not know God. ¹³Yes, at one time you were far away from God. But now in Christ Jesus you are brought near to him. You are brought near to God, through the blood (*death*) of Christ. ¹⁴Because of Christ we now have peace. Christ made us both (*Jews and non-Jews*) one people. The Jews and the non-Jews were separated like there was a wall between them. They hated each other. But Christ broke down that wall of hate by giving his own body. ¹⁵The Jewish law had many commandments and rules. But Christ ended that law. Christ's purpose was to make the two groups of people (*Jew and non-Jew*) become one new people in him. By doing this Christ would make peace. ¹⁶Through the cross Christ ended the hate between the two groups. And after the two groups became one body, Christ

uncircumcised People not having the mark of circumcision like the Jews have.

circumcised People having the mark of circumcision.

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

agreements The agreements that God gave to his people, in the Old Testament.

wanted to bring them both back to God. Christ did this with his death on the cross. ¹³Christ came and preached peace to you people (*non-Jews*) who were far away from God. And he preached peace to the people (*Jews*) who were near to God. ¹⁴Yes, through Christ we all have the right to come to the Father in one Spirit.*

¹⁵So now you (*non-Jews*) are not visitors or strangers. Now you are citizens together with God's holy people.* You belong to God's family. ¹⁶You believers are like a building that God owns. That building was built on the foundation that the apostles* and prophets* prepared. Christ himself is the most important stone* in that building. ¹⁷That whole building is joined together in Christ. And Christ makes it grow and become a holy temple* in the Lord. ¹⁸And in Christ you people are being built together with the other people (*the Jews*). You are being made into a place where God lives through the Spirit.*

Paul's Work for the Gentiles

3 So I (*Paul*) am a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am a prisoner for you people who are not Jews. ²Surely you know that God gave me this work through his grace (*kindness*). God gave me this work to help you. ³God let me know his secret plan. He showed it to me. I have already written a little about this. ⁴And if you read these things I wrote, then you can see that I truly understand the secret truth about the Christ. ⁵People who lived in other times were not told that secret truth. But now, through the Spirit,* God has shown that secret truth to his holy apostles* and prophets.* ⁶This is that secret truth: that the non-Jews will get the

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holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

prophets People who spoke for God.

most important stone Literally, "cornerstone." The first and most important rock in a building.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship him. Here it means that God lives in his people.

things God has for his people, the same as the Jews. The non-Jews are together with the Jews in the same body. And they share together in the promise that God made in Christ Jesus. The non-Jews have all these things because of the Good News.*

⁷By God's special gift of grace (*kindness*), I became a servant to tell that Good News.* God gave me that grace by using his power. ⁸I am the least important of all of God's people. But God gave me this gift—to tell the non-Jewish people the Good News about the riches Christ has. Those riches are too great to understand fully. ⁹And God gave me the work of telling all people about the plan for God's secret truth. That secret truth has been hidden in God since the beginning of time. God is the One who created everything. ¹⁰God's purpose was that all the rulers and powers in the heavenly places will now know the many different ways God shows his wisdom. They will know this because of the church.* ¹¹This agrees with the plan God had since the beginning of time. God did what he planned. He did it through Christ Jesus our Lord. ¹²In Christ we can come before God with freedom and without fear. We can do this through faith in Christ. ¹³So I ask you not to become discouraged and lose hope, because of the sufferings I am having for you. My sufferings bring honor to you.

The Love of Christ

¹⁴So I bow in prayer before the Father. ¹⁵Every family in heaven and on earth gets its true name from him. ¹⁶I ask the Father with his great glory to give you the power to be strong in your spirits. He will give you that strength through his Spirit.* ¹⁷I pray that Christ will live in your hearts because of your faith. I pray that your life will be strong in love and be built on love. ¹⁸And I pray that you and all God's holy people* will have the power to understand the greatness of Christ's love. I pray that you can understand how wide and how long and how

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

church God's church—his people in Christ.

high and how deep that love is. ¹⁰Christ's love is greater than any person can ever know. But I pray that you will be able to know that love. Then you can be filled with the fullness of God.

¹¹With God's power working in us, God can do much, much more than anything we can ask or think of. ¹²To him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever. Amen.

The Unity of the Body

4 I am in prison because I belong to the Lord. And God chose you to be his people. I tell you now to live the way God's people should live. ¹Always be humble and gentle. Be patient and accept each other with love. ²You are joined together with peace through the Spirit.* Do all you can to continue together in this way. Let peace hold you together. ³There is one body and one Spirit. And God called you to have one hope. ⁴There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.* ⁵There is one God and Father of everything. He rules everything. He is everywhere and in everything.

⁶Christ gave each one of us a special gift. Each person received what Christ wanted to give that person. ⁷That is why it says in the Scriptures, *

"He went up high into the sky;
he took prisoners with him,
and he gave gifts to people."

Palm 68:18

⁸When it says, "He went up," what does it mean? It means that he first came down low to earth. ⁹So Jesus came down, and he is the same One who went up. He went up above all the sky. Christ did that to fill everything with himself. ¹⁰And that same Christ gave gifts to people—he made some people to be apostles,*

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

some people to be prophets,* some people to go and tell the Good News,* and some people to have the work of caring for and teaching God's people. ¹¹Christ gave those gifts to prepare God's holy people* for the work of serving. He gave those gifts to make the body of Christ stronger. ¹²This work must continue, until we are all joined together in the same faith and in the same knowledge about the Son of God. We must become like a mature (*perfect*) person—we must grow until we become like Christ and have all his perfection.

¹³Then we will not still be babies. We will not be people who change like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced (*changed*) by every new teaching we hear from men who try to fool us. Those men make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong way. ¹⁴No! We will speak the truth with love. We will grow to be like Christ in every way. Christ is the head, and we are the body. ¹⁵The whole body depends on Christ. And all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part of the body does its own work. And this makes the whole body grow and be strong with love.

The Way You Should Live

¹For the Lord I tell you this. I warn you: Don't continue living like those people who don't believe. Their thoughts are worth nothing. ²Those people don't understand. They know nothing, because they refuse to listen. So they cannot have the life that God gives. ³They have lost their feeling of shame. And they use their lives for doing evil. More and more they want to do all kinds of bad things. ⁴But the things you learned in Christ were not like those bad things. ⁵I know that you heard about him. And you are in him, so you were taught the truth. Yes, the truth is in Jesus. ⁶You were taught to leave your old self—to stop living the evil way you lived before. That old self

prophets People who spoke for God to God's people.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

becomes worse and worse, because people are fooled by the evil things they want to do. ²But you were taught to be made new in your hearts. ³You were taught to become a new person. That new person is made to be like God—made to be truly good and holy.*

⁴So you must stop telling lies. You must always speak the truth to each other, because we all belong to each other in the same body. ⁵When you become angry, don't let that anger make you sin. And don't continue to be angry all day. ⁶Don't give the devil a way to defeat you. ⁷If a person is stealing, he must stop stealing. That person must start working. He must use his hands for doing something good. Then he will have something to share with those people who are poor.

⁸When you talk, don't say any bad things. But say things that people need—things that will help other people become stronger. Then the things you say will help the people who listen to you. ⁹And don't make the Holy Spirit* sad. The Spirit is God's proof that you belong to God. God gave you that Spirit to show that God will make you free at the right time. ¹⁰Never be bitter or angry or mad. Never shout angrily or say things to hurt other people. Never do anything evil. ¹¹Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other the same as God forgave you in Christ.

5 You are God's children that he loves. So try to be like God. ²Live a life of love. Love other people the same as Christ loved us. Christ gave himself for us—he was a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice* to God.

³But there must be no sexual sin among you. There must not be any kind of evil or greed (*selfishness*). Why? Because those things are not right for God's holy people.* ⁴Also, there must be no evil talk among you. You must not speak foolishly or tell evil jokes. These things

are not right for you. But you should be giving thanks to God. ⁵You can be sure of this: No person will have a place in the kingdom of Christ and of God if that person does sexual sins, or does evil things, or is a person who always wants more and more for himself. A person who always wants more and more for himself is serving a false god.

⁶Don't let any person fool you by telling you things that are not true. Those evil things make God angry with the people who don't obey. ⁷So don't do those things with them. ⁸In the past you were full of darkness (*sin*), but now you are full of light (*goodness*) in the Lord. So live like children who belong to the light. ⁹Light brings every kind of goodness, right living, and truth. ¹⁰Try to learn what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Don't do the things that people in darkness do. Doing those things brings nothing good. But do the good things to show that those things in darkness are wrong. ¹²It is really very shameful to even talk about the things those people in darkness do in secret. ¹³But when we show that those things are wrong, the light makes all those things easy to see. ¹⁴And everything that is made easy to see can become light. This is why we say:

“Wake up, you sleeping person!
Rise from death,
and Christ will shine on you.”

¹⁵So be very careful how you live. Don't live like people who are not wise. But live wisely. ¹⁶I mean that you should use every chance you have for doing good, because these are evil times. ¹⁷So don't be foolish with your lives. But learn what the Lord wants you to do. ¹⁸Don't be drunk with wine. That will ruin (*destroy*) you spiritually. But be filled with the Spirit.* ¹⁹Communicate to each other with psalms, hymns and, spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord. ²⁰Always give thanks to God the Father for everything. Give him thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

holy A holy person is pure, belongs only to God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Wives and Husbands

¹Be willing to obey each other. Do this because you respect Christ.

²Wives, be under the authority of (*obey*) your husbands, the same as the Lord. ³The husband is the head of the wife, the same as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body—Christ is the Savior of the body. ⁴The church is under the authority of Christ. So it is the same with you wives. You should be under the authority of your husbands in everything.

⁵Husbands, love your wives the same as Christ loved the church. Christ died for the church. ⁶He died to make the church holy.* Christ used the telling of the Good News* to make the church clean by washing it with water. ⁷Christ died so that he could give the church to himself, like a bride, full of glory (*beauty*). He died so that the church could be pure and without fault, with no evil or sin or any other thing wrong in the church. ⁸And husbands should love their wives like that. They should love their wives like they love their own bodies. The man who loves his wife loves himself. ⁹Why? Because no person ever hates his own body. Every person feeds and takes care of his body. And that is what Christ does for the church, ¹⁰because we are parts of his body. ¹¹The Scripture* says, "So a man will leave his father and mother and join his wife. And the two people will become one."¹²That secret truth is very important—I am talking about Christ and the church. ¹³But each one of you must love his wife like he loves himself. And a wife must respect her husband.

Children and Parents

6 Children, obey your parents the way the Lord wants. That is the right thing to do. ²The commandment says, "You must honor

holy God's people are holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"So ... one" Quote from Gen. 2:24.

(*respect*) your father and mother."³ That is the first commandment that has a promise with it. ⁴That promise is: "Then everything will be fine with you. And you will have a long life on the earth."⁵

⁶Fathers, don't make your children angry. But raise your children with the training and teaching of the Lord.

Slaves and Masters

¹Slaves, obey your masters here on earth. Obey with fear and respect. And do that with a heart that is true, the same as you obey Christ. ²You must do more than just obey your masters to please them while they are watching you. You must obey them like you are obeying Christ. With all your heart you must do what God wants. ³Do your work, and be happy to do it. Work like you are serving the Lord, not like you are serving only men. ⁴Remember that the Lord will give every person a reward for doing good. Every person, slave or free, will get a reward for the good things he does.

⁵Masters, in the same way, be good to your slaves. Don't say things to scare them. You know that the One who is your Master and their Master is in heaven. And that Master (*God*) judges every person the same.

Wear the Full Armor of God

¹To end my letter I tell you, be strong in the Lord and in his great power. ²Wear the full armor (*protection*) of God. Wear God's armor so that you can fight against the devil's evil tricks. ³Our fight is not against people on earth. We are fighting against the rulers and authorities and the powers of this world's darkness. We are fighting against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places. ⁴That is why you need to get God's full armor. Then on the day of evil you will be able to stand strong. And when you have finished the whole fight, you will still be standing. ⁵So stand strong, with the belt of truth tied around your waist.

"You must ... mother" Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

"Then ... earth" Quote from Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16.

of truth tied around your waist. And on your chest wear the protection of right living. ¹⁵And on your feet wear the Good News* of peace to help you stand strong. ¹⁶And also use the shield of faith. With that you can stop all the burning arrows of the Evil One (*the devil*). ¹⁷Accept God's salvation to be your helmet. And take the sword of the Spirit*—that sword is the teaching of God. ¹⁸Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need. To do this you must always be ready. Never give up. Always pray for all God's people.

¹⁹Also pray for me. Pray that when I speak, God will give me words so that I can tell the secret truth of the gospel* without fear. ²⁰I have the work of speaking for that gospel. I am

doing that now, here in prison. Pray that when I preach that gospel I will speak without fear like I should.

Final Greetings

²¹I am sending to you Tychicus, our brother that we love. He is a faithful servant of the Lord's work. He will tell you everything that is happening with me. Then you will know how I am and what I am doing. ²²That is why I am sending him. I want you to know how we are. I am sending him to encourage you.

²³Peace and love with faith to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴God's grace (*kindness*) to all of you who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love that never ends.

gospel, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Philippians

1 From Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ.

To all of God's holy people* in Christ Jesus that live in Philippi. And to all your elders* and special helpers.*

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Prayer

³I thank God every time I remember you. ⁴And I always pray for all of you with joy. ⁵I thank God for the help you gave me while I told people the Good News.* You helped from the first day you believed until now. ⁶God began doing good things with you. And God is continuing that work in you. God will finish that work in you when Jesus Christ comes again. I am sure of that.

⁷And I know that I am right to think like this about all of you. I am sure because I have you in my heart—I feel very close to you. I feel close to you because all of you share in God's grace (*kindness*) with me. You share in God's grace with me while I am in prison, while I am defending the Good News,* and while I am proving the truth of the Good News. ⁸God

knows that I want to see you very much. I love all of you with the love of Christ Jesus.

⁹This is my prayer for you:

that your love will grow more and more; that you will have knowledge and understanding with your love;

¹⁰ that you will see the difference between good and bad and choose the good; that you will be pure and without wrong for the coming of Christ;

¹¹ that you will do many good things with the help of Christ to bring glory and praise to God.

Paul's Troubles Help the Lord's Work

¹²Brothers and sisters,, I want you to know that those bad things that happened to me have helped to spread the Good News.* ¹³It is clear why I am in prison. I am in prison because I am a believer in Christ. All the guards know this, and so do all the other people. ¹⁴I am still in prison, but most of the believers feel better about it now. And so they are much braver about telling people the message* about Christ.

¹⁵Some people preach about Christ because they are jealous and bitter. Other people preach about Christ because they want to help. ¹⁶These people preach because they have love. They know that God gave me the work of defending the Good News.* ¹⁷But those other people preach about Christ because they are selfish. Their reason for preaching is wrong. They want to make trouble for me in prison.

message Same as Good News.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

special helpers Literally, "deacons," a Greek word meaning "servants." These people, it seems, were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

"I don't care if they make trouble for me. The important thing is that they are telling people about Christ. I want them to tell people about Christ. They should do it for the right reasons. But I am happy even if they do it for false and wrong reasons. I am happy because they tell people about Christ, and I will continue to be happy. ¹⁵You are praying for me, and the Spirit* of Jesus Christ helps me. So I know that this trouble will bring my freedom. ¹⁶The thing I want and hope for is that I will not fail Christ in anything. I hope that I will have the courage now, like always, to show the greatness of Christ in my life here on earth. I want to do that if I die or if I live. ¹⁷I mean that to me the only important thing about living is Christ. And even death would be profit for me.* ¹⁸If I continue living in the body, then I will be able to work for the Lord. But what would I choose—living or dying? I don't know. ¹⁹It is hard to choose between living or dying. I want to leave this life and be with Christ. That is much better. ²⁰But you people need me here in my body. ²¹I know that you need me. And so I know that I will stay with you. I will help you grow and have joy in your faith. ²²You will be very happy in Christ Jesus when I am with you again.

²³Be sure that you live in a way that fits the Good News* of Christ. Then if I come and visit you or if I am away from you, I will hear good things about you. I will hear that you continue strong with the same purpose and work together like a team for the faith (*truth*) that comes from the Good News. ²⁴And you will not be afraid of those people who are against you. All of these things are proof from God that you are being saved and that your enemies will be lost. ²⁵God gave you the honor of believing in Christ. But that is not all. God also gave you the honor of suffering for Christ. Both these

things bring glory to Christ. ²⁶When I was with you, you saw the struggles I had with people who were against the gospel. And now you hear about the struggles I am having. You yourselves are having the same kind of struggles.

Be United and Care for Each Other

2 Is there any way in Christ that I can ask you to do something? Does your love make you want to comfort me? Do we share together in the Spirit*? Do you have mercy and kindness? ²If you have these things, then I ask you to do something for me. This will make me very happy. I ask that all your minds be joined together by believing the same things. Be joined together in your love for each other. Live together by agreeing with each other and having the same goals. ³When you do things, don't let selfishness or pride be your guide. Be humble and give more honor to other people than to yourselves. ⁴Don't be interested only in your own life, but be interested in the lives of other people, too.

Learn from Christ to be Unselfish

⁵In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus.

⁶Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep.

⁷He gave up his place with God and agreed to be like a servant. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. ⁸And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused him to die. And he died on a cross.

⁹Christ obeyed God, so God raised Christ to the most important place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. ¹⁰God did this because he wants every person to bow for the name of Jesus. Every person in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth will bow. ¹¹Every person will confess (*say*). "Jesus Christ is Lord (*Master*)."¹² When they say this, it will bring glory to God the Father.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

death ... me Paul says that death would be better, because death would bring him nearer to Christ.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Be the People God Wants You to Be

¹²My dear friends, you have always obeyed. You obeyed God when I was with you. It is even more important that you obey now while I am not with you. Without my help you must make sure that you get your salvation. Do this with respect and fear for God. ¹³Yes, God is working in you. God helps you want to do the things that please him. And he gives you the power to do these things.

¹⁴Do everything without complaining or arguing. ¹⁵Then you will be innocent and without anything wrong in you. You will be God's children without fault. But you are living with evil people all around you who have become very bad. Among those people you shine like lights in the dark world. ¹⁶You offer those people the teaching that gives life. So I can be happy when Christ comes again. I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran in the race and won.

¹⁷Your faith makes you give your lives as a sacrifice* in serving God. Maybe I will have to offer my own blood (*death*) with your sacrifice. But if that happens, I will be happy and full of joy with all of you. ¹⁸You also should be happy and full of joy with me.

News About Timothy and Epaphroditus

¹⁹I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon. I will be happy to learn how you are. ²⁰I have no other person like Timothy. He truly cares for you. ²¹Other people are interested only in their own lives. They are not interested in the work of Christ Jesus. ²²You know the kind of person Timothy is. You know that he has served with me in telling the Good News* like a son serves his father. ²³I plan to send him to you quickly. I will send him when I know what will happen to me. ²⁴I am sure that the Lord will help me to come to you soon.

²⁵Epaphroditus is my brother in Christ. He works and serves with me in the army of Christ. When I needed help, you sent him to

me. I think now that I must send him back to you. ²⁶I send him because he wants very much to see all of you. He is worried because you heard that he was sick. ²⁷He was sick and was near death. But God helped him and me too, so that I would not have more sadness. ²⁸So I want very much to send him to you. When you see him, you can be happy. And I can stop worrying about you. ²⁹Welcome him in the Lord with much joy. Give honor to people like Epaphroditus. ³⁰He should be honored because he almost died for the work of Christ. He put his life in danger so that he could help me. This was help that you could not give me.

Christ Is More Important Than Anything

3 My brothers and sisters, be happy in the Lord. It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it will help you to be more ready. ²Be careful of those people who do evil. They are like dogs. They demand to cut* the body. ³But we are the people who are truly circumcised.* We worship (*serve*) God through his Spirit.* We are proud to be in Christ Jesus. And we don't trust in ourselves or anything we can do. ⁴Even if I am able to trust in myself, still I don't trust in myself. If any other person thinks that he has a reason to trust in himself, then he should know that I have a greater reason for trusting in myself. ⁵I was circumcised eight days after my birth. I am from the people of Israel* and the family group of Benjamin. I am a Hebrew (*Jew*), and my parents were Hebrews. The law of Moses was very important to me. That is why I became a Pharisee.* ⁶I was so excited about my Jewish religion, that I persecuted* the church (*the*

cut The word in Greek is like the word "circumcise," but it means "to cut completely off."

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

Pharisee Pharisees were a Jewish religious group that claimed to follow carefully all Jewish laws and customs.

persecuted To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

believers). No person could find fault with the way I always obeyed the law of Moses. ⁷At one time all these things were important to me. But now I think those things are worth nothing because of Christ. ⁸Not only those things, but I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of Christ, I lost all those things I thought were important. And now I know that all those things are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ. ⁹It allows me to be in Christ. In Christ, I am right with God and this being right does not come from my following the law. It comes from God through faith. God uses my faith in Christ to make me right with him. ¹⁰All I want is to know Christ and the power of his rising from death. I want to share in Christ's sufferings and become like him in his death. ¹¹If I have those things, then I have hope that I myself will be raised from death.

Trying to Reach the Goal

¹²I don't mean that I am already exactly like God wants me to be. I have not yet reached that goal. But I continue trying to reach that goal and to make it mine. Christ wants me to do that. That is the reason Christ made me his. ¹³Brothers and sisters, I know that I have not yet reached that goal. But there is one thing I always do: I forget the things that are past. I try as hard as I can to reach the goal that is before me. ¹⁴I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above.

¹⁵All of us who have grown spiritually to be mature (*perfect*) should think this way too. And if there is any of these things you don't agree with, God will make it clear to you. ¹⁶But we should continue following the truth, we already have.

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, all of you should try to live like me. And copy those people who live the way we showed you. ¹⁸Many people live like enemies of the cross of Christ. I have often told you about these people. And it makes me cry to tell you about them now. ¹⁹The way these people live is leading them to destruction. They

don't serve God. Those people live only to please themselves. They do shameful things, and they are proud of those things. They think only about earthly things. ²⁰But our homeland is in heaven. We are waiting for our Savior to come from heaven. Our Savior is the Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹He will change our humble bodies and make them like his own glorious body. Christ can do this by his power. With that power Christ is able to rule all things.

Some Things to Do

4 My dear brothers and sisters, I love you and want to see you. You bring me joy and make me proud of you. Continue following the Lord like I have told you.

¹I ask Euodia and Syntyche to agree in the Lord. ²And because you serve faithfully with me, my friend, I ask you to help these women do this. These women served with me in telling people the Good News.* They served together with Clement and the other people who worked with me. Their names are written in the book of life.*

³Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy.

⁴Let all people see that you are gentle and kind. The Lord is coming soon. ⁵Don't worry about anything. But pray and ask God for everything you need. And when you pray, always give thanks. ⁶And God's peace will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. That peace which God gives is so great that we cannot understand it.

⁷Brothers and sisters, continue to think about the things that are good and worthy of praise. Think about the things that are true and honorable and right and pure and beautiful and respected. ⁸And do the things that you learned and received from me. Do the things I told you and the things you saw me do. And the God who gives peace will be with you.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

book of life God's book that has the names of all God's chosen people (Revelation 3:5; 21:27).

Paul Thanks the Philippian Christians

¹⁰I am very happy in the Lord that you have shown your care for me again. You continued to care about me, but there was no way for you to show it. ¹¹I am telling you these things, but it is not because I need something. I have learned to be satisfied with the things I have and with everything that happens. ¹²I know how to live when I am poor. And I know how to live when I have plenty. I have learned the secret of being happy at any time in everything that happens. I have learned to be happy when I have enough to eat and when I don't have enough to eat. I have learned to be happy when I have all the things I need and when I don't have the things I need. ¹³I can do all things through Christ, because he gives me strength.

¹⁴But it was good that you helped me when I needed help. ¹⁵You people in Philippi remember when I first preached the Good News* there. When I left Macedonia, you were

the only church that gave me help. ¹⁶Several times you sent me things I needed when I was in Thessalonica. ¹⁷Really, it is not that I want to get gifts from you. But I want you to have the good that comes from giving. ¹⁸I have all the things I need. I have even more than I need. I have all I need because Epaphroditus brought your gift to me. Your gift is like a sweet-smelling sacrifice* offered to God. God accepts that sacrifice and it pleases him. ¹⁹My God is very rich with the glory of Christ Jesus. God will use his riches in Christ Jesus to give you everything you need. ²⁰Glory to our God and Father forever and ever. Amen.

²¹Say hello to each of God's people in Christ. God's people who are with me say hello to you. ²²All of God's people say hello to you. And those believers from Caesar's* palace say hello, too.

²³The grace (*kindness*) of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

sacrifice An offering or gift to God.

Caesar The name or title given to the emperor (ruler) of Rome.

Colossians

1 From Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because that is what God wanted.

Also from Timothy, our brother in Christ.

²To the holy* and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ that live in Colossae. Grace (*kindness*) and peace from God our Father.

³In our prayers we always thank God for you. God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴We thank God because we have heard about the faith you have in Christ Jesus and the love you have for all of God's people. ⁵You have faith in Christ and love God's people because of the hope you have. You know that the things you hope for are saved for you in heaven. You learned about this hope when you heard the true teaching, the Good News* that was told to you. Everywhere in the world that Good News is bringing blessings and growing. This same thing has happened with you since the time you heard that Good News and understood the truth about the grace (*kindness*) of God. ⁷You learned about the grace of God from Epaphras. Epaphras works together with us, and we love him. He is a faithful servant of Christ for us. ⁸Epaphras also told us about the love you have from the Holy Spirit.*

⁹Since the day we heard these things about you, we have continued praying for you. We pray these things for you:

- that you will know fully the things that God wants;
- that with your knowledge you will also have great wisdom and understanding in spiritual things;
- ¹⁰ that you will use these things to live in a way that brings honor to the Lord and pleases him in every way;
- that you will do all kinds of good things and grow in the knowledge of God;
- ¹¹ that God will strengthen you with his own great power;
- that God will strengthen you so that you will not quit when troubles come, and so that you will be patient and happy.

¹²Then you can give thanks to the Father. He has made you able to have the things he prepared for you. He has prepared these things for all his people who live in the light (*good*). ¹³God made us free from the power of darkness (*evil*). And he brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son (*Jesus*). ¹⁴The Son paid for our sins. In him we have forgiveness of our sins.

When We Look at Christ, We See God

¹⁵No person can see God. But Jesus is exactly like God. Jesus is ruler over all the things that have been made. ¹⁶Through his power all things were made—things in heaven and on earth, things seen and not seen, all

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

spiritual, powers, authorities, lords, and rulers. All things were made through Christ and for Christ. ²⁷Christ was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him. ²⁸Christ is the head of the body. (The body is the church.) Everything comes from him. And he is the Lord* who was raised from death. So in all things Jesus is most important. ²⁹God was pleased for all of himself to live in Christ. ³⁰And through Christ, God was happy to bring all things back to himself again—things on earth and things in heaven. God made peace by using Christ's blood (*death*) on the cross.

³¹At one time you were separated from God. You were God's enemies in your minds, because the evil things you did were against God. ³²But now Christ has made you God's friends again. Christ did this by his death while he was in his body. Christ did this so that he could bring you before God. He brings you before God as people who are holy,* with no wrong in you, and with nothing that God can judge you guilty of. ³³Christ will do this if you continue to believe in the Good News* you heard. You must continue strong and sure in your faith. You must not be moved away from the hope that Good News gave you. That same Good News has been told to all people in the world. I, Paul, help in telling that Good News.

Paul's Work for the Church

¹I am happy in my sufferings for you. There are many things that Christ must still suffer through his body, the church. I am accepting my part of these things that must be suffered. I accept these sufferings in my body. I suffer for his body, the church. ²I became a servant of the church because God gave me a special work to do. This work helps you. My work is to tell fully the teaching of God. ³This teaching is the secret truth that was hidden since the beginning of time. This truth was hidden from all people. But now that secret truth is made

known to God's holy people.* ⁴God decided to let his people know that rich and glorious truth. That great truth is for all people. That truth is Christ himself, who is in you. He is our only hope for glory. ⁵So we continue to tell people about Christ. We use all wisdom to strengthen every person and teach every person. We are trying to bring all people before God as people who have grown to be spiritually mature (*perfect*) in Christ. ⁶To do this, I work and struggle using the great strength that Christ gives me. That strength is working in my life.

2 I want you to know that I am trying very hard to help you. And I am trying to help the people in Laodicea and other people who have never seen me. ¹I want them to be strengthened and joined together with love. I want them to be rich in the strong belief that comes from understanding. I mean I want you to know fully the secret truth that God has made known. That truth is Christ himself. ²In Christ all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are safely kept.

³I tell you these things so that no person can fool you by telling you ideas that seem good, but are false. ⁴I am not there with you, but my heart is with you. I am happy to see your good lives and your strong faith in Christ.

Continue to Live in Christ

¹You received Christ Jesus the Lord. So continue to live following him without changing anything. ²You must depend on Christ only. Life and strength come from him. You were taught the truth. You must continue to be sure of that true teaching. And always be thankful.

³Be sure that no person leads you away with false ideas and words that mean nothing. Those ideas come from people, not Christ. Those ideas are the worthless ideas of people in the world. ⁴All of God lives in Christ fully (even in Christ's life on earth). ⁵And in Christ you are full. You need nothing else. Christ is ruler over all rulers and powers.

Lord Literally, "firstborn."

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

¹¹In Christ you had a different kind of circumcision.* That circumcision was not done by the hands of any person. I mean you were made free from the power of your sinful self. That is the kind of circumcision Christ does.

¹²When you were baptized,* your old self died and, you were buried with Christ. And in that baptism* you were raised up with Christ because of your faith in God's power. God's power was shown when he raised Christ from death. ¹³You were spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were not free from the power of your sinful self. But God made you alive with Christ. And God forgave all our sins. ¹⁴We owed a debt because we broke God's laws. That debt listed all the rules we failed to follow. But God forgave us of that debt. God took away that debt and nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵God defeated the spiritual rulers and powers. With the cross God won the victory and defeated those rulers and powers. God showed the world that they were powerless.

Don't Follow Rules That Men Make

¹⁶So don't let any person make rules for you about eating and drinking or about Jewish customs (festivals, new moon celebrations,* or Sabbath days*). ¹⁷In the past, these things were like a shadow that showed what was coming. But the new things that were coming are found in Christ. ¹⁸Some people enjoy acting like they are humble and love to worship angels. Those people always talk about the visions* they have seen. Don't let those people say, "You don't do these things, so you are wrong." Those people are full of foolish pride because they think only the thoughts of people, not the thoughts of God. ¹⁹Those people don't keep themselves

circumcision Cutting off the foreskin. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

baptized, baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

new moon celebrations Special days that some people thought were holy days.

Sabbath days The Sabbath day (seventh day of the week) was a special religious day for the Jews.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

under the control of the head (*Christ*). The whole body depends on Christ. Because of Christ all the parts of the body care for each other and help each other. This strengthens the body and holds it together. And so the body grows in the way God wants.

²⁰You died with Christ and were made free from the worthless rules of the world. So why do you act like you still belong to this world? I mean, why do you follow rules like these: ²¹"Don't eat this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch that thing"? ²²These rules are talking about earthly things that are gone after they are used. These rules are only commands and teachings from people, not God. ²³These rules seem to be wise. But these rules are only part of a man-made religion that makes people pretend to be humble and makes them punish their bodies. But these rules don't help people to stop doing the evil things their sinful selves want to do.

Your New Life in Christ

3 You were raised from death with Christ. So try to get the things in heaven. I mean the things where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ²Think only about the things in heaven, not the things on earth. ³Your old sinful self has died, and your new life is kept with Christ in God. ⁴Christ is your life. When he comes again, you will share in his glory.

⁵So put all evil things out of your life: sexual sinning, doing evil, letting evil thoughts control you, wanting things that are evil, and always selfishly wanting more and more. This wanting really means to live serving a false god. ⁶These things make God angry.* ⁷In your evil life in the past, you also did these things.

⁸But now put these things out of your life: anger, being very mad, doing or saying things to hurt other people, and using evil words when you talk. ⁹Don't lie to each other. Why? Because you have left your old sinful life and the things you did before. ¹⁰You have begun to live the new life. In your new life you are being

These ... angry Some Greek copies add: "against the people who don't obey God."

made new. You are becoming like the One who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God. ¹¹In the new life there is no difference between Greeks and Jews. There is no difference between people that are circumcised* and people that are not circumcised, or people that are from some foreign country, or Scythians.* There is no difference between slaves and free people. But Christ is in all those believers. And Christ is all that is important.

¹²God has chosen you and made you his holy people.* He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to people; be kind, humble, gentle, and patient. ¹³Don't be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If another person does something wrong against you, then forgive that person. Forgive other people because the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴Do all these things; but most important, love each other. Love is the thing that holds you all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace that Christ gives control your thinking. You were all called together in one body* to have peace. Always be thankful. ¹⁶Let the teaching of Christ live inside you richly. Use all wisdom to teach and strengthen each other. Sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Everything you say and everything you do should all be done for Jesus your Lord (*Master*). And in all you do, give thanks to God the Father through Jesus.

Your New Life with Other People

¹⁸Wives, be under the authority of (*obey*) your husbands. This is the right thing to do in the Lord.

¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and be gentle to them.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

Scythians The Scythians were known as very wild and uncivilized people.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

body The spiritual body of Christ, meaning the church or his people.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things. This pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, don't frustrate your children. If you are too hard to please, they might want to quit trying.

²²Servants, obey your masters in all things. Obey all the time, even when your masters can't see you. But it is not people you are really trying to please—you are trying to please the Lord. So obey honestly because you respect the Lord. ²³In all the work you are doing, work the best you can. Work like you are working for the Lord, not for people. ²⁴Remember that you will receive your reward from the Lord. He will give you what he promised his people. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵Remember that any person who does wrong will be punished for that wrong. And the Lord treats every person the same.

4 Masters, give the things that are good and fair to your servants. Remember that you have a Master in heaven.

Paul Tells Christians Some Things to Do

¹Continue praying. And when you pray, always thank God. ²Also pray for us. Pray that God will give us an opportunity to tell people his message.* Pray that we can preach the secret truth that God has made known about Christ. I am in prison because I preach this truth. ³Pray that I can make this truth clear to people. That is what I should do.

⁴Be wise in the way you act with those people who are not believers. Use your time in the best way you can. ⁵When you talk, you should always be kind and wise. Then you will be able to answer every person in the way you should.

News About the People with Paul

¹Tychicus is my dear brother in Christ. He is a faithful minister and servant with me in the Lord. He will tell you all the things that are happening to me. ²That is why I am sending

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

him. I want you to know how we are. And I am sending him to encourage you. ⁹I am sending him with Onesimus. Onesimus is a faithful and dear brother in Christ. He is from your group. Tychicus and Onesimus will tell you all that has happened here.

¹⁰Aristarchus says hello. He is a prisoner with me. And Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also says hello. (I have already told you what to do about Mark. If he comes, welcome him.)

¹¹Jesus (he is also called Justus) also says hello. These are the only Jewish believers who work with me for the kingdom of God. They have been a comfort to me.

¹²Epaphras also says hello. He is a servant of Jesus Christ. And he is from your group. He always prays for you. He prays that you will

grow to be spiritually mature (*perfect*) and have everything that God wants for you. ¹³I know that he has worked hard for you and the people in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. ¹⁴Demas and our dear friend Luke, the doctor, say hello.

¹⁵Say hello to the brothers and sisters, in Laodicea. And say hello to Nympha and to the church that meets in her house. ¹⁶After this letter is read to you, be sure that it is also read to the church in Laodicea. And you read the letter that I wrote to Laodicea. ¹⁷Tell Archippus, "Be sure to do the work the Lord gave you."

¹⁸I say hello and write this with my own hand—Paul. Remember me in prison. God's grace (*kindness*) be with you.

1 Thessalonians

1 From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
To the church (*group of believers*) that lives in Thessalonica. That church is in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. God's, grace (*kindness*) and peace be yours.

The Life and Faith of the Thessalonians

¹We always remember you when we pray and we thank God for all of you. ²When we pray to God our Father we always thank him for the things you have done because of your faith. And we thank him for the work you have done because of your love. And we thank him that you continue to be strong because of your hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ³Brothers and sisters,, God loves you. And we know that he has chosen you to be his. ⁴We brought the Good News* to you. But we did not use only words. We brought that Good News with power. We brought it with the Holy Spirit* and with sure knowledge that it was true. Also you know how we lived when we were with you. We lived that way to help you. ⁵And you became like us and like the Lord. You suffered much, but still you accepted the teaching with joy. The Holy Spirit gave you that joy. ⁶You became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁷The Lord's teaching spread from you in Macedonia and Achaia. And also your faith in God has become known

everywhere. So we don't need to say anything about your faith. ⁸People everywhere tell about the good way you accepted us when we were there with you. Those people tell about how you stopped worshiping idols* and changed to serve the living and true God. ⁹And you stopped worshiping idols to wait for God's Son to come from heaven. God raised that Son from death. He is Jesus, who saves us from God's angry judgment that is coming.

Paul's Work In Thessalonica

2 Brothers and sisters,, you know that our visit to you was not a failure. ²Before we came to you, we suffered in Philippi. People there said bad things against us. You know all about that. And when we came to you, many people were against us. But our God helped us to be brave. He helped us to tell you his Good News.* ³We encourage (*teach*) people. No person has fooled us. We are not evil. We are not trying to trick people. Those are not our reasons for doing what we do. ⁴No. We speak the Good News because God tested us and trusted us to tell the Good News. So when we speak, we are not trying to please men. We are trying to please God. God is the One who tests (*looks closely at*) our hearts. ⁵You know that we never tried to influence you by saying nice things about you. We were not trying to get your money. We had no selfishness to hide from you. God knows that this is true. ⁶We

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

idols False gods made of wood or stone and worshiped by the non-Jewish people.

were not looking for praise from people. We were not looking for praise from you or any other people.

⁷We are apostles* of Christ. And so when we were with you, we could have used our authority to make you do things. But we were very gentle with you. We were like a mother caring for her little children. ⁸We loved you very much. So we were happy to share God's Good News* with you; but not only that—we were also happy to share even our own lives with you. ⁹Brothers and sisters, I know that you remember how hard we worked. We worked night and day. We did not want to burden you by making you pay us, while we preached God's Good News to you.

¹⁰When we were with you believers, we lived in a holy and right way, without fault. You know that this is true, and God knows that this is true. ¹¹You know that we treated each one of you like a father treats his own children. ¹²We strengthened you, we comforted you, and we told you to live good lives for God. God calls you to his kingdom and glory.

¹³Also, we always thank God because of the way you accepted God's message (*teaching*). You heard that message from us, and you accepted it like it was God's words, not the words of men. And it really is God's message (*teaching*). And that message works in you people who believe. ¹⁴Brothers and sisters, you are like God's churches (*people*) in Christ that are in Judea.* God's people in Judea suffered bad things from the other Jews there. And you suffered the same bad things from the people of your own country. ¹⁵Those Jews killed the Lord Jesus. And they killed the prophets.* And those Jews forced us to leave that country (*Judea*). God is not pleased with them. They are against all people. ¹⁶Yes. They try to stop us from teaching the non-Jews. We teach the non-Jews so that the non-Jews can be

saved. But those Jews are adding more and more sins to the sins they already have. The anger of God has fully come to them now.

Paul's Desire to Visit Them Again

¹⁷Brothers and sisters, we were separated from you for a short time. (We were not there with you, but our thoughts were still with you.) We wanted very much to see you, and we tried very hard to do this. ¹⁸Yes, we wanted to come to you. Truly I, Paul, tried to come many times, but Satan (*the devil*) stopped us. ¹⁹You are our hope, our joy, and the crown we will be proud of when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁰Truly you are our joy and our glory.

3 We couldn't come to you, but it was very hard to wait any longer. ²So we decided to send Timothy to you and stay in Athens alone. Timothy is our brother. He works with us for God. He helps us tell people the Good News* about Christ. We sent Timothy to strengthen and comfort you in your faith. ³We sent Timothy so that none of you would be upset by these troubles we have now. You yourselves know that we must have these troubles. ⁴Even when we were with you, we told you that we all would have to suffer. And you know that it happened the way we said. ⁵This is why I sent Timothy, to you, so that I could know about your faith. I sent him when I could not wait any more. I was afraid that the one (*the devil*) who tempts people might have defeated you with temptations. Then our hard work would have been wasted.

⁶But Timothy came back to us from you. He told us good news about your faith and love. Timothy told us that you always remember us in a good way. He told us that you want very much to see us again. And it is the same with us—we want very much to see you. ⁷So, brothers and sisters, we are comforted about you, because of your faith. We have much trouble and suffering, but still we are comforted. ⁸Our life is really full if you stand strong in the Lord. ⁹We have so much joy before our God because of you! So we thank God for you. But we cannot thank him enough for all the joy we feel. ¹⁰We continue praying

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Judea The Jewish land where Jesus lived and taught and where the church first began.

prophets People who spoke for God.

very strongly for you night and day. We pray that we can be there and see you again and give you all the things you need to make your faith strong.

¹¹We pray that our God and Father and our Lord Jesus will prepare the way for us to come to you. ¹²We pray that the Lord will make your love grow. We pray that he will give you more and more love for each other and for all people. We pray that you will love all people like we love you. ¹³We pray this so that your hearts will be made strong. Then you will be holy* and without fault before our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy people.

A Life That Pleases God

4 Brothers and sisters, now I have some other things to tell you. We taught you how to live in a way that will please God. And you are living that way. Now we ask you and encourage you in the Lord Jesus to live that way more and more. ²You know the things we told you to do. We told you those things by the authority (power) of the Lord Jesus. ³God wants you to be holy.* He wants you to stay away from sexual sins. ⁴God wants each one of you to learn to control your own body.* Use your body in a way that is holy and that gives honor to God. ⁵Don't use your body for sexual sin. The people who don't know God use their bodies for that. ⁶None of you should do wrong to your brother in Christ, or cheat him in this way. The Lord will punish people that do those things. We have already told you and warned you about that. ⁷God called us to be holy. He does not want us to live in sin. ⁸So the person who refuses to obey this teaching is refusing to obey God, not man. And God is the One who gives us his Holy Spirit.*

⁹We don't need to write to you about having love for your brothers and sisters in Christ. God has already taught you to love each other. ¹⁰And truly you do love the brothers and

sisters, in all of Macedonia. Brothers and sisters, now we encourage you to love them more and more.

¹¹Do all you can to live a peaceful life. Take care of your own business. Do your own work. We have already told you to do these things. ¹²If you do these things, then people who are not believers will respect the way you live. And you will not have to depend on other people for what you need.

The Lord's Coming

¹³Brothers and sisters, we want you to know about those people who have died. We don't want you to be sad like other people—people who have no hope. ¹⁴We believe that Jesus died. But we believe that Jesus rose again. So, because of Jesus, God will bring together with Jesus those people who have died. ¹⁵What we tell you now is the Lord's own message. We who are living now might still be living when the Lord comes again. We who are living at that time will be with the Lord, but not before those people who have already died. ¹⁶The Lord himself will come down from heaven. There will be a loud command. That command will be given with the voice of the archangel* and with the trumpet call of God. And the people who have died and were in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷After that, we people who are still alive at that time will be gathered up with those people who have died. We will be taken up in the clouds and meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. ¹⁸So comfort each other with these words.

Be Ready for the Lord's Coming

5 Now, brothers and sisters, we don't need to write to you about times and dates. ²You know very well that the day the Lord comes again will be a surprise, like a thief that comes in the night. ³People will say, "We have peace, and we are safe." At that time destruction will come to them quickly. Destruction will come like the pains of a

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

body Literally, "vessel." This might also mean "wife."

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

archangel The leader among God's angels.

woman who is having a baby. And those people will not escape. ⁴But you, brothers and sisters,, are not living in darkness (*sin*). And so that day will not surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all people who belong to the light (*goodness*). You belong to the day. We don't belong to the night or to darkness (*evil*). ⁶So we should not be like other people. We should not be sleeping. We should be awake and have self-control. ⁷People who sleep, sleep at night. People who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸But we belong to the day (*goodness*), so we should control ourselves. We should wear faith and love to protect us. And the hope of salvation should be our helmet. ⁹God did not choose us to suffer his anger. God chose us to have salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰Jesus died for us so that we can live together with him. It is not important if we are alive or dead (when Jesus comes). ¹¹So comfort each other and give each other strength. And you are doing that now.

Final Instructions and Greetings

¹²Now brothers and sisters,, we ask you to respect those people who work hard with you—those who lead you in the Lord and teach you. ¹³Respect those people with a very special love because of the work they do with you.

Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴We ask you, brothers and sisters,, to warn those people who don't work. Encourage the people who are afraid. Help the people who are weak. Be patient with every person. ¹⁵Be sure that no person pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.

¹⁶Always be full of joy. ¹⁷Never stop praying. ¹⁸Give thanks to God, at all times. That is what God wants for you in Christ Jesus.

¹⁹Don't stop the work of the Holy Spirit.*

²⁰Don't treat prophecy* like it is not important.

²¹But test everything. Keep what is good. ²²And stay away from everything that is evil.

²³We pray that God himself, the God of peace, will make you pure—belonging only to him. We pray that your whole self—spirit, soul, and body—will be kept safe and be without wrong when our Lord Jesus Christ comes. ²⁴The One (God) who calls you will do that for you. You can trust him.

²⁵Brothers and sisters,, please pray for us. ²⁶Give all the brothers and sisters, a holy kiss when you meet. ²⁷I tell you by the authority (power) of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters,. ²⁸The grace (kindness) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophecy Teaching by a person who speaks for God.

2 Thessalonians

1 From Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.
To the church (*group of believers*) that lives in Thessalonica. You people are in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³We thank God for you always. And we should do that because that is right for us to do. It is right because your faith is growing more and more. And the love that every one of you has for each other is also growing. ⁴So we boast about you to the other churches of God. We tell the other churches the way you continue to be strong and have faith. You are being persecuted and are suffering many troubles, but you continue with strength and faith.

Paul Tells About God's Judgment

⁵That is proof that God is right in his judgment. God wants you to be worthy of his kingdom. Your suffering is for that kingdom. ⁶'God will do what is right. He will give trouble to those people who trouble you.' ⁷And God will give peace to you people who are troubled. And he will give peace to us. God will give us this help when the Lord Jesus is shown to us. Jesus will come from heaven with his powerful angels. ⁸'He will come from heaven with burning fire to punish those people who don't know God. He will punish those people who don't obey the gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹'Those people will be punished with a

destruction that continues forever. They will not be allowed to be with the Lord. Those people will be kept away from his great power. ¹⁰'This will happen on the day when the Lord Jesus comes. Jesus will come to receive glory with his holy people.* And all the people who have believed will be amazed at Jesus. You will be in that group of believers, because you believed the things we told you.

¹¹'That is why we always pray for you. We ask our God to help you live the good way that he called you to live. The goodness you have makes you want to do good. And the faith you have makes you work. We pray that with his power God will help you do these things more and more. ¹²'We pray all this so that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ can have glory in you. And you can have glory in him. That glory comes from the grace (*kindness*) of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evil Things Will Happen

2 Brothers and sisters,, we have something to say about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We want to talk to you about that time when we will meet together with him. ²'Don't become easily upset in your thinking or afraid if you hear that the day of the Lord has already come. Some person may say this in a prophecy* or in some message. Or you may read it in a letter that some person tells you came from us. ³'Don't let any person fool you in

gospel The Good News that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

prophecy Teaching by a person who speaks for God.

any way. That day of the Lord will not come, until the turning away from God, happens. And that day will not come, until the Man of Evil appears (*comes*). That Man of Evil belongs to hell.* That Man of Evil is against anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil puts himself above anything called God or anything that people worship. And that Man of Evil even goes into God's temple* and sits there. Then he says that he is God.

¹I told you before that all these things would happen. Remember? ²And you know what is stopping that Man of Evil now. He is being stopped now so that he will appear (*come*) at the right time. ³The secret power of evil is already working in the world now. But there is one who is stopping that secret power of evil. And he will continue to stop it until he is removed (*taken out of the way*). ⁴Then that Man of Evil will appear (*come*). And the Lord Jesus will kill that Man of Evil with the breath that comes from his mouth. The Lord Jesus will destroy that Man of Evil with the glory of his coming. ⁵The Man of Evil will come by the power of Satan (*the devil*). He will have great power, and he will do many different false miracles, signs, and wonders.* ⁶The Man of Evil will use every kind of evil to trick those people who are lost. Those people are lost because they refused to love the truth. (If they loved the truth, they would be saved.) ⁷But those people refused to love the truth, so God sends them something powerful that leads them away from the truth. God sends them that power so that they will believe something that is not true. ⁸So all those people who don't believe the truth will be condemned (*judged guilty*). They did not believe the truth, and they enjoyed doing evil things.

belongs to hell Literally, "He is the son of destruction."
temple Probably the special building in Jerusalem where God commanded the Jews to worship.

false miracles, signs, and wonders These are amazing acts done by the devil's power.

You Are Chosen for Salvation

¹Brothers and sisters, the Lord loves you. God chose you from the beginning to be saved. So we should always thank God for you. You are saved by the Spirit* making you holy* and by your faith (*believing*) in the truth. ²God called you to have that salvation. He called you by using the Good News* that we preached. God called you so that you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. ³So, brothers and sisters, stand strong and continue to believe the teachings we gave you. We taught you those things in our speaking and in our letter to you.

⁴We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father will comfort you and strengthen you in every good thing you do and say. God loved us. Through his grace (*kindness*) he gave us a good hope and comfort that continues forever.

Pray for Us

3 And now, brothers and sisters, pray for us. Pray that the Lord's teaching will continue to spread quickly. And pray that people will give honor to that teaching, the same as happened with you. ²And pray that we will be protected from bad and evil people. (Not all people believe in the Lord.)

³But the Lord is faithful. He will give you strength and protect you from the Evil One (*the devil*). ⁴The Lord makes us feel sure that you are doing the things we told you. And we know that you will continue to do those things. ⁵We pray that the Lord will lead your hearts into God's love and Christ's patience.

The Obligation to Work

*Brothers and sisters, by the authority (*power*) of our Lord Jesus Christ we command

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

holy God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

you to stay away from any believer who refuses to work. People who refuse to work are not following the teaching that we gave them. ⁷You yourselves know that you should live like we live. We were not lazy when we were with you. ⁸And when we ate another person's food, we always paid for it. We worked and worked so that we would not be trouble to any of you. We worked night and day. ⁹We had the right to ask you to help us. But we worked to take care of ourselves, so that we would be an example for you to follow. ¹⁰When we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a person will not work, then he will not eat."

¹¹We hear that some people in your group refuse to work. They do nothing. And they make themselves busy in other people's lives. ¹²We command those people to stop bothering other people. We command them to work and earn their own food. In the Lord Jesus Christ

we beg them to do this. ¹³Brothers and sisters, never become tired of doing good.

¹⁴If any person does not obey what we tell you in this letter, then remember who that person is. Don't associate with that person. Then maybe that person will feel ashamed. ¹⁵But don't treat him like an enemy—warn him like a brother.

Final Words

¹⁶We pray that the Lord of peace will give you peace. We pray that he will give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

¹⁷I am Paul, and I end this letter now with my own writing. All my letters have this to show they are from me. This is the way I write.

¹⁸The grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

1 Timothy

1 From Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle by the command of God our Savior and Christ Jesus our hope.

²To Timothy. You are like, a true son to me because you believe.

Grace (*kindness*), mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warnings Against False Teachings

¹I want you to stay in Ephesus. I asked you to do that when I went into Macedonia. Some people there in Ephesus are teaching false things. Stay there so that you can command those people not to teach those false things. ²Tell those people not to give their time to stories that are not true and to long lists of names in family histories. Those things only bring arguments. Those things don't help God's work. God's work is done by faith. ³The goal of this command is for people to have love. To have this love people must have a pure heart, they must do what they know is right, and they must have true faith. ⁴Some people have not done these things. They have wandered away, and now they talk about things that are worth nothing. ⁵Those people want to be teachers of the law.* But they don't know what they are talking about. They don't even understand the things that they say they are sure about.

⁶We know that the law* is good if a man uses it right. ⁷We also know that the law is not

made for good men. The law is made for people who are against the law and for people who refuse to follow the law. The law is for people who are against God and are sinful, people who are not holy and have no religion, people who kill their fathers and mothers, murderers, ⁸people who do sexual sins, homosexuals, people who sell slaves, people who tell lies, people who speak falsely, and people who do anything that is against the true teaching of God. ⁹That teaching is part of the Good News* that God gave me to tell. That glorious Good News is from the blessed God.

Thanks for God's Mercy

¹⁰I thank Christ Jesus our Lord because he trusted me and gave me this work of serving him. He gives me strength. ¹¹In the past I spoke against Christ and persecuted him and did things to hurt him. But God gave me mercy because I did not know what I was doing. I did those things when I did not believe. ¹²But the grace (*kindness*) of our Lord was fully given to me. And with that grace came the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

¹³What I say is true, and you should fully accept it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the worst of those sinners. ¹⁴But I was given mercy. I was given mercy so that in me Christ Jesus could show that he has patience without limit. Christ showed his patience with me, the worst of all

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

law Probably the Jewish law that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. (Read Ex. 19 and 20.)

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

sinner. Christ wanted me to be an example for those people who would believe in him and have life forever. "Honor and glory to the King that rules forever. He cannot be destroyed and cannot be seen. Honor and glory forever and ever to the only God. Amen."

"Timothy, you are like a son to me. I am giving you a command. This command agrees with the prophecies* that were told about you in the past. I tell you these things so that you can follow those prophecies and fight the good fight of faith. "Continue to have faith and do what you know is right. Some people have not done this. Their faith has been destroyed. "Hymenaeus and Alexander are men who have done that. I have given those men to Satan (*the devil*) so that they will learn not to speak against God.

Some Rules for Men and Women

2 First, I tell you to pray for all people. Talk to God about all people. Ask him for the things people need, and be thankful to him. "You should pray for kings and for all people who have authority (*power*). Pray for those leaders so that we can have quiet and peaceful lives—lives full of worship and respect for God. "This is good and it pleases God our Savior. "God wants all people to be saved. And he wants all people to know the truth. "There is only one God. And there is only one way that people can reach God. That way is through Jesus Christ, who is also a man. "Jesus gave himself to pay for the sins of all people. Jesus is proof that God wants all people to be saved. And he came at the right time. "That is why I was chosen to tell the Good News.* That is why I was chosen to be an apostle.* (I am telling the truth. I am not lying.) I was chosen to be a teacher of the non-Jewish people. I teach them to believe and know the truth.

prophecies Things that prophets said about Timothy's life before those things happened.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

"I want men everywhere to pray. These men who lift up their hands in prayer must be holy.* They must not be men who become angry and have arguments.

"I also want women to wear clothes that are right for them. Women should dress with respect and right thinking. They should not use fancy braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes to make themselves beautiful. "But they should make themselves beautiful by doing good things. Women who say they worship God should make themselves beautiful in that way.

"A woman should learn while listening quietly and while being fully ready to obey. "I don't allow a woman to teach a man. And I don't allow a woman to have authority (*power*) over a man. The woman must continue in quietness. Why? "Because Adam was made first. Eve was made later. "Also, Adam was not the one who was tricked by the devil.* It was the woman who was tricked and became a sinner. "But women will be saved in their work of having children. They will be saved if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, and control themselves in the right way.

Leaders in the Church

3 What I say is true: If any person is trying hard to become an elder,* that person is wanting a good work. "An elder must be good enough that people cannot rightly criticize him. He must have only one wife. An elder must have self-control and be wise. He must be respected by other people. He must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must be a good teacher. "He must not drink too much wine, and he must not be a person who likes to fight. He must be gentle and peaceful. He must not be a person who loves money. "He must be a good leader of his own family. This means that his children obey him

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Adam ... devil The devil tricked Eve, and Eve caused Adam to sin (Gen. 3:1-13).

elder Literally, "overseer," one of the men chosen to lead a church. Also called "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

with full respect. ¹(If a man does not know how to be a leader over his own family, then he will not be able to take care of God's church.) ²But an elder* must not be a new believer. It might make a new believer be too proud of himself, if he were made an elder. Then he would be judged (*condemned*) for his pride the same as the devil was. ³An elder must also have the respect of people who are not in the church. Then he will not be criticized by other people and be caught in the devil's trap.

Helpers in the Church

¹In the same way, the men who serve as special helpers* must be men that people can respect. These men must not say things they don't mean, and they must not use their time drinking too much wine. They must not be men who are always trying to get rich by cheating others. ²They must follow the faith (*truth*) that God made known to us and always do what they know is right. ³You should test those men first. If you find nothing wrong in them, then they can serve as special helpers. ⁴In the same way, the women* must have the respect of other people. They must not be women who talk evil about other people. They must have self-control and be women who can be trusted in everything. ⁵The men who serve as special helpers must have only one wife. They must be good leaders of their children and their own families. ⁶Those persons who serve in a good way are making an honorable place for themselves. And they will feel very sure of their faith in Christ Jesus.

The Secret of Our Life

¹I hope I can come to you soon. But I am writing these things to you now. ²Then, even if I cannot come soon, you will know about the

things that people must do in the family* of God. That family is the church of the living God. And God's church is the support and foundation of the truth. ³Without any doubt, the secret of our life of worship is great:

He (*Christ*) was shown to us in a human body;
the Spirit* proved that he was right;
he was seen by angels.
The Good News* about him, was
preached to the nations (*non-Jews*);
people in the world believed in him;
he was taken up to heaven in glory.

A Warning About False Teachers

4 The Holy Spirit* clearly says that in the later times some people will stop believing the true, faith (*teaching*). Those people will obey spirits that tell lies. And those people will follow the teachings of demons.* ²Those teachings come through men who tell lies and trick people. Those men cannot see what is right and what is wrong. It is like their understanding was destroyed by a hot iron. ³Those men tell people that it is wrong to marry. And those men tell people that there are some foods that people must not eat. But God made those foods. And those people who believe and who know the truth can eat those foods with thanks. ⁴Everything that God made is good. Nothing that God made should be refused if it is accepted with thanks to God. ⁵Everything God made is made holy by what God has said and by prayer.

Be A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

¹Tell these things to the brothers and sisters, there. This will show that you are a good servant of Christ Jesus. You will show

elder Literally, "overseer," one of the men chosen to lead a church. Also called "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

men ... helpers Literally, "deacons," a Greek word meaning "servants." These people, it seems, were chosen to serve the church in special ways.

women This can mean women who serve as special helpers, or it might mean the wives of the special helpers.

family Literally, "house." This could mean that God's people are like God's temple.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

that you are made strong by the words of faith and good teaching that you have followed. ⁷People tell silly stories that don't agree with God's truth. Don't follow what those stories teach. But teach yourself to truly serve God. ⁸Training (*teaching*) your body helps you in some ways. But serving God helps you in every way. Serving God brings you blessings in this life and in the future life too. ⁹What I say is true, and you should fully accept it. ¹⁰This is why we work and struggle: We hope in the living God. He is the Savior of all people. And in a special way, he is the Savior of all those people who believe in him.

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²You are young, but don't let any person treat you like you are not important. Be an example to show the believers how they should live. Show them with the things you say, with the way you live, with your love, with your faith, and with your pure life. ¹³Continue to read the Scriptures* to the people, strengthen them, and teach them. Do those things until I come. ¹⁴Remember to use the gift that you have. That gift was given to you through a prophecy* when the group of elders* put their hands on* you. ¹⁵Continue to do those things. Give your life to doing those things. Then all the people can see that your work is progressing (*continuing*). ¹⁶Be careful in your life and in your teaching. Continue to live and teach rightly. Then you will save yourself and those people who listen to your teaching.

Some Rules for Living with Other People

5 Don't speak angrily to an older man. But talk to him like he was your father. Treat the younger men like brothers. ²Treat the older women like mothers. And treat the younger

women like sisters. Always treat them in a good way.

³Give honor to (*take care of*) widows* who are really alone. ⁴But if a widow has children or grandchildren, the first thing they need to learn is this: to show respect for their own family by helping their parents. When they do this, they will be repaying their parents or grandparents. That pleases God. ⁵If a widow is really alone and without help, then she hopes in God to take care of her. That woman prays all the time, night and day. She asks God for help. ⁶But the widow who uses her life to please herself is really dead while she is still living. ⁷Tell the believers there to do these things (*take care of their family*) so that no other person can say they are doing wrong. ⁸A person should take care of all his own people. Most important, he should take care of his own family. If a person does not do that, then he does not accept the true faith (*teaching*). That person is worse than a person who does not believe.

⁹To be added to your list of widows,* a woman must be 60 years old or older. She must have been faithful to her husband. ¹⁰She must be known as a woman who has done good things. I mean good things like raising her children, accepting visitors in her home, washing the feet of God's people, helping people in trouble, and using her life to do all kinds of good things.

¹¹But don't put younger widows* on that list. When they give themselves to Christ, they are often pulled away from him by their strong physical needs. Then they want to marry again. ¹²And they will be judged for that. They will be judged for not doing what they first promised to do. ¹³Also, those younger widows begin to waste their time going from house to house. They also begin to gossip and be busy with other people's lives. They say things that they should not say. ¹⁴So I want the younger widows to marry, have children, and take care of their homes. If they do this, then our enemy will not have any reason to criticize them. ¹⁵But some of the younger widows have already turned away to follow Satan (*the devil*).

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

Scriptures The Holy Writings—God's message to people through the writers of the Bible.

prophecy Something said about Timothy's life before that thing happened.

elders A group of men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

put ... on A sign to show that Timothy was being given a special work of God.

¹⁶If any woman who is a believer has widows* in her family, then she should care for them herself. The church should not be troubled to care for them. Then the church will be able to care for the widows who have no living family.

¹⁷The elders* who lead the church in a good way should receive great honor. Those elders who work by speaking and teaching are the men who should have that great honor. ¹⁸Why? Because the Scripture* says, "When a work animal is doing the work of separating grain, don't cover its mouth and stop it from eating the grain."* And the Scripture also says, "A worker should be given his pay."*

¹⁹Don't listen to a person who accuses an elder.* You should listen to that person only if there are two or three other people who can say what the elder did wrong. ²⁰Tell those people who sin that they are wrong. Do this in front of the whole church. In that way the others will have a warning.

²¹Before God and Jesus Christ and the chosen angels I command you to do these things. But don't judge people before you know the truth. And do these things equally to every person.

²²Think carefully before you put your hands on* any person, making him an elder. Don't share in the sins of other people. Keep yourself pure.

²³Timothy, you have been drinking only water. Stop doing that, and drink a little wine. This will help your stomach, and you will not be sick so often.

²⁴The sins of some people are easy to see. Their sins show that they will be judged. But the sins of some other people are seen only later. ²⁵It is the same with the good things people do. The good things people do are easy to see. But even when those good things are not easy to see, they cannot stay hidden.

6 All people who are slaves should show full respect to their masters. When they do that, then God's name and our teaching will not be criticized. ²Some slaves have masters who are believers. So those slaves and those masters are brothers. But the slaves should not show them any less respect. No! Those slaves should serve those believing masters even better. Why? Because those slaves are helping believers that they love.

False Teaching and True Riches

You must teach and tell the people to do these things. ³Some people will teach things that are false. Those people will not agree with the true teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they will not accept the teaching that agrees with the true way to serve God. ⁴That person who teaches falsely is full of pride and understands nothing. That person is sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words. And that brings jealousy, making trouble, insults, and evil mistrust. ⁵And also that brings arguments from men who have evil minds. Those people have lost the truth. They think that serving God is a way to get rich.

⁶It is true that serving God makes a person very rich, if that person is satisfied with what he has. ⁷When we came into the world, we brought nothing. And when we die, we can take nothing out. ⁸So, if we have food and clothes, we will be satisfied with that. ⁹People who want to become rich bring temptations to themselves. They are caught in a trap. They begin to want many foolish things that will hurt them. Those things ruin and destroy people. ¹⁰The love of money causes all kinds of evil. Some people have left the true, faith (teaching) because they want to get more and more money. But they have caused themselves to be very, very sad.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—God's message to people through the writers of the Bible.

"When ... grain" Quote from Deut. 25:4.

"A worker ... pay" Quote from Lk. 10:7.

elder One of a group of men chosen to lead a church. Called "overscers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

put ... on A sign of giving authority or power to another person.

Some Things You Should Remember

¹¹But you are a man of God. So you should stay away from all those things. Try to live in the right way, serve God, have faith, love, patience, and gentleness. ¹²Keeping your faith is like running a race. Try as hard as you can to win that race. Be sure you get that life that continues forever. You were called to have that life. And you confessed the great truth about Christ, in a way that many people heard you. ¹³Before God and Christ Jesus I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One that confessed that same great truth when he stood before Pontius Pilate. And God is the One that gives life to everything. Now I tell you: ¹⁴Do the things you were commanded to do. Do those things without wrong or blame until the time when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. ¹⁵God will make that happen at the right time. God is the blessed and only Ruler. God is the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords (*rulers*). ¹⁶God is the only One who never dies. God lives in light so bright that men cannot go near it. No person has ever seen God. No person is able to see God. Honor to God and power forever. Amen.

¹⁷Give this command to the people who are rich with the things this world has. Tell them not to be proud. Tell those rich people to hope in God, not their money. Money cannot be trusted. But God takes care of us richly. He gives us everything to enjoy. ¹⁸Tell the rich people to do good. Tell them to be rich in doing good things. And tell them to be happy to give and ready to share. ¹⁹By doing that they will be saving a treasure for themselves in heaven. That treasure will be a strong foundation*—their future life can be built on that treasure. Then they will be able to have the life that is true life.

²⁰Timothy, God has trusted you with many things. Keep those things safe. Stay away from people who say foolish things that are not from God. Stay away from people who argue against the truth. Those people use something they call "knowledge"—but it is really not

knowledge. ²¹Some people say that they have that "knowledge." Those people have left the true, faith (*teaching*).

God's grace (*kindness*) be with you all.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.

2 Timothy

1 From Paul, an apostle* of Christ Jesus. I am an apostle because God wanted me to be. God sent me to tell people about the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus.

²To Timothy. You are like, a dear son to me. Grace (*kindness*), mercy, and peace to you from God the Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving and Encouragement

¹I always remember you in my prayers day and night. I thank God for you in those prayers. He is the God my ancestors served. I have always served him, doing what I know is right. ²I remember that you cried for me. I want very much to see you so that I can be filled with joy. ³I remember your true faith. That kind of faith first belonged to your grandmother Lois and to your mother Eunice. I know that you now have that same faith. ⁴That is why I want you to remember the gift God gave you. God gave you that gift when I put my hands on* you. Now I want you to use that gift and let it grow more and more, like a small flame grows into a fire. ⁵God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. God gave us a spirit of power and love and self control.

⁶So don't be ashamed to tell people about our Lord Jesus. And don't be ashamed of me—I am in prison for the Lord. But suffer with

me for the gospel.* God gives us the strength to do that. ⁷God saved us and made us his holy people.* That happened not because of anything we did ourselves. No! God saved us and made us his people because that was what he wanted and because of his grace (*kindness*). That grace was given to us through Christ Jesus before time began. ⁸That grace was not shown to us until now. It was shown to us when our Savior Christ Jesus came. Jesus destroyed death and showed us the way to have life. Yes! Through the Good News* Jesus showed us the way to have life that cannot be destroyed. ⁹I was chosen to tell that Good News. I was chosen to be an apostle* and a teacher of that Good News. ¹⁰And I suffer now because I tell that Good News. But I am not ashamed. I know the One (*Jesus*) that I have believed. I am sure that he is able to protect the things that he has trusted me with until that Day.* ¹¹Follow the true teachings you heard from me. Follow those teachings with the faith and love we have in Christ Jesus. Those teachings are an example (that shows you what you should teach). ¹²Protect the truth that you were given. Protect those things with the help of the Holy Spirit.* That Holy Spirit lives inside us.

gospel, Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Day The day Christ will come to judge all people and take his people to live with him.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

apostle Person Jesus chose to be his special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

put ... on A sign to show that Paul had power from God to give Timothy a special blessing.

"You know that every person in the country of Asia* has left me. Even Phygelus and Hermogenes have left me. "I pray that the Lord will show mercy to the family of Onesiphorus. Many times Onesiphorus helped me. He was not ashamed that I was in prison. "No. He was not ashamed. When he came to Rome, he looked and looked for me until he found me. "I pray that the Lord will allow Onesiphorus to have mercy from the Lord on that Day.* You know how many ways Onesiphorus helped me in Ephesus.

A Loyal Soldier of Christ Jesus

2 Timothy, you are like, a son to me. Be strong in the grace (*kindness*) that we have in Christ Jesus. "You have heard the things that I have taught. Many other people heard those things too. You should teach those same things. Give those teachings to some people you can trust. Then they will be able to teach those things to other people. "Share in the troubles that we have. Accept those troubles like a true soldier of Christ Jesus. "A person that is a soldier wants to please his commanding officer. So that soldier does not use his time doing the things that most people do. "If an athlete is running a race, he must obey all the rules to win. "The farmer who works hard should be the first person to get some of the food that he grew. "Think about these things that I am saying. The Lord will give you the ability to understand all these things.

"Remember Jesus Christ. He is from the family of David.* After Jesus died, he was raised from death. This is the Good News* that I tell people. "And I am suffering because I tell that Good News. I am even bound with chains like a person who has really done wrong. But God's teaching is not bound. "So I patiently accept all these troubles. I do this to help all the people that God has chosen. I accept these

troubles so that those people can have the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. With that salvation comes glory that never ends.

"This teaching is true:

- If we died with him (*Jesus*),
then we will also live with him.
- ¹¹ If we accept suffering,
then we will also rule with him.
- If we refuse to accept him,
then he will refuse to accept us.
- ¹³ If we are not faithful,
he will still be faithful,
because he cannot be false to himself.

An Approved Worker

"Continue telling the people these things. And warn those people before God not to argue about words. Arguing about words does not help any person. And it ruins those people who listen. "Do the very best you can to be the kind of person that God will accept, and give yourself to him. Be a worker who is not ashamed of his work—a worker who uses the true teaching in the right way. "Stay away from people who talk about useless things that are not from God. That kind of talk will lead a person more and more against God. "Their evil teaching will spread like a sickness inside the body. Hymenaeus and Philetus are men like that. "They have left the true teaching. They say that the rising from death of all people, has already happened. And those two men are destroying the faith of some people. "But God's strong foundation* continues to be the same. These words are written on that foundation: "The Lord knows those people who belong to him."* Also, these words are written on that foundation: "Every person who says that he believes in the Lord must stop doing wrong."

"In a large house there are things made of gold and silver. But also there are things made of wood and clay. Some things are used for special purposes. Other things are made for

Asia The western part of Asia Minor.

Day The day Christ will come to judge all people and take his people to live with him.

David King of Israel about 1000 years before Christ.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

foundation The bottom part or first part of a house that the rest of the house is built on.

"The Lord ... him" Quote from Num. 16:5.

dirty jobs. ²¹If any person will make himself clean from all the evil things, then that person will be used for special purposes. That person will be made holy,* and the master can use him. That person will be ready to do any good work.

²²Stay away from the evil things a young person wants to do. Try very hard to live right and to have faith, love, and peace. Do these things together with those people who have pure hearts and trust in the Lord. ²³Stay away from foolish and stupid arguments. You know that those arguments grow into bigger arguments. ²⁴A servant of the Lord must not argue! He must be kind to every person. A servant of the Lord must be a good teacher. He must be patient. ²⁵The Lord's servant must gently teach those people that don't agree with him. Maybe God will let those people change their hearts so that they can accept the truth. ²⁶The devil has trapped those people and makes them do what he wants. But maybe they can wake up and see that the devil is using them, and free themselves from the devil's trap.

The Last Days

3 Remember this! There will be many troubles in the last days. ²In those times people will love only themselves and money. They will be boastful and proud. People will say bad things against other people. People will not obey their parents. People will not be thankful. They will not be the kind of people God wants. ³People will not have love for other people. They will refuse to forgive other people, and they will speak bad things. People will not control themselves. They will be angry and mean and will hate things that are good. ⁴In the last days people will turn against their friends. They will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited and proud. People will love pleasure—they will not love God. ⁵Those people will continue to act like they serve God. But the way they live shows that they don't really serve God. Timothy, stay away from those people. ⁶Some of those people

go into homes and get women who are weak. Those women are full of sin. Those women are led to sin by the many evil things they want to do. ⁷Those women always try to learn new teachings, but they are never able to fully understand the truth. ⁸Remember Jannes and Jambres. They were against Moses. It is the same with these people. They are against the truth. They are people whose thinking has been confused. They have failed in trying to follow the faith. ⁹But they will not be successful in the things they do. All the people will see that they are foolish. That is what happened to Jannes and Jambres.

Last Instructions

¹⁰But you know all about me. You know what I teach and the way I live. You know my goal in life. You know my faith, my patience, and my love. You know that I never stop trying. ¹¹You know about my persecutions (*troubles*) and my sufferings. You know all the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. You know the persecutions I suffered in those places. But the Lord saved me from all those troubles. ¹²Every person who wants to live the way God wants, in Christ Jesus, will be persecuted. ¹³People who are evil and cheat other people will become worse and worse. They will fool other people, but they will also be fooling themselves.

¹⁴But you should continue following the teachings you learned. You know that those teachings are true. You know you can trust the people who taught you those things. ¹⁵You have known the Holy Scriptures* since you were a child. Those Scriptures are able to make you wise. And that wisdom leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is given by God. And all Scripture is useful for teaching and for showing people the things that are wrong in their lives. It is useful for correcting faults and teaching how to live right. ¹⁷Using the Scriptures, the person who serves God will be ready and will have everything he needs to do every good work.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

4 Before God and Jesus Christ I give you a command. Christ Jesus is the One who will judge the people who are living and the people who have died. Jesus has a kingdom, and he is coming again. So I give you this command: ¹Tell people the Good News.* Be ready at all times. Tell people the things they need to do, tell them when they are wrong, and encourage them. Do these things with great patience and careful teaching. ²The time will come when people will not listen to the true teaching. But people will find more and more teachers that please them. People will find teachers that say the things those people want to hear. ³People will stop listening to the truth. They will begin to follow the teaching in false stories. ⁴But you should control yourself at all times. When troubles come, accept those troubles. Do the work of telling the Good News. Do all the duties of a servant of God.

⁵My life is being given as an offering for God. The time has come for me to leave this life here. ⁶I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. ⁷Now, a crown (*reward*) is waiting for me. I will get that crown for being right with God. The Lord is the judge who judges rightly. He will give me the crown on that Day.* Yes! He will give that crown to me. He will give that crown to all people who have wanted him to come again and have waited for him.

Personal Words

⁸Do your best to come to me as soon as you can. ⁹Demas loved this world too much. That is why he left me. He went to Thessalonica. Crescens went to Galatia. And Titus went to Dalmatia. ¹⁰Luke is the only one still with me. Get Mark and bring him with you when you come. He can help me in my work here. ¹¹I sent Tychicus to Ephesus.

¹²When I was in Troas, I left my coat there with Carpus. So when you come, bring it to me.

Also, bring my books. The books written on parchment* are the ones I need most.

¹³Alexander the metalworker did many bad things against me. The Lord will punish Alexander for the things he did. ¹⁴You should be careful that he doesn't hurt you too. He fought strongly against our teaching.

¹⁵The first time I defended myself, no person helped me. Every person left me. I pray that God will forgive them. ¹⁶But the Lord stayed with me. The Lord gave me strength so that I could fully tell the Good News* to the non-Jews. The Lord wanted all the non-Jews to hear that Good News. I was saved from the lion's (*enemy's*) mouth. ¹⁷The Lord will save me when any person tries to hurt me. The Lord will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. Glory forever and ever be the Lord's.

Final Greetings

¹⁸Say hello to Priscilla and Aquila and to the family of Onesiphorus. ¹⁹Erastus stayed in Corinth. And I left Trophimus in Miletus—he was sick. ²⁰Try as hard as you can to come to me before winter.

Eubulus says hello to you. Also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers in Christ say hello to you.

²¹The Lord be with your spirit. Grace (*kindness*) be with you.

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Day The day Christ will come to judge all people and take his people to live with him.

parchment Something like paper made from the skins of sheep and used for writing on.

Titus

1 From Paul, a servant of God and an apostle* of Jesus Christ. I was sent to help the faith of God's chosen people. I was sent to help those people to know the truth. And that truth shows people how to serve God. ²That faith and that knowledge come from our hope for life forever. God promised that life to us before time began—and God does not lie. ³At the right time God let the world know about that life. God told the world through preaching. God trusted me with that work. I preached those things because God our Savior commanded me to.

⁴To Titus. You are like, a true son to me in the faith we share together.

Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Titus' Work In Crete

¹I left you in Crete so that you could finish doing the things that still needed to be done. And I also left you there so that you could choose men to be elders* in every town. ²To be an elder, a man must not be guilty of doing anything wrong. He must have only one wife. His children must be believers. They must not be known as children that are wild don't obey. ³An elder* has the job of taking care of God's work. So he must not be guilty of doing

anything wrong. He must not be a person who is proud and selfish or who becomes angry quickly. He must not drink too much wine. He must not be a person who likes to fight. And he must not be a person who always tries to get rich by cheating people. ⁴An elder must be ready to help people by accepting them into his home. He must love what is good. He must be wise. He must live right. He must be holy.* And he must be able to control himself. ⁵An elder must faithfully follow the truth the same as we teach it. An elder must be able to help people by using true and right teaching. And he must be able to show the people who are against the true teaching that they are wrong.

⁶There are many people who refuse to obey—people who talk about worthless things and lead other people into the wrong way. I am talking mostly about those people who say that all non-Jewish people must be circumcised.* ⁷An elder* must be able to show that those people are wrong and, stop them from talking about those worthless things. Those people are destroying whole families by teaching things that they should not teach. They teach those things only to cheat people and make money. ⁸Even one of their own prophets (*teachers*) from Crete, said, "Cretan people are always liars. They are evil animals and lazy people who do nothing but eat." ⁹The words that prophet said are true. So tell those people

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

elder(s) Elders are men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overscers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

elder Here, literally, "overseer."

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

circumcised To have the foreskin cut off. This was done to every Jewish baby boy. It was a mark of the agreement God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

that they are wrong. You must be strict with them. Then they will become strong in the faith. "Then those people will stop accepting Jewish stories. And they will stop following the commands of those people who don't accept the truth. "To people that are pure, all things are pure. But to people who are full of sin and don't believe, nothing is pure. Really, those people's thinking has become evil and their knowledge of what is right has been ruined. "Those people say they know God. But the evil things those people do show that they don't accept God. They are terrible people, they refuse to obey, and they are not useful for doing anything good.

Following the True Teaching

2 You must tell people the things they must do to follow the true teaching. "Teach the older men to have self-control, to be serious, and to be wise. They should be strong in the faith, strong in love, and strong in patience.

"Also, teach the older women to be holy* in the way they live. Teach them not to speak against other people or have the habit of drinking too much wine. Those women should teach what is good. "In that way they can teach the younger women to love their husbands and children. "They can teach the younger women to be wise and to be pure, to take care of their homes, to be kind, and to obey their husbands. Then no person will be able to criticize the teaching God gave us.

"In the same way, tell the young men to be wise. "You should do good things to be an example in every way for the young men. When you teach, be honest and serious. "And when you speak, speak the truth so that you cannot be criticized. Then any person who is against you will be ashamed because he has nothing bad that he can say against us.

"And tell these things to the people who are slaves: They should obey their masters at all times; they should try to please their masters; they should not argue with their masters; "they should not steal from their masters; and they

should show their masters that they can be trusted. The slaves should do these things so that in everything they do, they will show that the teaching of God our Savior is good.

"That is the way we should live,, because God's grace (*kindness*) has come. That grace can save every person. And that grace has been given to us. "That grace teaches us not to live against God and not to do the bad things the world wants to do. That grace teaches us to live on earth now in a wise and right way—a way that shows that we serve God. "We should live like that while we are waiting for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our great hope, and he will come with glory. "He gave himself for us. He died to free us from all evil. He died to make us pure people that belong only to him—people that are always wanting to do good things.

"Tell the people these things. You have full authority (*power*). So use that authority to strengthen the people and tell them what they should do. And don't let any person treat you like you are not important.

The Right Way to Live

3 Tell the people to remember always to do these things: to be under the authority of rulers and government leaders; to obey those leaders and be ready to do good; "to speak no evil against any person; to live in peace with other people; to be gentle to other people; and to be polite to other people. Tell the believers to do these things to all people.

"In the past we were foolish people too. We did not obey, we were wrong, and we were slaves to the many things our bodies wanted and enjoyed. We lived doing evil and being jealous. People hated us and we hated each other. "But then the kindness and love of God our Savior was made known. "He saved us because of his mercy (*love*)—not because of the good things we did to be right with God. He saved us through the washing that made us new people. He saved us by making us new through

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

the Holy Spirit.* "God poured out (*gave*) to us that Holy Spirit fully through Jesus Christ our Savior. "We were made right with God by His grace (*kindness*). And God gave us the Spirit so that we could receive the life that never ends. That is what we hope for. "This teaching is true.

And I want you to be sure that the people understand these things. Then the people who believe in God will be careful to use their lives for doing good. These things are good and will help all people.

"Stay away from people who have foolish arguments, people who talk about useless family histories, people who make trouble and fight about what the law of Moses teaches. Those things are worth nothing and will not help people. "If a person causes arguments, then give him a warning. If that person continues to cause arguments, then warn him again. If he still continues causing arguments, then don't associate with him. "You know that

a person like that is evil and sinful. His sins prove that he is wrong.

Some Things to Remember

"I will send Artemas and Tychicus to you. When I send them, try hard to come to me at Nicopolis. I have decided to stay there this winter. "Zenas the lawyer and Apollos will be traveling from there. Do all that you can to help them on their trip. Be sure that they have everything they need. "Our people must learn to use their lives for doing good things. They should do good for people who need it. Then our people will not have empty lives.

"All the people with me here say hello to you. Say hello to those people who love us in the faith.

Grace (*kindness*) be with you all.

Philemon

1 From Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and from Timothy, our brother.

To Philemon, our dear friend and worker with us. ²Also to Apphia, our sister; to Archippus, a worker with us; and to the church that meets in your home.

³Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

⁴I remember you in my prayers. And I always thank my God for you. ⁵I hear about the love you have for all God's holy people* and the faith you have in the Lord Jesus. And I thank God for that love and faith you have. ⁶I pray that the faith you share will make you understand every good thing that we have in Christ. ⁷My brother, you have shown love to God's people. You have made them feel happy. This has given me great joy and comfort.

Accept Onesimus Like a Brother

⁸There is something that you should do. And because of your love in Christ, I feel free to command you to do that. ⁹But I am not commanding you; I am asking you to do it. I am Paul. I am an old man now, and I am a prisoner for Christ Jesus. ¹⁰I am asking you for my son Onesimus. He became my son while I was in prison. ¹¹In the past he was useless to you. But now he has become useful for both you and me.

¹²I am sending him back to you. With him I am sending my own heart. ¹³I wanted to keep him with me to help me while I am in prison for the gospel.* By helping me he would be serving you. ¹⁴But I did not want to do anything without asking you first. Then the good thing you do for me will be because you wanted to do it, not because I forced you to do it.

¹⁵Onesimus was separated from you for a short time. Maybe that happened so that you could have him back forever—¹⁶not to be a slave, but better than a slave, to be a brother that is loved. I love him very much. But you will love him even more. You will love him as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

¹⁷If you accept me to be your friend, then accept Onesimus back. Welcome him like you would welcome me. ¹⁸If Onesimus has done anything wrong to you, charge that to me. If he owes you anything, charge that to me. ¹⁹I am Paul, and I am writing this with my own hand. I will pay back anything Onesimus owes. And I will say nothing about what you owe me for your own life. ²⁰So, my brother, I ask that you do something for me in the Lord. Comfort my heart in Christ. ²¹I write this letter knowing that you will do what I ask you. I know that you will do even more than I ask.

²²Also, please prepare a room for me to stay in. I hope that God will answer your prayers and I will be able to come to you.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

gospel The Good News that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Final Greetings

²²Epaphras is a prisoner with me for Christ Jesus. He says hello to you. ²³And also Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke say hello to you. They are workers together with me.

²⁴The grace (*kindness*) of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Hebrews

God Has Spoken Through His Son

1 In the past God spoke to our people through the prophets.* God spoke to them many times and in many different ways. ²And now in these last days God has spoken to us again. God has spoken to us through his Son. God made the whole world through his Son. And God has chosen his Son to have all things. ³The Son shows the glory of God. He is a perfect copy of God's nature. The Son holds everything together with his powerful command. The Son made people clean from their sins. Then he sat down at the right side of the Great One (God) in heaven. ⁴God gave him a name that is a much greater name than any of the angels have. And he became that much greater than the angels.

⁵God never said these things to any of the angels:

"You are my Son;
Today I have become your Father."

Psalms 2:7

God also never said to an angel,

"I will be his Father,
And he will be my son."

2 Samuel 7:14

⁶And when God brings his firstborn* Son into the world, he says,

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

firstborn This word means that Christ was the first and most important of all God's children.

"Let all God's angels worship the Son."⁷

Deuteronomy 32:43

⁸This is what God said about the angels:

"God makes his angels become
like winds,*
and God makes his servants become
like flames of fire."

Psalms 104:4

⁹But God said this about his Son:

"Your throne, O God, will continue
forever and ever,
You will rule your kingdom
with right judgments.
¹⁰ You love the right,
and you hate the wrong.
So, God, your God has given you
a greater joy
than he gave the people with you."

Psalms 45:6-7

¹¹God also says,

"O Lord, in the beginning you made the
earth.

And your hands made the sky.

¹² These things will disappear,
but you will stay.
All things will become old like clothes.

"Let ... Son" These words are found in Deuteronomy 32:43 in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, and in a Hebrew copy among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

winds This can also mean "spirits."

- ¹² You will fold them like a coat.
And they will be changed like clothes.
But you never change.
And your life will never end."

Psalms 102:25-27

- ¹³ And God never said this to an angel:

"Sit at my right side
until I put your enemies
under your power.*"

Psalms 110:1

"All the angels are spirits who serve God and are sent to help those people who will receive salvation.

Our Salvation Is Greater than the Law

2 So we must be more careful to follow the things that we were taught. We must be careful so that we will not be pulled away from the true way. ²The teaching (*the law*) that God spoke through angels was shown to be true. And every time the Jewish people did something against that teaching they were punished for what they did. They were punished when they did not obey that teaching. ³The salvation that was given to us is very great. So surely we also will be punished if we live like this salvation is not important. It was the Lord (*Jesus*) who first told people about this salvation. And the people who heard him proved to us that this salvation is true. ⁴God also proved it by using wonders, great signs, and many kinds of miracles.* And he proved it by giving people gifts through the Holy Spirit.* He gave those gifts the way he wanted.

Christ Became Like Men to Save Them

⁵God did not choose angels to be the rulers over the new world that was coming. That future world is the world we have been talking

about. ⁶It is written some place in the Scriptures,*

"God, why do you care about man
(*people*)?

Why do you care about the son of
man*?

Is he so important?

- ⁷ For a short time you made him lower
than the angels.

You gave him glory and honor
to be his crown.

- ⁸ You put everything under his control.*"

Psalms 8:4-6

If God put everything under his control, then there was nothing left that he did not rule. But we don't yet see him ruling over everything. ⁹For a short time Jesus was made lower than the angels, but now we see him wearing a crown of glory and honor because he suffered and died. Because of God's grace (*kindness*) Jesus died for every person.

¹⁰God is the One who made all things. And all things are for his glory. God wanted to have many sons (*people*) to share his glory. So God did what he needed to do. He made perfect the One (*Jesus*) who leads those people to salvation. God made Jesus a perfect Savior, through Jesus' suffering.

¹¹The One (*Jesus*) who makes people holy* and those people who are made holy are from the same family. So he (*Jesus*) is not ashamed to call those people his brothers and sisters.

¹²Jesus says,

"God, I will tell my brothers and sisters,
about you.

Before all your people I will sing your
praises."

Psalms 22:22

until ... power Literally, "until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

Miracle(s) Amazing works done by the power of God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

son of man This can mean any man (person), but the name "Son of Man" is often used to mean Jesus. Jesus showed what God planned for all men (people) to be.

control Literally, "feet."

holy God's people are holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

¹³He also says,

"I will trust in God."

Isaiah 8:17

And he says,

"I am here.

And with me are the children
that God has given me."

Isaiah 8:18

¹⁴Those children are people with physical bodies. So Jesus himself became like those people and had the same experiences people have. Jesus did this so that, by dying, he could destroy the one who has the power of death. That one is the devil. ¹⁵Jesus became like those people and died so that he could free them. They were like slaves all their lives because of their fear of death. ¹⁶Clearly, it is not angels that Jesus helps. Jesus helps the people who are from Abraham.* ¹⁷For this reason Jesus had to be made like his brothers and sisters, in every way. Jesus became like people so that he could be their merciful and faithful high priest* in service to God. Then Jesus could bring forgiveness for the people's sins. ¹⁸And now Jesus can help those people who are tempted. Jesus is able to help because he himself suffered and was tempted.

Jesus Is Greater Than Moses

3 So all of you should think about Jesus. God sent Jesus to us, and he is the high priest* of our faith. I tell this to you, my holy* brothers and sisters,, you were all called by God. ²God sent Jesus to us and made him our high priest. And Jesus was faithful to God like Moses was. He did everything God wanted him to do in God's house (*family*). ³When a man builds a house, people will honor the man more than the house. It is the same with Jesus. Jesus should have more honor than Moses. ⁴Every house is built by some person. But God built everything. ⁵Moses was faithful in all God's

house (*family*) like a servant. He told people the things that God would say in the future. ⁶But Christ is faithful in ruling God's house like a Son. We, believers, are God's house (*family*). We are God's house if we continue to be sure and proud of the great hope we have.

We Must Continue to Follow God

⁷So it is like the Holy Spirit* says:

"If you hear God's voice today,

* don't be stubborn like in the past,
when you were against God.

That was the day you tested God
in the desert.

⁹ For 40 years in the desert your people
saw the things I did.

But they tested me and my patience.

¹⁰ So I was angry with those people.

I said, 'Those people's thoughts
are always wrong.

Those people have never understood my
ways.'

¹¹ So I was angry and made a promise:

'Those people will never enter
and have my rest.*'

Psalms 95:7-11

¹²So, brothers and sisters,, be careful that none of you is sinful, and refuses to believe, and stops following the living God. ¹³But comfort each other every day. Do this while it is "today."* Help each other so that none of you will become hardened because of sin and the way sin fools people. ¹⁴We all share together with Christ. This is true if we continue until the end to have the sure faith we had in the beginning. ¹⁵This is what that Scripture* said:

"If you hear God's voice today,

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

rest A place of rest God promised to give his people.

today This word is taken from verse 7. It means that it is important to do these things now.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Abraham Most respected ancestor of the Jews.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

don't be stubborn like in the past
when you were against God."

Psalms 95:7-8

"Who were those people who heard God's voice and were against him? It was all those people that Moses led out of Egypt. "And who was God angry with for 40 years? God was angry with those people who sinned. Those people died in the desert. "And what people was God talking to when he promised that they would never enter and have his rest? God was talking about those people who did not obey him. "So we see that those people were not allowed to enter and have God's rest. Why? Because they did not believe.

4 And we still have that promise God gave those people. That promise is that we can enter and have God's rest. So we should be very careful, so that none of you fail to get that promise. "The way to be saved" was told to us the same as to those people. But the teaching those people heard did not help them. They heard that teaching but did not accept it with faith. "We people who believe are able to enter and have God's rest. Like God said,

"I was angry and made a promise:
"Those people will never enter
and have my rest.*"

Psalms 95:11

God said this. But God's work was finished from the time he made the world. "Some place in the Scriptures,* God talked about the seventh day of the week: "So on the seventh day God rested from all his work."* "And in that other Scripture God also said, "Those people will never enter and have my rest."

"It is still true that some people will enter and have God's rest. But those people who first heard the way to be saved* did not enter. They did not enter because they did not obey. "So God planned another special day. It is called "today." God spoke about that day through

rest A place of rest God promised to give his people.
way to be saved Literally, "Good News" or "gospel." See Rom. 1:16.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.
"So ... work" Quote from Gen. 2:2.

David a long time later. It is the same Scripture* we used before:

"If you hear God's voice today,
don't be stubborn like in the past."

Psalms 95:7-8

"We know that Joshua* did not lead the people into the rest* God promised. We know this because God spoke later about another day for rest, ("today"). "This shows that the seventh-day rest* for God's people is still coming. "God rested after he finished his work. So the person who enters and has God's rest is the person who has finished his work like God did. "So let us try as hard as we can to enter God's rest. We must try hard so that none of us will be lost by following the example of those people who refused to obey God.

"God's word* (message) is alive and working. His word is sharper than the sharpest sword. God's word cuts all the way into us like a sword. It cuts deep to the place where the soul and the spirit are joined. God's word cuts to the center of our joints and our bones. It judges the thoughts and feelings in our hearts. "Nothing in all the world can be hidden from God. He can clearly see all things. Everything is open before him. And to him we must explain the way we have lived.

Jesus Helps Us Come Before God

"We have a great high priest* who has gone to live with God in heaven. He is Jesus the Son of God. So let us continue strongly in the faith we have. "Jesus, the high priest that we have, is able to understand our weaknesses. When Jesus lived on earth, he was tempted in every way. He was tempted in the same ways that we are tempted, but he never sinned. "With Jesus as our high priest we can feel free to come before

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Joshua After Moses died, Joshua became leader of the Jewish people. Joshua led them into the land that God promised to give them.

seventh-day rest Literally, "sabbath rest," meaning a sharing in the rest God began after he created the world.

God's word God's teachings and commands.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

God's throne where there is grace (*forgiveness*). There we receive mercy and kindness to help us when we need it.

5 Every Jewish high priest* is chosen from among men. That priest is given the work of helping people with the things they must do for God. That priest must offer to God gifts and sacrifices* for sins. ²The high priest himself is weak, like all people. So he is able to be gentle with those people who don't understand and who are doing wrong things. ³The high priest offers sacrifices for the sins of the people. But the high priest has weaknesses himself. So he also must offer sacrifices for his own sins.

⁴To be a high priest* is an honor. But no person chooses himself for this work. That person must be called by God like Aaron* was. ⁵It is the same with Christ. He did not choose himself to have the glory of becoming a high priest. But God chose him. God said to Christ,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father."

Psalm 2:7

⁶And in another Scripture* God says,

"You will be a priest forever,
the same as Melchizedek.*"

Psalm 110:4

⁷While Christ lived on earth he prayed to God and asked God for help. God is the One who could save him from death, and Jesus prayed to God with loud cries and tears. And God answered Jesus' prayers because Jesus was humble and did everything God wanted. ⁸Jesus was the Son of God. But Jesus suffered and learned to obey by the things that he suffered. ⁹Then Jesus was perfect. And Jesus is the reason that all those people who obey him can have salvation forever. ¹⁰And God made

Jesus the high priest,* the same as Melchizedek.

¹¹We have many things to tell you about this. But it is hard to explain because you have stopped trying to understand. ¹²You have had enough time that by now you should be teachers. But you need some person to teach you again the first lessons of God's teaching. You still need the teaching that is like milk. You are not ready for solid food. ¹³Any person who lives on milk is still a baby. That person knows nothing about right teaching. ¹⁴But solid food is for people who have stopped being like babies. It is for people who are grown-up in their spirits. Those people have practiced and taught themselves to know the difference between good and evil.

6 So we should be finished with the beginning lessons about Christ. We should not go back to the things we started with. We began our life in Christ, by turning away from the evil things we did before and by believing in God. ²At that time we were taught about baptisms,* and about the special act of a person putting his hands on people.* We were taught about people rising from death and about the judgment that will continue forever. But now we need to go forward to more mature (*advanced*) teaching.* ³And we will do this if God allows.

⁴"After people have left the way of Christ, can you make them change their life again? I am talking about people who have learned the truth. They received God's gift and also shared in the Holy Spirit.* Those people heard the things God said, and they saw the great powers of God's new world. And they saw for themselves that those things are very good. But

high priest Most important priest of God's people.

sacrifices Gifts or offerings to God. The Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

Aaron First Jewish high priest. He was Moses' brother.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Melchizedek A priest and king who lived in the time of Abraham. (Read Genesis 14:17-24.)

baptisms The word here may mean Christian baptism (a brief burial in water), or it may mean the Jewish ceremonial washings.

putting his hands on people This showed that they were given a special work or blessing.

now ... teaching The Greek text has these words in verse 1.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

then those people left the way of Christ. It is not possible to make those people change their lives and come to Christ, again. Why? Because those people that leave Christ's way, are really nailing Christ to the cross again. Those people bring shame to Christ before all people.

Those people are like, land that gets plenty of rain. A farmer plants and cares for that land so that it will give food for people. If that land grows plants that help people, then that land has the blessing of God. But if that land grows thorns and weeds, it is worthless. That land is in danger that it will be cursed by God. And that land will be destroyed by fire.

Dear friends, we are saying these things to you. But really we expect better things from you. We feel sure that you will do the things that are a part of salvation. God is fair. God will remember all the work you have done. And God will remember that you showed your love to him by helping his people. And God will remember that you continue to help his people. We want each of you to continue with the same hard work all your lives. Then you will surely get that great thing you hope for. We don't want you to become lazy. We want you to be like those people who get the things that God promised. Those people get God's promises because they have faith and patience.

God made a promise to Abraham. And there is no one greater than God, so God used himself to vow (promise) that he would do what he said. God said, "I will truly bless you. I will give you many, many descendants." Abraham waited patiently for this to happen. And later Abraham received what God promised.

People always use the name of someone greater than themselves to make a vow (promise). The vow proves that what they say is true. And this ends all arguing about what they say. God wanted to prove that his promise was true. God wanted to prove this to those people who would get what he promised.

descendants A person's children and all their future families.

I will ... descendants Quote from Gen. 22:17.

God wanted those people to understand clearly that his purposes (plans) never change. So God said something would happen, and he proved what he said by also making a vow (promise). Those two things cannot change. God cannot lie when he says something and he cannot lie when he makes a vow. So those things give great comfort to us who came to God for safety. Those two things give us comfort and strength to continue in the hope that God gives us. We have this hope. And it is like an anchor. It is strong and sure and keeps our soul safe. It goes into the most holy place, behind the curtain in the heavenly temple. Jesus has already entered there and opened the way for us. Jesus has become the high priest forever the same as Melchizedek.*

The Priest Melchizedek

Melchizedek* was the king of Salem and a priest for God the Most High. Melchizedek met Abraham when Abraham was coming back after defeating the kings. That day Melchizedek blessed Abraham. And Abraham gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything he had. (The name Melchizedek, king of Salem, has two meanings. First, Melchizedek means "king of goodness." Also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace.") No person knows who Melchizedek's father or mother was. No person knows where he came from.* And no person knows when he was born or when he died. Melchizedek is like the Son of God and he continues being a priest forever.

You can see that Melchizedek was very great. Abraham, the great father, gave Melchizedek one-tenth of everything that Abraham won in battle. Now the law says that people in the family group* of Levi who become priests must get one-tenth from the people. The priests collect it from their own

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

Melchizedek A priest and king who lived in the time of Abraham. (Read Gen. 14:17-24.)

No person ... from Literally, "Melchizedek was without father, without mother, without genealogy."

family group One of the twelve "tribes" of the Jewish people, named after Jacob's twelve sons.

people (*the Jews*), even though the priests and their people are both from the family of Abraham. ⁶Melchizedek was not from the family group of Levi. But he got one-tenth from Abraham. And he blessed Abraham—the man who had God's promises. ⁷All people know that the more important person blesses the less important person. ⁸Those priests get one-tenth, but they are only men who live and then die. But Melchizedek, who got one-tenth from Abraham, continues living, like the Scripture* says. ⁹It is Levi who gets one-tenth from the people. But we can say that when Abraham paid Melchizedek one-tenth, then Levi also paid it. ¹⁰Levi was not yet born. But Levi was in the body of his ancestor Abraham when Melchizedek met Abraham.

¹¹People were given the law* under the system of priests from the Levi family group.* But people could not be made spiritually perfect through that system of priests. So there was a need for another priest to come. I mean a priest that is like Melchizedek, not Aaron. ¹²And when a different kind of priest comes, then the law must be changed too. ¹³We are saying these things about Christ. He belonged to a different family group. No person from that family group ever served as a priest, at the altar.* ¹⁴It is clear that our Lord (*Christ*) came from the family group of Judah. And Moses said nothing about priests belonging to that family group.

Jesus Is a Priest Like Melchizedek

¹⁵And these things become even more clear. We see that another priest (*Jesus*) comes who is like Melchizedek. ¹⁶He was not made a priest by human rules and laws. He became a priest through the power of his life which continues forever. ¹⁷In the Scriptures, this is said about

him: "You will be a priest forever the same as Melchizedek."*

¹⁸The old rule (*law*) is now ended because it was weak and worthless. ¹⁹The law of Moses, could not make anything perfect. And now a better hope has been given to us. And with that hope we can come near to God.

²⁰Also, it is important that God made a vow (*promise*) when he made Jesus high priest.* When those other men became priests, there was no vow. ²¹But Christ became a priest with God's vow. God said:

"The Lord has made a vow (*promise*)
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever.""

Psalms 110:4

²²So this means that Jesus is the guarantee of a better agreement* from God to his people.

²³Also, when one of those other priests died, he could not continue being a priest. So there were many of those priests. ²⁴But Jesus lives forever. He will never stop serving as priest. ²⁵So Christ can save those people who come to God through him. Christ can do this forever, because he always lives, ready to help people when they come before God.

²⁶So Jesus is the kind of high priest* that we need. He is holy—he has no sin in him. He is pure and not influenced by sinners. And he is raised above the heavens. ²⁷He is not like those other priests. Those other priests had to offer (*give*) sacrifices* every day. They had to offer sacrifices first for their own sins and then for the sins of the people. But Christ doesn't need to do that. Christ offered only one sacrifice for all time. Christ offered himself. ²⁸The law chooses high priests who are people and have the same weaknesses as people. But God made a promise that came after the law. God spoke

"You will ... Melchizedek" Quote from Ps. 110:4.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

agreement God gives a contract or agreement to his people.

For the Jews, the agreement was the law of Moses. But now God has given a new and better agreement to his people through Christ.

sacrifices A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. The Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

law The law of Moses.

family group One of the twelve "tribes" of the Jewish people, named after Jacob's twelve sons.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

those words with a vow (*promise*), and those words made the Son of God to be the high priest.* And that Son has been made perfect forever.

Jesus Our High Priest

8 Here is the point of what we are saying: We have a high priest* like we have been telling you about. That high priest now sits on the right side of God's throne in heaven. ²Our high priest serves in the Most Holy Place.* He serves in the true place of worship* that was made by God, not by people.

³Every high priest has the work of offering gifts and sacrifices* to God. So our high priest must also offer something to God. ⁴If our high priest were now living on earth, then he would not be a priest. I say this because there are already priests here who follow the law by offering gifts to God. ⁵The work that these priests do is really only a copy and a shadow of the things that are in heaven. That is why God warned Moses when Moses was ready to build the place of worship: "Be sure to make everything exactly like the pattern I showed you on the mountain." ⁶But the work that has been given to Jesus is much greater than the work that was given to those priests. In the same way, the new agreement* that Jesus brought from God to his people is much greater than the old one. And the new agreement is based on promises of better things.

⁷If there was nothing wrong with the first agreement, then there would be no need for a second agreement. ⁸But God found something wrong with the people. God said:

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holiest of holies," the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

true ... worship Literally, "true tabernacle (*tent*)."

sacrifices Gifts or offerings to God. The Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

agreement God gives a contract or agreement to his people. For the Jews, the agreement was the law of Moses. But now God has given a new and better agreement to his people through Christ.

"The time is coming, says the Lord, when I will give a new agreement to the people of Israel,* and to the people of Judah.*

⁹ It will not be like the agreement that I gave to their fathers.

That is the agreement I gave when I took them by the hand and led them out of Egypt.

They did not continue following the agreement I gave them, and I turned away from them, says the Lord.

¹⁰ This is the new agreement I will give the people of Israel.*

I will give this agreement in the future, says the Lord:

I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write my laws on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

¹¹ Never again will a person have to teach his brother or God's other people.

He will not need to tell them to know the Lord.

Why? Because all people—the greatest people and the least important people—will know me.

¹² And I will forgive the wrong things they do against me, and I will not remember their sins."

Jeremiah 31:31-34

¹³God called this a new agreement, so God has made the first agreement* old. And anything that is old and useless is ready to disappear.

Worship Under the Old Agreement

9 The first agreement* had rules for worship. And it had a man-made place for

Israel The northern part of the Jewish nation.

Judah The southern part of the Jewish nation.

first agreement The contract God gave the Jewish people when he gave them the law of Moses.

worship. ²This place was inside a tent. The first area in the tent was called the Holy Place. In the Holy Place were the lamp and the table with the special bread offered to God. ³Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place.* ⁴In the Most Holy Place was a golden altar* for burning incense.* And also there was the holy box that held the old agreement.* The box was covered with gold. Inside this box was a golden jar of manna* and Aaron's rod (*stick*)-the rod that once grew leaves. Also in the box were the flat rocks, with the Ten Commandments, of the old agreement, written on them. ⁵Above the box were the cherub angels* that showed God's glory. These cherub angels were over the mercy seat.* But we cannot say everything about these things now.

⁶Everything in the tent was made ready in the way I have explained. Then the priests went into the first room every day to do their worship. ⁷But only the high priest* could go into the second room. And the high priest went into that room only once a year. And the high priest could never enter that room without taking blood with him. The priest offered that blood to God for himself and for the people's sins. Those sins were the sins the people did without knowing that they were sinning. ⁸The Holy Spirit* uses those two separate rooms to teach us this: that the way into the Most Holy Place* was not open while that first room was still there. ⁹This is an example for us today.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holy of holies," the place where God met with the high priest.

altar A stone table used for burning sacrifices offered as gifts to God.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

holy box ... agreement Wooden box covered with gold that had in it God's law on two flat stones.

manna The food God gave the Jewish people in the desert.

cherub angels Two images or statues of angels.

mercy seat Place on top of "the holy box that held the agreement," where the high priest put the blood of an animal once a year to pay for the sins of the people.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

This shows that the gifts and sacrifices* that were offered to God were not able to fully cleanse the person who was worshiping God. Those sacrifices could not make that person perfect in his heart. ¹⁰Those gifts and sacrifices were only about food and drink and special washings. Those things were only rules about the body—not about things inside people's hearts. God gave those rules for his people to follow, until the time of God's new way.

Worship Under the New Agreement

¹¹But Christ has already come to be the high priest.* He is the high priest of the good things we now have. But Christ does not serve in a place like the tent that those other priests served in. Christ serves in a place that is better than that tent. It is more perfect. And that place is not made by men. It does not belong to this world. ¹²Christ entered the Most Holy Place* only one time—enough for all time. Christ entered the Most Holy Place by using his own blood (*death*), not the blood of goats or young bulls. Christ entered there and got for us freedom forever. ¹³The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a cow were sprinkled on those people who were no longer pure enough to enter that tent (place of worship). That blood and those ashes made those people pure again—but only their bodies. ¹⁴So surely the blood of Christ can do much, much more. Christ offered himself through the eternal Spirit* as a perfect sacrifice* to God. His blood will make us fully clean from the evil things we have done. His blood will make us pure even in our hearts. We are made pure so that we can worship (*serve*) the living God.

¹⁵So Christ brings a new agreement* from God to his people. Christ brings this new agreement so that those people that are called by God can have the things that God promised. God's people can have those things forever.

sacrifices The Jewish priests killed animals and offered them as sacrifices to God.

Spirit Probably the Holy Spirit. See note on Holy Spirit.

sacrifice A gift offered to God.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

They can have those things because Christ died to pay for the sins that people did under the first agreement.* Christ died to make people free from those sins.

¹⁶When a man dies, he leaves a will* (agreement). But people must prove that the man who wrote that will is dead. ¹⁷A will means nothing while the man who wrote it is still living. The will can be used only after the man dies. ¹⁸It is the same with the first agreement between God and his people. There had to be blood (death) before the agreement could be made good. ¹⁹First, Moses told all the people every commandment in the law. Then Moses took the blood of calves and mixed it with water. Then he used red wool and a branch of hyssop* to sprinkle the blood and water on the book of the law and on all the people. ²⁰Then Moses said, "This is the blood that makes the agreement good—the agreement that God commanded you to follow." ²¹In the same way, Moses sprinkled the blood on the tent. He sprinkled the blood over all the things used in worship. ²²The law says that almost everything must be made clean by blood. And sins cannot be forgiven without blood (death).

Christ's Sacrifice Takes Away Sins

²³These things are copies of the real things that are in heaven. These copies had to be made clean by animal sacrifices.* But the real things in heaven must have much better sacrifices. ²⁴Christ went into the Most Holy Place.* But Christ did not go into the Most Holy Place that was made by men. That Most Holy Place is only a copy of the real one. Christ went into heaven. Christ is there now before God to help us. ²⁵The high priest* enters the Most Holy Place once every year. He takes with him blood

to offer. But he does not offer his own blood like Christ did. Christ went into heaven, but not to offer himself many times like the high priest offers blood again and again. ²⁶If Christ had offered himself many times, then he would have needed to suffer many times since the time the world was made. But Christ came and offered himself, only once. And that once is enough for all time. Christ came at a time when the world is nearing an end. Christ came to take away all sin by offering himself as a sacrifice.* ²⁷Every person must die once. After a person dies, he is judged. ²⁸So Christ was offered as a sacrifice one time to take away the sins of many people. And Christ will come a second time, but not for people's sin. Christ will come the second time to bring salvation to those people who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Makes Us Perfect

10 The law* gave us only an unclear picture of the good things coming in the future. The law is not a perfect picture of the real things. The law tells people to offer the same sacrifices* every year. The people who come to worship God continue to offer those sacrifices. But the law can never make those people perfect. ²If the law could make people perfect, then those sacrifices would have already stopped. Those people would already be clean from their sins. And they would not still feel guilty for their sins. But the law cannot do that. ³Those people's sacrifices make them remember their sins every year, ⁴because it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵So when Christ came into the world he said:

"You (God) don't want sacrifices* and offerings,
but you have prepared a body for me.

⁶ You are not pleased with the sacrifices of animals killed and burned.

first agreement The contract God gave to the Jewish people when he gave them the law of Moses.

will The paper a person signs to show which people he wants to have his things after he dies.

hyssop A special plant.

sacrifices Offerings or gifts to God.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holiness of holiness." The place where God met the high priest.

high priest Most important priest for God's people.

sacrifice A sacrifice is a gift or offering to God. Jewish priests killed animals and offered them to God. Jesus Christ gave his own life as a sacrifice to pay for people's sins.

law The law of Moses.

And you are not pleased with sacrifices
to take away sins.

¹ Then I said, "Here I am, God.

It is written about me in the book
of the law.

I have come to do the things you want."

Psalms 40:6-8

⁹In this Scripture,* he (*Christ*) first said, "You don't want sacrifices* and offerings, and you are not pleased with sacrifices and offerings. You are not pleased with animals killed and burned or with sacrifices to take away sin." (These are all sacrifices that the law* commands.) ¹⁰Then he (*Christ*) said, "Here I am, God. I have come to do the things you want." So God ends that first system of sacrifices and starts his new way. ¹¹Jesus Christ did the things God wanted him to do. And because of that, we are made holy through the sacrifice* of Christ's body. Christ made that sacrifice one time—enough for all time.

¹²Every day the priests stand and do their religious service. Again and again the priests offer the same sacrifices.* But those sacrifices can never take away sins. ¹³But Christ offered only one sacrifice for sins, and that sacrifice is enough for all time. Then Christ sat down at the right side of God. ¹⁴And now Christ waits there for his enemies to be put under his power.* ¹⁵With one sacrifice Christ made his people perfect forever. Those people are the ones who are being made holy.*

¹⁶The Holy Spirit* also tells us about this. First he says:

¹⁶ "This is the agreement* I will make with
my people in the future,

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

sacrifices Animals killed and offered to God.

law The law of Moses.

sacrifice(s) Gifts or offerings to God.

to be put ... power Literally, "to be made a footstool for his feet."

holy God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

agreement The new and better agreement that God has given to his people through Jesus.

says the Lord.

I will put my laws in their hearts.

I will write my laws in their minds."

Jeremiah 31:33

¹⁷Then he says:

"I will forgive their sins
and the evil things they do—
I will never remember those things
again."

Jeremiah 31:34

¹⁸And after all these things are forgiven, there is no more need for a sacrifice* to pay, for sins.

Come Near to God

¹⁹And so, brothers and sisters,, we are completely free to enter the Most Holy Place.* We can do this without fear because of the blood (*death*) of Jesus. ²⁰We can enter through a new way that Jesus opened for us. It is a living way. This new way leads through the curtain—Christ's body. ²¹And we have a great priest who rules the house (*people*) of God. ²²We have been cleansed and made free from feelings of guilt. And our bodies have been washed with pure water. So come near to God with a sincere (*true*) heart, feeling sure because of our faith. ²³We should hold strongly to the hope that we have. And we should never fail to tell people about our hope. We can trust God to do what he promised.

Help Each Other Be Strong

²⁴We should think about each other and see how we can help each other to show love and do good things. ²⁵We should not quit meeting together. That's what some people are doing. But we should meet together and, strengthen each other. You should do this more and more as you see the Day* coming.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holy of holies," the spiritual place where God lives and is worshiped.

the Day Probably the time Christ will come again.

Don't Turn Away from Christ

¹If we decide to continue sinning after we have learned the truth, then there is no other sacrifice* that will take away sins. ²If we continue sinning, all we have is fear in waiting for the judgment and the angry fire that will destroy all people who live against God. ³Any person who refused to obey the law of Moses was found guilty from the proof given by two or three witnesses. That person was not forgiven. He was killed. ⁴So what do you think should be done to a person who shows his hate for the Son of God? Surely that person should have a much worse punishment. Yes, that person should have a worse punishment for not showing respect for the blood (*Jesus' death*) of the new agreement.* That blood once made that person holy. And that person should have a worse punishment for showing his hate against the Spirit* of God's grace (*kindness*). ⁵We know that God said, "I will punish people for the wrong things they do; I will repay them."⁶ And God also said, "The Lord will judge his people."⁷ ⁸It is a terrible thing for a sinful person, to fall into the hands of the living God.

Don't Lose the Courage and Joy You Had

⁹Remember those days when you first learned the truth. You had a hard struggle with many sufferings, but you continued strong. ¹⁰Sometimes people said hateful things to you and persecuted* you before many people. And sometimes you helped other people who were being treated that same way. ¹¹Yes, you helped those people in prison and shared in their suffering. And you still had joy when all the things you owned were taken away from you. You continued with joy because you knew that you had something much better that would continue forever.

sacrifice(s) Gifts or offerings to God.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

"I will ... them" Quote from Deut. 32:35.

"The Lord ... people" Quote from Ps. 135:14.

persecuted To hurt, bother, or do bad things to.

¹²So don't lose the courage that you had in the past. Your courage will be rewarded richly.

¹³You must be patient. After you have done what God wants, then you will get the things that he promised you. ¹⁴In a very short time,

"The One who is coming will come.

He will not be late.

¹⁵ The person who is right with me (*God*) will have life because of his faith.

But if that person turns back in fear,

I will not be pleased with him."¹⁶

Habakkuk 2:3-4

¹⁷But we are not those people who turn back and are lost. No. We are the people who have faith and are saved.

Faith

11 Faith means being sure of the things we hope for. And faith means knowing that something is real even if we don't see it. ²God was pleased with those people who lived a long time ago because they had faith like this.

³Faith helps us understand that God created the whole world with his command. This means that the things we see were made by something that cannot be seen.

⁴Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices* to God. But Abel offered a better sacrifice to God because Abel had faith. God said he was pleased with the things Abel offered. And so God called Abel a good man because Abel had faith. Abel died, but through his faith he is still speaking.

⁵Enoch was carried away from this earth. He never died. The Scripture* says that, before Enoch was carried off, he was a man who truly pleased God. Later, people could not find Enoch, because God took Enoch to be with him. This happened to Enoch because he had faith. ⁶Without faith, a person cannot please God. Any person who comes to God must believe that God is real. And any person who comes to God must believe that God rewards those people who truly want to find him.

"The One ... him" This quote is from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

⁷Noah was warned by God about things that Noah could not yet see. But Noah had faith and respect for God. So Noah built a large boat to save his family. With his faith, Noah showed that the world was wrong. And Noah became one of those people who are made right with God through faith.

⁸God called Abraham to travel to another place that God promised to give Abraham. Abraham did not know where that other place was. But Abraham obeyed God and started traveling, because Abraham had faith.

⁹Abraham lived in that country that God promised to give him. Abraham lived there like a visitor who did not belong. Abraham did this because he had faith. Abraham lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob. Isaac and Jacob also received that same promise from God. ¹⁰Abraham was waiting for the city* that has real foundations. He was waiting for the city that is planned and built by God.

¹¹Abraham was too old to have children. And Sarah was not able to have children. But Abraham had faith in God, and so God made them able to have children. Abraham trusted God to do the things he promised. ¹²This man was so old that he was almost dead. But from that one man came as many descendants (*people*) as there are stars in the sky. So many people came from that one man that they are like grains of sand on the seashore.

¹³All those great men continued living with faith until they died. Those men did not get the things that God promised his people. The men only saw those things coming far in the future and were glad. Those men accepted the fact that they were like visitors and strangers on earth. ¹⁴When people accept something like that, then those people show that they are waiting for a country that will be their own country. ¹⁵If those men were thinking about that country they had left, then they could have gone back. ¹⁶But those men were waiting for a better country—a heavenly country. So God is not ashamed to be called their God. And God has prepared a city for those men.

¹⁷⁻¹⁸God tested Abraham's faith. God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.* Abraham obeyed because he had faith. Abraham already had the promises from God. And God had already said to Abraham, "Isaac will be your only legal son." But Abraham was ready to offer his only son (*Isaac*). Abraham did this because he had faith. ¹⁹Abraham believed that God could raise people from death. And really, when God stopped Abraham from killing Isaac, it was like Abraham got Isaac back from death.

²⁰Isaac blessed the future of Jacob and Esau. Isaac did that because he had faith. ²¹And Jacob blessed each one of Joseph's sons. Jacob did this while he was dying. He was leaning on his rod and worshiping God. Jacob did those things because he had faith.

²²And when Joseph was almost dead, he spoke about the Israelites* (*the Jews*) leaving Egypt. And Joseph told the people what they should do with his body. Joseph said those things because he had faith.

²³And the mother and father of Moses hid Moses for three months after he was born. They did this because they had faith. They saw that Moses was a beautiful baby. And they were not afraid to disobey the king's (*Pharaoh's*) order.

²⁴Moses grew up and became a man. Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. ²⁵Moses chose not to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Those pleasures end quickly. Instead, Moses chose to suffer bad things with God's people. Moses did this because he had faith. ²⁶Moses thought that it was better to suffer for the Christ* than to have all the treasures of Egypt. Moses was waiting for the reward that God would give him. ²⁷Moses left Egypt. He left because he had faith. Moses was not afraid of the king's (*Pharaoh's*) anger. Moses continued strong like he could see the God that no person can see. ²⁸Moses prepared

sacrifice(s) Gifts or offerings to God.

Israelites The Jewish people were from the twelve sons of Jacob, who is also called "Israel."

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

city The spiritual "city" where God's people live with him.

Also called "the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22).

the Passover* and spread the blood on the doors. This blood was spread on the doors, so that the Angel of Death* would not kill the firstborn* sons of the Jewish people. Moses did this because he had faith.

²⁹And the people that Moses led, all walked through the Red Sea like it was dry land. They were able to do this because they had faith. The Egyptians also tried to walk through the Red Sea, but they were all drowned.

³⁰And the walls of Jericho fell because of the faith of God's people. The people marched around the walls of Jericho for seven days, and then the walls fell.

³¹And Rahab, the prostitute,* welcomed the Israelite spies and helped them like friends. And because of her faith she was not killed with those other people who refused to obey.

³²Do I need to give you more examples? I don't have enough time to tell you about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets.* ³³All those people had great faith. And with that faith they defeated kingdoms. They did the things that are right, and they got the things that God promised. With their faith some people closed the mouths of lions. ³⁴Some people stopped great fires, and other people were saved from being killed with swords. They did those things because they had faith. Weak people were made strong because of their faith. They became powerful in battle and defeated other armies. ³⁵People that had died were raised from death, and they were given back to the women in their family. Other people were tortured* and refused to accept their freedom. They did this so that they could be raised from death to a better life. ³⁶Some people were laughed at and

beaten. Other people were tied and put into prison. ³⁷They were killed with stones and they were cut in half. They were killed with swords. Some of these people wore the skins of sheep and goats. They were poor, persecuted,* and treated badly by other people. ³⁸The world was not good enough for these great people. These people wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹All these people are known for their faith. But none of these people got God's great promise. ⁴⁰God planned to give us something better. Then those people could be made perfect, but only together with us.

We Should Also Follow Jesus' Example

12 We have those many people of faith around us. Their lives tell us what faith means. So we should be like them. We too should run the race that is before us and never stop trying. We should take away from our lives, anything that would stop us. And we should take away the sin that so easily catches us. ²We should always follow the example of Jesus. Jesus is the leader in our faith. And he makes our faith perfect. He suffered death on the cross. But Jesus accepted the shame of the cross like it was nothing. He did this because of the joy that God put before him. And now he is sitting at the right side of God's throne. ³Think about Jesus. He was patient while sinful men were doing bad things against him. Jesus did this so that you also will be patient and not stop trying.

God Is Like a Father

⁴You are struggling against sin, but your struggles have not yet caused you to be killed. ⁵You are sons of God, and he speaks words of comfort to you. You have forgotten those words:

"My son, don't think it is worth nothing when the Lord punishes you, and don't stop trying when the Lord corrects you.

Passover Important holy day for Jews. They ate a special meal on this day every year to remember that God freed them from slavery in Egypt in Moses' time.

Angel of Death Literally, "the destroyer." To punish the Egyptian people, God sent an angel to kill the oldest son in each home (Ex. 12:29-32).

firstborn The first child born into a family.

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

prophets People who spoke for God. Their writings are part of the Old Testament.

tortured To be bound or tied and then hurt or punished.

persecuted To be hurt or bothered by other people.

- ⁶ The Lord punishes every person
that he loves,
and he punishes every person
that he accepts as a son."

Proverbs 3:11-12

⁷So accept sufferings like those sufferings are a father's punishment. God does these things to you like a father punishing his sons. All sons are punished by their fathers. ⁸If you are never punished (and every son must be punished), then you are not true children and not really sons. ⁹We have all had fathers here on earth who punished us. And we respected our fathers. So it is even more important that we accept punishment from the Father of our spirits. If we do this we will have life. ¹⁰Our fathers on earth punished us for a short time. They punished us the way they thought was best. But God punishes us to help us, so that we can become holy* like him. ¹¹We don't enjoy punishment when we get it. Being punished is painful. But later, after we have learned from being punished, we have peace, because we start living right.

Be Careful How You Live

¹²You have become weak. So make yourselves strong again. ¹³Walk (*live*) in the right way so that you will be saved and your weakness will not cause you to be lost.

¹⁴Try to live in peace with all people. And try to live lives free from sin. If a person's life is not holy,* then he will never see the Lord. ¹⁵Be careful that no person fails to get God's grace (*kindness*). Be careful that no person becomes like a bitter weed growing among you. A person like that can ruin your whole group. ¹⁶Be careful that no person does sexual sin. And be careful that no person is like Esau and never thinks about God. Esau was the oldest son and he would have inherited (*received*) everything from his father. But Esau sold all that for a single meal. ¹⁷You remember that after Esau did this, he wanted to get his father's blessing. Esau wanted that blessing so

much that he cried. But his father refused to give him the blessing, because Esau could find no way to change the thing he had done.

¹⁸You have come to a new place. It is not a place like the mountain that the people of Israel* came to. You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. You have not come to darkness, sadness and storms. ¹⁹You have not come to the sound of a trumpet or to a voice speaking words to you. When the people heard the voice, they begged to never hear another word. ²⁰They did not want to hear the command: "If anything, even an animal, touches the mountain, it must be killed with stones."²¹ ²²The things those people saw were so terrible that Moses said, "I am shaking with fear."²³

²⁴But you have not come to that kind of place. The new place you have come to is Mount Zion.* You have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.* You have come to thousands of angels gathered together with joy. ²⁵You have come to the meeting of God's firstborn* children. Their names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all people. And you have come to the spirits of good people who have been made perfect. ²⁶You have come to Jesus—the One that brought the new agreement* from God to his people. You have come to the sprinkled blood* that tells us about better things than the blood of Abel.*

²⁷Be careful and don't refuse to listen when God speaks. Those people (*Israelites*) refused to listen to him when he warned them on earth.

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

"If ... stones" Quote from Ex. 19:12-13.

"I ... fear" Quote from Deut. 9:19.

Mount Zion Another name for Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Here, the spiritual city of God's people.

firstborn The first son born in a Jewish family had the most important place in the family and received special blessings.

All God's children are like that.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

sprinkled blood The blood (death) of Jesus.

Abel The son of Adam and Eve, who was killed by his brother Cain (Gen. 4:8).

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

And those people did not escape. Now God is speaking from heaven. So now it will be worse for those people who refuse to listen to him. ¹⁴When he spoke before, his voice shook the earth. But now he has promised, "Once again I will shake the earth. But I will also shake heaven."¹⁵ The words "once again" clearly show us that everything that was made will be destroyed. Those are the things that can be shaken. And only the things that cannot be shaken will continue.

¹⁶So we should be thankful because we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken. We should be thankful and worship God in a way that will please him. We should worship him with respect and fear, ¹⁷because our God is like a fire that can destroy.

13 You are brothers and sisters, in Christ, so continue loving each other. ²Always remember to help people by accepting them into your home. Some people have done that and have helped angels without knowing it. ³Don't forget those people in prison. Remember them like you are in prison with them. And don't forget those people who are suffering. Remember them like you are suffering with them.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all people. And every marriage should be kept pure between only two people. God will judge guilty those people who do sexual sins and adultery.* ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money. And be satisfied with the things you have. God has said,

"I will never leave you;
I will never run away from you."

Deuteronomy 31:6

⁶So we can feel sure and say,

"The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
People can do nothing to me."

Psalms 118:6

⁷Remember your leaders. They taught God's message to you. Remember how they lived and died, and copy their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

⁹Don't let all kinds of strange teachings lead you into the wrong way. Your hearts should be strengthened by God's grace (*kindness*), not by obeying rules about foods. Obeying those rules doesn't help people.

¹⁰We have a sacrifice.* And those priests who serve in the tent* cannot eat from our sacrifice. ¹¹The high priest* carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place.* He offers that blood for sins. But the bodies of those animals are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the city. Jesus died to make his people holy* with his own blood (*death*). ¹³So we should go to Jesus outside the camp. We should accept the same shame that Jesus had. ¹⁴Here on earth we don't have a city that continues forever. But we are waiting for the city that we will have in the future. ¹⁵So through Jesus we should never stop offering our sacrifice to God. That sacrifice is our praise, coming from lips that speak his name. ¹⁶And don't forget to do good for other people. And share with other people. These are the sacrifices that please God.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and be under their authority. Those men are responsible for you. So they are always watching to protect your souls. Obey those men so that they will do this work with joy, not sadness. It will not help you to make their work hard.

¹⁸Continue praying for us. We feel right about the things we do, because we always try to do the best thing. ¹⁹And I beg you to pray that God will send me back to you soon. I want this more than anything else.

sacrifice Here, the sacrifice (offering) of Jesus. He gave his life to pay for people's sins.

tent The special tent or "tabernacle" where the Jewish priests worshiped God.

high priest Most important Jewish priest and leader.

Most Holy Place Literally, "holy of holies," the place where God met the high priest.

holy God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

"Once again ... heaven" Quote from Hag. 2:6.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

^{20,21}I pray that the God of peace will give you every good thing you need so that you can do the things he wants. God is the One who raised our Lord Jesus from death. He raised Jesus, the Great Shepherd of the sheep. God raised Jesus because of his blood (*death*). His blood began the new agreement* that continues forever. I pray that God will do the things in us that please him. I ask that he will do those things through Jesus Christ. To Jesus be glory forever. Amen.

²²My brothers and sisters,, I beg you to listen patiently to these things I have said. I said these things to strengthen you. And this letter is not very long. ²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy is out of prison. If he comes to me soon, we will both come to see you.

²⁴Say hello to all your leaders and to all God's people. All God's people, in Italy say hello to you.

²⁵God's grace (*kindness*) be with you all.

new agreement This is the "better agreement" that God has given to his people through Jesus.

James

1 From James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ. To all of God's people that are scattered everywhere in the world: Greetings.

Faith and Wisdom

²My brothers and sisters,, you will have many kinds of troubles. But when these things happen, you should be very happy. ³Why? Because you know that these things are testing your faith. And this will give you patience. ⁴Let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do. Then you will be perfect and complete. You will have everything you need. ⁵But if any of you needs wisdom, then you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people. So God will give you wisdom. ⁶But when you ask God, you must believe. Don't doubt God. The person who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. The person who doubts is like that wave. ¹⁴The person who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord.

True Riches

¹If a believer is poor, he should be proud because God has made him spiritually rich. ¹⁰If a believer is rich, he should be proud because God has shown him that, he is spiritually poor. The rich person will die like a wild flower in the grass. ¹¹The sun rises and becomes hotter and hotter. The heat from the

sun makes the plants very dry. The flower falls off. The flower was beautiful, but now it is dead. It is the same with a rich person. While he is still making plans for his business, he will die.

Temptation Does Not Come from God

¹When a person is tempted and still continues strong, he should be happy. Why? Because after he has proved his faith,, God will give him the reward of life forever. God promised this to all people who love him. ¹³When a person is being tempted, he should not say, "God is tempting me." Evil cannot tempt God. And God himself does not tempt any person. ¹⁴It is the evil things a person wants that tempt that person. His own evil desire leads him away and holds him. ¹⁵This desire causes sin. Then the sin grows and brings death.

¹⁶My dear brothers and sisters,, don't be fooled about this. ¹⁷Everything good comes from God. And every perfect gift is from God. These good gifts come down from the Father (*Maker*) of all light (*sun, moon, stars*). God does not change. He is always the same. ¹⁸God decided to give us life through the word of truth. He wanted us to be the most important of all the things he made.

Listening and Obeying

¹My dear brothers and sisters,, always be more willing to listen than to speak. Don't become angry easily. ²A person's anger does not help him live right like God wants. ³So put

out of your life every evil thing and every kind of wrong thing you do. Be humble and accept God's teaching that is planted in your hearts. This teaching can save your souls.

²Do what God's teaching says; don't just listen and do nothing. Why? Because when you only sit and listen, you are fooling yourselves. ³If a person hears God's teaching and does nothing, he is like this: He is like a man who looks at his face in the mirror. ⁴The man sees himself, then goes away and quickly forgets what he looked like. ⁵But the truly happy person is the person who carefully studies God's perfect law that makes people free. He continues to study it. He listens to God's teaching and does not forget what he heard. Then he obeys what God's teaching says. When that person does this, it makes that person happy.

The True Way to Worship God

⁶Some person might think he is religious (*good*). But if that person says things he should not say, then he is fooling himself. His "religion" is worth nothing. ⁷This is the kind of religion (*worship*) that God accepts: caring for orphans* or widows* who need help, and keeping yourself free from the world's evil influence. This is the kind of religion (*worship*) that God accepts as pure and good.

Love All People

2 My dear brothers (and sisters), you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So don't think that some people are more important than other people. ²Suppose a person comes into your group. He is wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor man comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. ³You show special attention to the man wearing nice clothes. You say, "Sit here in this good seat." But you say to the poor man, "Stand there!" or, "Sit on the floor by our feet!" "What are you doing? You are making some people more

important than others. With evil thoughts you are deciding which person is better.

⁴Listen, my dear brothers (and sisters),! God chose the poor people in the world to be rich with faith. He chose them to receive the kingdom God promised to people who love him. ⁵But you show no respect to the poor man. And you know that the rich people are the people who always try to control your lives. And they are the people who take you to court. ⁷And the rich people are the people who say bad things against the good name of the One (*Jesus*) who owns you.

⁸One law rules over all other laws. This royal law is found in the Scriptures*: "Love other people as much as you love yourself."* If you obey this law, then you are doing right. ⁹But if you are treating one person like he is more important than another person, then you are sinning. That royal law proves that you are guilty of breaking God's law. ¹⁰A person might follow all of God's law. But if that person fails to obey only one command, then he is guilty of breaking all the commands in that law. ¹¹God said, "Don't do the sin of adultery.*" The same God also said, "Don't kill.*" So if you don't do the sin of adultery, but you kill a person, then you are guilty of breaking all of God's law. ¹²You will be judged by the law that makes people free. You should remember this in everything you say and do. ¹³Yes, you must show mercy to other people. If you do not show mercy, then God will not show mercy to you when he judges you. But the person who shows mercy can stand without fear when he is judged.

Faith and Good Works

¹⁴My brothers (and sisters), if a person says that he has faith, but does nothing, then that faith is worth nothing. Can faith like that save him? No! ¹⁵A brother or sister in Christ might need clothes or might need food to eat. ¹⁶And

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"Love ... yourself" Quote from Lev. 19:18.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

"Don't ... adultery" Quote from Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18.

"Don't kill" Quote from Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17.

orphans Children whose mother and father have died.

widows A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

you say to that person, "God be with you! I hope you stay warm and get plenty to eat." You say these things, but you don't give that person those things he needs. If you don't help that person, your words are worth nothing. ¹⁷It is the same with faith. If faith does nothing, then that faith is dead, because it is alone.

¹⁸A person might say, "You have faith, but I do things. Show me your faith! Your faith does nothing. I will show you my faith by the things I do." ¹⁹You believe there is one God. Good! But the demons* believe, too! And they shake with fear.

²⁰You foolish person! Must you be shown that faith that does nothing is worth nothing?

²¹Abraham is our father (*ancestor*). Abraham was made right with God by the things he did. He offered (*gave*) his son Isaac to God on the altar.* ²²So you see that Abraham's faith and the things he did worked together. His faith was made perfect by the things he did. ²³This shows the full meaning of the Scripture* that says: "Abraham believed God. And God accepted Abraham's faith. That faith made Abraham right with God."* Abraham was called "God's friend."* ²⁴So you see that a person is made right with God by the things he does. He cannot be made right by faith only.

²⁵Another example is Rahab. Rahab was a prostitute.* But she was made right with God by something she did: She helped the spies for God's people. She welcomed them into her home and helped them escape by a different road.*

²⁶A person's body that does not have a spirit is dead. It is the same with faith—faith that does nothing is dead!

Controlling the Things We Say

3 My brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers. Why? Because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly than other people. ²We all make many mistakes. If there were a person who never said anything wrong, then that person would be perfect. He would be able to control his whole body, too. ³We put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us. With these bits in the horses' mouths, we can control their whole body. ⁴It is the same with ships. A ship is very big, and it is pushed by strong winds. But a very small rudder controls that big ship. The man who controls the rudder decides where the ship will go. The ship goes where the man wants. ⁵It is the same with our tongue. It is a small part of the body, but it boasts about doing great things.

A big forest fire can be started with only a little flame. ⁶The tongue is like a fire. It is a world of evil among the parts of our body. How? The tongue spreads its evil through our whole body. It starts a fire that influences all of life. The tongue gets this fire from hell. ⁷People can tame every kind of wild animal, bird, reptile, and fish. People have already tamed all these things. ⁸But no person can tame (*control*) the tongue. It is wild and evil. It is full of poison that can kill. ⁹We use our tongues to praise our Lord and Father (*God*), but then we curse (*say bad things to*) people. And God made those people like himself. ¹⁰Praises and curses come from the same mouth! My brothers and sisters, this should not happen. ¹¹Do good water and bad water flow from the same spring? No! ¹²My brothers and sisters, can a fig tree make olives? No! Can a grapevine make figs? No! And a well full of salty water cannot give good water.

True Wisdom

¹³Is there any person among you who is truly wise and understanding? Then he should show his wisdom by living right. He should do good things with humility. A wise person does not boast. ¹⁴If you are selfish and have bitter

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

altar(s) Place for offering sacrifices (gifts) to God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

"Abraham ... God" Quote from Gen. 15:6.

"God's friend" Quote from 2 Chron. 20:7; Is. 41:8.

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

She helped ... road The story about Rahab is found in Joshua 2:1-21.

jealousy in your hearts, then you have no reason to boast. Your boasting is a lie that hides the truth. ¹⁵That kind of "wisdom" does not come from God. That "wisdom" comes from the world. It is not spiritual. It is from the devil. ¹⁶Where there is jealousy and selfishness, there will be confusion and every kind of evil. ¹⁷But the wisdom that comes from God is like this: First, it is pure. It is also peaceful, gentle, and easy to please. This wisdom is always ready to help people who have trouble and to do good things for other people. This wisdom is always fair and honest. ¹⁸People who work for peace in a peaceful way get the good things that come from right-living.

Give Yourself to God

4 Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? Your fights and arguments come from the selfish desires that make war inside you. ²You want things, but you don't get them. So you kill and are jealous of other people. But you still cannot get what you want. So you argue and fight. You don't get the things you want because you don't ask God. ³Or when you ask, you don't receive. Why? Because the reason you ask is wrong. You only want things so that you can use those things for your own pleasures. ⁴So you people are not faithful to God! You should know that loving the world is the same as hating God. So if a person wants to be a part* of the world, then he makes himself God's enemy. ⁵Do you think the Scripture* means nothing? The Scripture says, "The Spirit* that God, made to live in us wants us only for himself."* ⁶But the grace (*kindness*) that God gives is greater. Like the Scripture says, "God is against proud people, but he gives grace (*kindness*) to people who are humble."* ⁷So give yourselves to God. Be against the devil, and the devil will run

away from you. ⁸Come near to God and God will come near to you. You are sinners. So clean sin out of your lives.* You are trying to follow God and the world at the same time. Make your thinking pure. ⁹Be sad, be sorry, and cry! Change your laughter into crying. Change your joy into sadness. ¹⁰Be humble before the Lord, and he will make you great.

You Are Not the Judge

¹Brothers and sisters, don't say things against each other. If you criticize your brother in Christ, or judge him, then you are criticizing the law he follows. When you judge a brother in Christ, you are really judging the law he follows. And when you are judging the law, you are not a follower of the law. You have become a judge! ²God is the only One who makes laws. He is the only Judge. God is the only One who can save and destroy. So it is not right for you to judge another person.

Let God Plan Your Life

¹Some of you say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to some city. We will stay there a year, do business, and make money." Listen! Think about this: ²You don't know what will happen tomorrow! Your life is like a fog. You can see it for a short time, but then it goes away. ³So you should say, "If the Lord wants, we will live and do this or that." ⁴But now you are proud and you boast. All of this boasting is wrong. ⁵And when a person knows how to do good, but does not do good, then he is sinning.

Selfish Rich People Will Be Punished

5 You rich people, listen! Cry and be very sad because much trouble will come to you. ²Your riches will rot and be worth nothing. Your clothes will be eaten by moths. ³Your gold and silver will rust, and that rust will be a proof that you were wrong. That rust will eat your bodies like fire. You saved your treasure in the last days. ⁴People worked in your fields, but you did not pay them. Those

part Literally, "friend."

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

"The Spirit ... himself!" See Ex. 20:5.

"God ... humble" Quote from Prov. 3:34.

So clean ... lives Literally, "So wash your hands."

people are crying out against you. Those people harvested your crops. Now the Lord (*God*) of heaven's armies* has heard the things they are shouting. "Your life on earth was full of rich living. You pleased yourselves with everything you wanted. You made yourselves fat, like an animal ready for the day of slaughter.* "You showed no mercy to good people. They were not against you, but you killed them.

Be Patient

"Brothers and sisters,, be patient; the Lord Jesus, will come. So be patient until that time. Farmers are patient. A farmer waits for his valuable crop to grow up from the earth. A farmer waits patiently for his crop to receive the first rain and the last rain.* "You must be patient, too. Don't stop hoping. The Lord Jesus, is coming soon. "Brothers, and sisters,, don't complain against each other. If you don't stop complaining, you will be judged guilty. And the Judge is ready to come! "Brothers, and sisters,, follow the example of the prophets* who spoke for the Lord (*God*). They suffered many bad things, but they were patient. "We say that those people who accepted their troubles with patience are now happy. You have heard about Job's patience.* You know that after all Job's trouble, the Lord helped him. This shows that the Lord is full of mercy and is kind.

Be Careful What You Say

"My brothers and sisters,, it is very important that you not use an oath when you make a promise. Don't use the name of heaven, earth, or anything else to prove what you say. When you mean yes, say only "yes." When you mean no, say only "no." Do this so that you will not be judged guilty.

Lord ... armies Literally, "Lord Sabaoth," meaning ruler of all heavenly powers.

You ... slaughter Literally, "You fattened your hearts for the day of slaughter."

first ... rain The "first rain" came in the Fall and the "last rain" came in the Spring.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

Job's patience Read the book of Job.

The Power of Prayer

"If one of you is having troubles, he should pray. If one of you is happy, he should sing. "If one of you is sick, he should call the church's elders.* The elders should rub oil on him* in the name of the Lord and pray for him. "And the prayer that is said with faith will make the sick person well. The Lord will heal him. And if this person has sinned, then God will forgive him. "Always tell each other the wrong things you have done. Then pray for each other. Do this so that God can heal you. When a good person prays hard, great things happen. "Elijah* was a person the same as us. He prayed that it would not rain. And it did not rain on the land for three and a half years! "Then Elijah prayed that it would rain. And the rain came down from the sky, and the land grew crops again.

Saving a Soul

"My brothers and sisters,, one of you may wander away from the truth. And another person may help him come back to the truth. "Remember this: Any person who brings a sinner back from the wrong way will save that sinner's soul from death (*hell*). By doing this, that person will cause many sins to be forgiven.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11).

rub oil on him Oil was used like medicine.

Elijah Man who spoke for God about 850 B.C.

1 Peter

1 From Peter, an apostle* of Jesus Christ.
To God's chosen people who are away from their homes—people scattered all around the areas of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. ²God planned long ago to choose you by making you his holy people.* Making you holy is the Spirit's* work. God wanted you to obey him and to be made clean by the blood (*death*) of Jesus Christ. Grace (*kindness*) and peace be yours more and more.

A Living Hope

³Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has great mercy, and because of his mercy he gave us a new life. This new life brings us a living hope through Jesus Christ's rising from death. ⁴Now we hope for the blessings God has for his children. Those blessings are kept for you in heaven. Those blessings cannot ruin or be destroyed or lose their beauty. ⁵God's power protects you through your faith, and it keeps you safe until your salvation comes. That salvation is ready to be given to you at the end of time. ⁶This makes you very happy. But now for a short time different kinds of troubles may make you sad. ⁷Why do these troubles happen? To prove that your faith is pure (*true*). This purity of faith is

worth more than gold. Gold can be proved to be pure by fire, but gold will ruin. The purity of your faith will bring you praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ appears (*comes*). ⁸You have not seen Christ, but still you love him. You can't see him now, but you believe in him. You are filled with a joy that cannot be explained. And that joy is full of glory. ⁹Your faith has a goal. That goal is to save your souls. And you are receiving that goal—your salvation.

¹⁰The prophets* studied carefully and tried to learn about this salvation. Those prophets spoke about the grace (*kindness*) that was coming to you. ¹¹The Spirit of Christ was in those prophets. And the Spirit was telling about the sufferings that would happen to Christ and about the glory that would come after those sufferings. Those prophets tried to learn about what the Spirit was showing them. They tried to learn when those things would happen and what the world would be like at that time. ¹²It was shown to those prophets that their service was not for themselves. The prophets were serving you. They were serving you when they told about the things that you have heard. The men who preached the gospel* to you told you those things. They told you with the help of the Holy Spirit* that was sent from heaven. The things you were told are things that even the angels want very much to know about.

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

gospel, message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

A Call to Holy Living

"So prepare your minds for service, and have self-control. All your hope should be for the gift of grace (*kindness*) that will be yours when Jesus Christ appears (*comes*). "In the past you did not understand about these things, so you did the evil things you wanted. But now you are children of God, who obey. So don't live like you lived in the past. "But be holy* in all the things you do, the same as God is holy. God is the One who called you. "It is written in the Scriptures,*: "Be holy, because I (God) am holy.*"

"You pray to God and call him Father. God judges each man's work equally. So while you are visiting here on earth,, you should live with fear (*respect*) for God. "You know that, in the past, you were living in a worthless way. You got that way of living from the people who lived before you. But you were saved from that way of living. You were bought, but not with things that ruin like gold or silver. "But you were bought with the precious blood (*death*) of Christ—a pure and perfect lamb. "Christ was chosen before the world was made. But he was shown to the world, in these last times for you. "You believe in God through Christ. God raised Christ from death. Then God gave glory to him. So your faith and your hope is in God.

"Now you have made yourselves pure by obeying the truth. Now you can have true love for your brothers and sisters. So love each other deeply—with all your heart. "You have been born again. This new life did not come from something that dies. That life came from something that cannot die. You were born again through God's living message* that continues forever. "The Scripture* says,

"All people are like the grass,
and all their glory is like

the flower on the grass.

The grass dies,

and the flower falls,

2 but the word of God will live forever."

Isaiah 40:6-8

And this is the word (*teaching*) that was told to you.

The Living Stone and the Holy Nation

2 So don't do anything to hurt other people,, don't lie, don't do things to fool people, don't be jealous, don't say bad things about people. Put all these things out of your life. "Be like babies that are newly born. Be hungry for the pure milk (*teaching*) that feeds your spirit. By drinking that you can grow up and be saved. "You have already tasted the goodness of the Lord.

"The Lord Jesus, is the "stone"* that lives. The people of the world, decided they did not want that stone (*Jesus*). But he was the stone God chose. To God he was worth much. So come to him. "You also are like living stones. Let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple*—to be holy priests who give spiritual sacrifices* to God that he will accept. You give those sacrifices through Jesus Christ. "The Scripture* says:

"Look, I have chosen a precious
(*valuable*) cornerstone,*

and I put that stone (*Jesus*) in Zion*;

the person who trusts in him will never be
ashamed."

Isaiah 28:16

"That stone (*Jesus*) is worth much to you people who believe. But to the people who don't believe, he is:

stone The most important stone in God's spiritual temple or house (his people).

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

sacrifices A sacrifice is a gift or offering for God.

Scripture Part of the Holy Writings—Old Testament.

cornerstone First and most important rock of a building.

Zion Another name for Jerusalem, the city of God's chosen people.

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Scripture(s) Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

"Be ... holy" Quote from Lev. 11:45; 19:3; 20:7.

gospel, message The news that God has made a way through Christ for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

"the stone that the builders decided they did not want.
That stone became the most important stone."

Psalms 118:22

"To people who don't believe, he is:

- "a stone that makes people stumble,
a stone that makes people fall."

Isaiah 8:14

People stumble because they don't obey what God says. This is what God planned to happen to those people.

"But you are chosen people. You are the King's priests. You are a holy* nation of people. You are people who belong to God. God chose you to tell about the wonderful things he has done. He called (*brought*) you out of darkness (*sin*) into his wonderful light. "At one time you were not God's people. But now you are God's people. In the past you had never received mercy. But now you have received mercy from God.

Live for God

"Dear friends, you are like visitors and strangers in this world. So I beg you to stay away from the evil things your bodies want to do. These things fight against your soul. "People who don't believe are living all around you. Those people may say that you are doing wrong. So live good lives. Then they will see the good things you do, and they will give glory to God on that day when he comes.

ObeY Every Human Authority

"Obey the people who have authority* in this world. Do this for the Lord. Obey the king who is the highest authority. "And obey the leaders who are sent by the king. They are sent to punish people who do wrong and to praise those people who do good. "So when you do good, you stop foolish people from saying

holy Holy people are pure and belong only to God.
people who have authority Rulers, governors,
presidents, or other government leaders.

stupid things about you. This is what God wants. "Live like free men. But don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. Live like you are serving God. "Show respect for all people. Love all the brothers and sisters of God's family. Fear (*respect*) God, and honor the king.

The Example of Christ's Suffering

"Slaves, accept the authority of your masters. Do this with all respect. You should obey the masters that are good and kind, and you should obey the masters that are bad. "A person might have to suffer even when he has done nothing wrong. If that person thinks of God and bears the pain, then this pleases God. "But if you are punished for doing wrong, there is no reason to praise you for bearing that punishment. But if you suffer for doing good, and you are patient, then that pleases God. "That is what you were called to do. Christ gave you an example to follow. You should do the same as he did. You should be patient when you suffer, because Christ suffered for you.

- "He (*Christ*) did no sin,
and no lies were found in his mouth."

Isaiah 53:9

"People said bad things to Christ, but he did not say bad things to them. Christ suffered, but he did not threaten (*speak against*) the people. No! Christ let God take care of him. God is the One who judges rightly. "Christ carried our sins in his body on the cross. He did this so that we would stop living for sin and live for what is right. By his (*Christ's*) wounds you were healed. "You were like sheep that went the wrong way. But now you have come back to the Shepherd and Protector of your souls.

Wives and Husbands

3 In the same way you wives should accept the authority of your husbands. Then, if some of your husbands have not obeyed God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe. You will not need to say anything. They will be persuaded by the way their wives

live. ²Your husbands will see the pure lives that you live with your respect for God. ³It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. ⁴No, your beauty should come from inside you—the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. That beauty will never disappear. It is worth very much to God. ⁵It was the same with the holy women who lived long ago and followed God. They made themselves beautiful in that same way. They accepted the authority of their husbands. ⁶I am talking about women, like Sarah. She obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid.

⁷In the same way, you husbands should live with your wives in an understanding way. You should show respect to your wives. They are weaker than you. But God gives your wives the same blessing that he gives you—the grace (*kindness*) that gives true life. Do these things so that nothing will trouble your prayers.

Suffering for Doing Right

⁸So all of you should live together in peace. Try to understand each other. Love each other like brothers. Be kind and humble. ⁹Don't do wrong to a person to pay him back for doing wrong to you. Or don't say something bad to a person to pay him back for saying something bad to you. But ask God to, bless that person. Do this, because you yourselves were called to receive a blessing. ¹⁰The Scripture* says,

"The person that wants to love life
and wants to enjoy good days
must stop speaking evil,
and he must stop telling lies.

- ¹¹ That person must stop doing evil
and do good;
that person should look for peace and
try to get it.
- ¹² The Lord sees the good people,
and the Lord listens to their prayers;
but the Lord is against those people

that do evil."

Psalms 34:12-16

¹³If you are always trying to do good, then no person can really hurt you. ¹⁴But you may suffer for doing right. If that happens, then you are blessed (*happy*). "Don't be afraid of those people who make you suffer; don't be worried."^{*} ¹⁵But you should keep the Lord Christ holy in your hearts. Always be ready to answer every person who asks you to explain about the hope you have. ¹⁶But answer those people in a gentle way with respect. Always be able to feel that you are doing right. When you do that, the people who say bad things about you will be made ashamed. They say these bad things about the good way you live in Christ. They will be made ashamed for the bad things they said about you. ¹⁷It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong. Yes, it is better if that is what God wants. ¹⁸Christ himself died for you. And that one death paid for your sins. He was not guilty, but he died for people who are guilty. He did this to bring you all to God. His body was killed, but he was made alive in the spirit. ¹⁹And in the spirit he went and preached to the spirits in prison. ²⁰Those were the spirits who refused to obey God long ago in the time of Noah. God was waiting patiently for them while Noah was building the ark (*boat*). Only a few people—eight in all—were saved in that ark. Those people were saved by water. ²¹That water is like baptism* that now saves you. Baptism is not the washing of dirt from the body. Baptism is asking God for a pure heart. It saves you because Jesus Christ was raised from death. ²²Now Jesus has gone into heaven. He is at God's right side. He rules over angels, authorities, and powers.

Changed Lives

4 Christ suffered while he was in his body. So you should strengthen yourselves with the same kind of thinking Christ had. The

"Don't ... worried" Quote from Is. 8:12.

baptism A Greek word meaning to be immersed, dipped, or buried briefly under water.

person who has suffered in his body is finished with sin. ²Strengthen yourselves, so that you will live your lives here on earth doing what God wants, not doing the evil things that people want. ³In the past you wasted too much time doing the things that the non-believers like to do. You were doing sexual sins. You were doing the evil things you wanted. You were becoming drunk, having wild and wasteful parties, having drunken parties, and doing wrong by worshiping idols (*false gods*). ⁴Those non-believers think that it is strange that you don't do the many wild and wasteful things that they do. And so they say bad things about you. ⁵But those people will have to explain about the things they have done. They will have to explain to the One (*Christ*) who is ready to judge the people who are living and the people who are dead. ⁶The gospel* was preached to those people who are now dead, because those people will be judged like all people are judged. They will be judged for the things they did while they were living. But the gospel was preached to them so that they could live in the spirit like God lives.

Be Good Managers of God's Gifts

⁷The time is near when all things will end. So keep your minds clear, and control yourselves. This will help you to pray. ⁸Most important, love each other deeply. Love hides many, many sins. ⁹Share your homes with each other without complaining. ¹⁰Each of you received a spiritual gift (from God). God has shown you his grace (*kindness*) in many different ways. And you are like servants who are responsible for using God's gifts. So be good servants and use your gifts to serve each other. ¹¹The person who speaks should speak words from God. The person who serves should serve with the strength that God gives. You should do these things so that in everything God will be praised through Jesus Christ. Power and glory belong to him forever and ever. Amen.

gospel The Good News that God was making a way for people to be saved.

Suffering as a Christian

¹²My friends, don't be surprised at the painful things that you are now suffering. Those things are testing your faith. Don't think that something strange is happening to you. ¹³But you should be happy that you are sharing in Christ's sufferings. You will be happy and full of joy when Christ shows his glory. ¹⁴When people say bad things to you because you follow Christ, then you are blessed (*happy*). You are blessed because the Spirit* of glory is with you. That is the Spirit of God. ¹⁵Don't be like a criminal or a person who kills, steals, or bothers other people. A person will suffer for doing those things. None of you should ever suffer like that. ¹⁶But if you suffer because you are a Christian, then don't be ashamed. You should praise (*thank*) God for that name (*Christian*). ¹⁷It is time for judging to begin. That judging will begin with God's family. If that judgment begins with us, then what will happen to those people who don't obey the gospel* of God? ¹⁸"It is very hard for a good person to be saved. So what will happen to the person who is against God and is full of sin?"* ¹⁹So those people who suffer like God wants them to should trust their souls to him. God is the One who made them, and they can trust him. So they should continue to do good.

The Flock of God

5 Now I have something to say to the elders* in your group. I am also an elder. I myself have seen Christ's sufferings. And I will share in the glory that will be shown to us. I beg you to ²take care of the group of people that you are responsible for. They are God's flock.* Watch over that flock because you want

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

"It ... sin" Quote from Prov. 11:31 in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

God's flock God's people. They are like a flock (group) of sheep that need to be cared for.

to, not because you are forced to do it. That is how God wants it. Do it because you are happy to serve, not because you want money. ³Don't be like a hard ruler over those people you are responsible for. But be good examples to those people. ⁴Then when the Ruling Shepherd (*Christ*) comes, you will get a crown. That crown will be very glorious, and it will never lose its beauty.

⁵Young men, I have something to say to you, too. You should accept the authority of the elders.* All of you should be very humble with each other.

"God is against the proud people,
but he gives grace (*kindness*) to the
humble people."

Proverbs 3:34

⁶So be humble under God's powerful hand. Then he will lift you up when the right time comes. ⁷Give all your worries to him, because he cares for you.

⁸Control yourselves and be careful! The devil is your enemy. And he goes around like a roaring lion looking for some person to eat. ⁹Refuse to follow the devil. Stand strong in your faith. You know that your brothers and sisters all over the world are having the same sufferings that you have.

¹⁰Yes, you will suffer for a short time. But after that, God will make everything right. He will make you strong. He will support you and keep you from falling. He is the God that gives all grace (*kindness*). He called you to share in his glory in Christ. That glory will continue forever. ¹¹All power is his forever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

¹²I wrote this short letter with the help of Silas. I know that he is a faithful brother in Christ. I wrote to comfort and encourage you. I wanted to tell you that this is the true grace (*kindness*) of God. Stand strong in that grace.

elders Men chosen to lead a church. Also called "overseers" and "pastors" (shepherds), they have the work of caring for God's people (Acts 20:28).

¹³The church in Babylon* says hello to you. Those people were chosen the same as you. Mark, my son in Christ, also says hello.

¹⁴Give each other a kiss of love when you meet.

Peace to all of you that are in Christ.

church in Babylon Literally, "She in Babylon."

2 Peter

1 From Simon Peter, a servant and apostle* of Jesus Christ.

To all you people who have a faith that is valuable like ours. You received that faith because our God and Savior Jesus Christ is fair. He does what is right.

²Grace (*kindness*) and peace be given to you more and more. You will have grace and peace because you truly know God and Jesus our Lord.

God Has Given Us Everything We Need

³Jesus has the power of God. His power has given us everything we need to live and to serve God. We have these things because we know him. Jesus called us by his glory and goodness. ⁴Through his glory and goodness, Jesus gave us the very great and rich gifts that he promised us. With those gifts you can share in being like God. And so the world will not ruin you with the evil things it wants.

⁵Because you have these blessings, you should try as much as you can to add these things to your life; to your faith add goodness; and to your goodness add knowledge; ⁶and to your knowledge add self-control; and to your self-control add patience; and to your patience add service for God; ⁷and to your service for God add kindness for your brothers and sisters in Christ; and to this kindness for your brothers and sisters add love. ⁸If all these things are in you and they are growing, then these

things will help you to never be useless. These things will help you to never be worthless in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹But if a person does not have these things, then he cannot see clearly. That person is blind. He has forgotten that he was cleansed (*forgiven*) from his past sins.

¹⁰My brothers and sisters, God called you and chose you to be his. Try hard to show that you really are God's called and chosen people. If you do all those things, you will never fall. ¹¹And you will be given a very great welcome into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That kingdom continues forever.

¹²You know these things. You are very strong in the truth you have. But I will always help you to remember these things. ¹³I think it is right for me to help you remember these things while I am still living here on earth. ¹⁴I know that I must soon leave this body. Our Lord Jesus Christ has shown me that. ¹⁵I will try the best I can to help you remember these things always. I want you to be able to remember these things after I am gone.

We Saw Christ's Glory

¹⁶We told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. We told you about his coming. Those things we told you were not just smart stories that people invented. No! We saw the greatness of Jesus with our own eyes. ¹⁷Jesus heard the voice of the Greatest Glory (*God*). That was when Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice said, "This is my Son, and I love him. I am very pleased with

apostle Person Jesus chose to be a special helper for telling the Good News to the world.

him." "And we heard that voice. It came from heaven while we were with Jesus on the holy mountain.

"This makes us more sure about the things the prophets* said. And it is good for you to follow closely what the prophets said. The things they said are like a light shining in a dark place. That light shines until the day begins and the morning star rises in your hearts. "Most important, you must understand this: No prophecy* in the Scriptures* ever comes from a person's own interpretation. "No! No prophecy ever came from what a man wanted to say. But people were led by the Holy Spirit* and spoke things from God.

False Teachers

2 In the past there were false prophets* among God's, people. It is the same now. You will have some false teachers in your group. They will teach things that are wrong—teachings that will make people be lost. And those false teachers will teach in a way that will be hard for you to see that they are wrong. They will even refuse to accept the Master (*Jesus*) who bought their freedom. And so they will quickly destroy themselves. "Many people will follow them in the evil (*bad*) things they do. And other people will say bad things about the Way of truth because of those people. "Those false teachers only want your money. So they will use you by telling you things that are not true. But the judgment against those false teachers has been ready for a long time. And they will not escape the One (*God*) who will destroy them.

"When angels sinned, God did not let them go free without punishment. No! God sent them

to hell. God put those angels in caves of darkness. They are being held there until the judgment. "And God punished the evil, people who lived long ago. God brought a flood to the world that was full of people who were against God. But God saved Noah and seven other people with Noah. Noah was a man who told people about being right with God,. "And God also punished the evil, cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.* God burned those cities until there was nothing left but ashes. God made those cities be an example to show what will happen to people who are against God. "But God saved Lot (from those cities,. Lot was a very good man. He was troubled because of the dirty lives of evil people. "Lot was a good man, but he lived with those evil people every day. Lot's good heart was hurt by the evil things that he saw and heard.) "Yes, God did all these things,. So the Lord, God, will always save the people who serve him. He will save them when troubles come. And the Lord will hold evil people and punish them while waiting for the day of judgment. "That punishment is mostly for those people who live by doing the bad things their sinful selves want, and it is for people who hate the Lord's authority (*power*).

These false teachers, will do anything they want, and they boast about themselves. They are not afraid to say bad things against the glorious angels,.* "The angels are much stronger and more powerful than these false teachers. But even the angels don't accuse the false teachers and say bad things about them to the Lord. "But these false teachers speak evil against things they don't understand. These false teachers are like animals that do things without really thinking—like wild animals that are born to be caught and killed. And, like wild animals, these false teachers will be destroyed. "These false teachers have made many people suffer. So they themselves will suffer. That is their pay for what they have done. These false teachers think it is fun to do evil things openly

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

prophecy Teaching from God, given by a person who speaks for God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

Sodom and Gomorrah Cities that God destroyed to punish the evil people who lived there.

the glorious angels Literally, "the glories" or "the glorious ones."

(where all people can see.). They enjoy the evil things that please them. So they are like dirty spots and stains among you—they bring shame to you, in the meals that you eat together. ¹⁴Every time they look at a woman they want her. These false teachers are always sinning this way. They lead weaker people into the trap (of sin.). They have taught their own hearts to be selfish. They are under a curse.* ¹⁵These false teachers left the right way and went the wrong way. They followed the same way that Balaam went. Balaam was the son of Beor. He loved being paid for doing wrong. ¹⁶But a donkey told Balaam that he was doing wrong. And the donkey is an animal that cannot talk. But that donkey spoke with a man's voice and stopped the prophet's (Balaam's) crazy thinking.

¹⁷Those false teachers are like rivers that have no water. They are like clouds that are blown by a storm. A place in the deepest darkness has been kept for them. ¹⁸Those false teachers boast with words that mean nothing. They lead people into the trap (of sin.). They lead away people who are just beginning to come away from other people who live wrong. Those false teachers do this by using the evil things people want to do in their sinful selves. ¹⁹These false teachers promise that those people will have freedom. But the false teachers themselves are not free. They are slaves of things that will be destroyed. A person is a slave to the thing that controls him. ²⁰Those people were made free from the evil things in the world. They were made free by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. But if those people go back into those evil things and those things control them, then it is worse for them than it was before. ²¹Yes, it would be better for those people to have never known the right way. That would be better than to know the right way and then to turn away from the holy teaching that was given to them. ²²What those people did is like this true saying: "When a dog vomits (*throws up*), he comes back to his

vomit."* And, "After a pig is washed, the pig goes back and rolls in the mud again."

Jesus Will Come Again

3 My friends, this is the second letter I have written to you. I wrote both letters to you to help your honest minds remember something. ²I want you to remember the words that the holy prophets* spoke in the past. And remember the command that our Lord and Savior gave us. He gave us that command through your apostles.* ³It is important for you to understand what will happen in the last days. People will laugh (at you.). Those people will live following the evil things they want to do. ⁴Those people will say, "He (*Jesus*) promised to come again. Where is he? Our fathers have died. But the world continues the way it has been since it was made." ⁵But those people don't want to remember what happened long ago. The skies were there, and God made the earth from water and with water. All this happened by God's word. ⁶Then that world was flooded and destroyed with water. ⁷And that same word (of God,) is keeping the skies and the earth that we have now. The skies and the earth are being kept to be destroyed by fire. The skies and the earth are kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of all people who are against God.

⁸But don't forget this one thing, dear friends: To the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. ⁹The Lord is not being slow in doing what he promised—the way some people understand slowness. But God is being patient with you. God doesn't want any person to be lost. God wants every person to change his heart and stop sinning.

¹⁰But the Day when the Lord comes again will be a surprise like a thief. The sky will disappear with a loud noise. All the things in the sky will be destroyed with fire. And the

under a curse Literally, "children of a curse," meaning that God will punish them.

"When ... vomit" Quote from Prov. 26:11.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

earth and everything in it will be burned.* ¹¹In that way everything will be destroyed like I told you. So what kind of people should you be? You should live holy* lives and do things to serve God. ¹²You should wait for the Day of God. You should want very much for that Day to come. When that Day comes, the sky will be destroyed with fire, and everything in the sky will melt with heat. ¹³But God made a promise to us. And we are waiting for what he promised—a new sky and a new earth. That will be the place where goodness lives.

¹⁴Dear friends, we are waiting for this to happen. So try as hard as you can to be without sin and without fault. Try to be at peace with God. ¹⁵Remember that we are saved because our Lord is patient. Our dear brother Paul told

you that same thing when he wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. ¹⁶Paul writes like this about these things in all his letters. Sometimes there are things in Paul's letters that are hard to understand. Some people explain those things falsely. Those people are ignorant and weak in faith. Those same people also falsely explain the other Scriptures.* But they are destroying themselves by doing that.

¹⁷Dear friends, you already know about this. So be careful. Don't let those evil people lead you away by the wrong things they do. Be careful so that you will not fall from your strong faith,. ¹⁸But grow in the grace (*kindness*) and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Glory be to him now and forever! Amen.

will be burned Many Greek copies say, "will be found."

One copy says, "will disappear."

holy A holy person is pure and belongs only to God.

Scriptures Holy Writings—the Old Testament.

1 John

1 We tell you now about something that has existed (*lived*) since before the world began:

This we heard,
we saw with our own eyes,
we watched,
we touched with our hands.

We write to you about the Word (*Christ*) that gives life. ²That Life was shown to us. We saw it. We can give proof about it. Now we tell you about that Life. It is Life that continues forever. This is the Life that was with God the Father. God showed this Life to us. ³Now we tell you the things that we have seen and heard. Why? Because we want you to have fellowship* together with us. The fellowship we share together is with God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. ⁴We write these things to you so that you can be full of joy with us.

God Forgives Our Sins

⁵We heard the true teaching from God. Now we tell it to you: God is light* (*goodness*). In God there is no darkness (*sin*). ⁶So if we say that we have fellowship* with God, but we continue living in darkness (*sin*), then we are liars—we don't follow the truth. ⁷God is in the light (*goodness*). We should live in the light, too. If we live in the light, then we share

fellowship with each other. And when we live in the light, the blood (*death*) of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. (Jesus is God's Son.)

⁸If we say that we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹But if we confess (*admit*) our sins, then God will forgive our sins. We can trust God. God does what is right. God will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, then we make God a liar—we don't accept God's true teaching.

Jesus Is Our Helper

2 My dear children, I write this letter to you so that you will not sin. But if any person sins, we have Jesus Christ to help us. He is the righteous (*good*) One. Jesus defends us before God the Father. ³Jesus is the way our sins are taken away. And Jesus is the way that all people can have their sins taken away, too.

⁴If we obey what God has told us to do, then we are sure that we truly know God. ⁵A person says, "I know God!" But if that person does not obey God's commands, then that person is a liar. The truth is not in him. ⁶But when a person obeys God's teaching, then God's love has truly arrived at its goal in that person. This is how we know that we are following God: ⁷If a person says that God lives in him, then he must live like Jesus lived.

God Commanded Us to Love Other People

⁸My dear friends, I am not writing a new command to you. It is the same command you have had since the beginning. This command is

fellowship Associating with people and sharing things together with them. Christians share love, joy, sorrow, faith, and other things with each other and with God.

light This word is used to show what God is like. It means goodness or truth.

the teaching you have already heard. ⁹But also I write this command to you as a new command. This command is true; you can see its truth in Jesus and in yourselves. The darkness (*sin*) is passing away and the true light is already shining.

⁹A person says, "I am in the light.* But if that person hates his brother, then he is still in the darkness (*sin*). ¹⁰The person that loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in that person that will make him do wrong. ¹¹But the person who hates his brother is in darkness. He lives in darkness. That person does not know where he is going. Why? Because the darkness has made him blind.

¹² I write to you, dear children,
because your sins are forgiven through
Christ.

¹³ I write to you, fathers,
because you know the One who existed
(*lived*) from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you have defeated the Evil One
(*the devil*).

¹⁴ I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

I write to you, fathers,
because you know the One who existed
(*lived*) from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you are strong;
the word of God lives in you,
and you have defeated the Evil One.

¹⁵Don't love the world or the things in the world. If a person loves the world, the love of the Father (*God*) is not in that person. ¹⁶These are the evil things in the world:

Wanting things to please our sinful
selves, Wanting the sinful things we
see, Being too proud of the things
we have.

But none of those things come from the Father (*God*). All of those things come from the

world. ¹⁷The world is passing away. And all the things that people want in the world are passing away. But the person who does what God wants lives forever.

Don't Follow the Enemies of Christ

¹⁸My dear children, the end is near! You have heard that the Enemy of Christ* is coming. And now many enemies of Christ are already here. So we know that the end is near. ¹⁹Those enemies of Christ were in our group. But they left us. They did not really belong with us. If they were really part of our group, then they would have stayed with us. But they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us.

²⁰You have the gift* that the Holy One (*God or Christ*) gave you. So you all know the truth. ²¹Why do I write to you? Do I write because you don't know the truth? No! I write this letter because you do know the truth. And you know that no lie comes from the truth.

²²So who is the liar? It is the person that says Jesus is not the Christ.* A person that says Jesus is not the Christ is the enemy of Christ. That person does not believe in the Father (*God*) or in his Son (*Christ*). ²³If a person does not believe in the Son (*Christ*), then he does not have the Father. But the person who accepts the Son has the Father, too.

²⁴Be sure that you continue to follow the teaching that you heard from the beginning. If you continue in that teaching, then you will stay in the Son (*Christ*) and in the Father (*God*). ²⁵And this is what the Son promised to us—life forever.

²⁶I am writing this letter about those people who are trying to lead you into the wrong way. ²⁷Christ gave you a special gift.* You still have this gift in you. So you don't need any person to teach you. The gift he gave you teaches you about everything. This gift is true. It is not false. So continue to live in Christ, like his gift taught you.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

gift The word in the Greek text is "anointing." This might mean the Holy Spirit. Or it might mean teaching or truth as in verse 24.

light This word is used to show what God is like. It means goodness or truth.

²Yes, my dear children, live in him. If we do this, we can be without fear (*have confidence*) on the day when Christ comes back. We will not need to hide and be ashamed when he comes. ³You know that Christ is righteous (*good*). So you know that all people who do what is right (*good*) are God's children.

We Are God's Children

3 The Father (*God*) has loved us so much! This shows how much he loved us: We are called children of God. And we really are God's children. But the people in the world (*people who don't believe*) don't understand that we are God's children, because they have not known him (*God*). ²Dear friends, now we are children of God. We have not yet been shown what we will be in the future. But we know that when Christ comes again, we will be like him. We will see him like he really is. ³Christ is pure. And every person who has this hope in Christ keeps himself pure like Christ.

⁴When a person sins, he breaks God's law. Yes, sinning is the same as living against God's law. ⁵You know that Christ came to take away people's sins. There is no sin in Christ. ⁶So the person who lives in Christ does not continue to sin. If a person continues to sin, he has never really understood Christ and has never known Christ.

⁷Dear children, don't let any person lead you into the wrong way. Christ is righteous (*good*). To be good like Christ, a person must do what is right (*good*). ⁸The devil has been sinning since the beginning. The person who continues to sin belongs to the devil. The Son of God (*Christ*) came for this: to destroy the devil's work.

⁹When God makes a person his child, that person does not continue to sin. Why? Because the new life* God gave that person stays in him. So that person is not able to continue sinning. Why? Because he has become a child of God. ¹⁰So we can see who God's children are. Also, we can know who the children of the devil are. The people who don't do what is

right are not children of God. And the person who does not love his brother is not a child of God.

We Must Love One Another

¹¹This is the teaching you have heard from the beginning: We must love each other. ¹²Don't be like Cain.* Cain belonged to the Evil One (*the devil*). Cain killed his brother (*Abel**). But why did Cain kill his brother? Because the things Cain did were evil, and the things his brother (*Abel*) did were good.

¹³Brothers and sisters, don't be surprised when the people of this world hate you. ¹⁴We know that we have left death (*sin*) and have come into life. We know this because we love our brothers and sisters in Christ. The person who does not love is still in death. ¹⁵Every person who hates his brother is a murderer.* And you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. ¹⁶This is how we know what real love is: Jesus gave his life for us. So we should give our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ. ¹⁷Suppose a believer is rich enough to have all the things he needs. He sees his brother in Christ, who is poor and does not have the things he needs. What if the believer who has things does not help the poor brother? Then the believer who has the things he needs does not have God's love in his heart. ¹⁸My children, our love should not be only words and talk. No! Our love must be true love. We should show our love by the things we do.

¹⁹*That is the way we know that we belong to the way of truth. And when our hearts make us feel guilty, we can still have peace before God. Why? Because God is greater than our heart (*conscience*). God knows everything.

²⁰My dear friends, if we don't feel that we are doing wrong, then we can be without fear (*have confidence*) when we come to God. ²¹And God gives us the things we ask for. We receive these things because we obey God's

Cain, Abel Sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was jealous of Abel and killed him (Gen. 4:1-16).

Every ... murderer If a person hates his brother in Christ, then in his mind he has killed his brother. Jesus taught his followers about this sin (Mt. 5:21-26).

commands and we do the things that please God. ²This is what God commands: that we believe in his Son Jesus Christ and that we love each other. This is what he commanded. ³The person who obeys God's commands lives in God. And God lives in that person. How do we know that God lives in us? We know because of the Spirit* that God gave us.

John Warns Against False Teachers

4 My dear friends, many false prophets* are in the world now. So don't believe every spirit. But test the spirits to see if they are from God. ¹This is how you can know God's Spirit.* One spirit says, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ who came to earth and became a man." That Spirit is from God. ²Another spirit refuses to say this about Jesus. That spirit is not from God. This is the spirit of the Enemy of Christ. You have heard that the Enemy of Christ is coming. And now the Enemy of Christ is already in the world.

³My dear children, you belong to God. So you have defeated them (*the false teachers*). Why? Because the One (*God*) who is in you is greater than the one (*the devil*) who is in the people of, the world. ⁴And those people (*the false teachers*) belong to the world. So the things they say are from the world, too. And the world listens to what they say. ⁵But we are from God. So the people who know God listen to us. But the people who are not from God don't listen to us. That is how we know the Spirit* that is true and the spirit that is false.

Love Comes from God

¹Dear friends, we should love each other, because love comes from God. The person who loves has become God's child. And so the person who loves knows God. ²The person that does not love does not know God, because God is love. ³This is how God showed his love to

us: God sent his only Son into the world to give us life through him. ⁴True love is God's love for us, not our love for God. God sent his Son to be the way that God takes away our sins.

⁵That is how much God loved us, dear friends! So we also must love each other. ⁶No person has ever seen God. But if we love each other, then God lives in us. If we love each other, then God's love has reached its goal—it is made perfect in us.

⁷We know that we live in God and God lives in us. We know this because God gave us his Spirit.* ⁸"We have seen that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. That is what we tell people now. ⁹"If a person says, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of God," then God lives in that person. And that person lives in God. ¹⁰And so we know the love that God has for us. And we trust that love.

God is love. The person who lives in love lives in God. And God lives in that person. ¹¹If God's love is made perfect in us, then we can be without fear on the day when God judges us. We will be without fear, because in this world we are like him (*Christ or God*). ¹²Where God's love is, there is no fear. Why? Because God's perfect love takes away fear. It is God's punishment that makes a person fear. So God's love is not made perfect in the person who has fear.

¹³We love because God first loved us. ¹⁴If a person says, "I love God," but that person hates his brother or sister in Christ, then that person is a liar. That person can see his brother, but he hates him. So that person cannot love God, because he has never seen God! ¹⁵And he (*God*) gave us this command: The person who loves God must also love his brother.

God's Children Win Against the World

5 The people who believe that Jesus is the Christ* are God's children. The person who loves the Father (*God*) also loves the Father's children. ²How do we know that we love God's children? We know because we love God and we obey his commands. ³Loving

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

false prophets People who say they speak for God but do not really speak God's truth.

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

God means obeying his commands. And God's commands are not too hard for us. ⁴Why? Because every person that is a child of God has the power to win against the world. ⁵It is our faith that has won the victory against the world. So who is the person that wins against the world? Only the person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

God Told Us About His Son

⁶Jesus Christ is the One who came. Jesus came with water* and with blood.* Jesus did not come by water only. No, Jesus came by both water and blood. And the Spirit* tells us that this is true. The Spirit is the truth. ⁷So there are three witnesses that tell us about Jesus: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three witnesses agree. ⁸We believe people when they say something is true. But what God says is more important. And this is what God told us: He told us the truth about his own Son. ⁹The person who believes in the Son of God has the truth that God told us. The person who does not believe God makes God a liar. Why? Because that person does not believe what God told us about his Son. ¹⁰This is what God told us: God has given us eternal life. And this eternal life is in his Son (*Jesus*). ¹¹The person who has the Son has true life. But the person who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

We Have Eternal Life Now

¹²I write this letter to you people who believe in the Son of God. I write so that you will know that you have eternal life now. ¹³We can come to God with no doubts. This means that when we ask God for things (and those things agree with what God wants for us), then God cares about what we say. ¹⁴God listens to us every time we ask him. So we know that he gives us the things that we ask from him.

¹⁵Suppose a person sees his brother or sister in Christ, sinning (sin that does not lead to eternal death). That person should pray for his brother or sister, who is sinning. Then God will give the brother or sister life. I am talking about people whose sin does not lead to eternal death. There is sin that leads to death. I don't mean that a person should pray about that sin. ¹⁶Doing wrong is always sin. But there is sin that does not lead to eternal death.

¹⁷We know that any person who has been made God's child does not continue to sin. The Son of God keeps God's child safe.* The Evil One (*the devil*) cannot hurt that person. ¹⁸We know that we belong to God. But the Evil One (*the devil*) controls the whole world. ¹⁹And we know that the Son of God has come. The Son of God has given us understanding. Now we can know God. God is the One who is true. And our lives are in that true God and in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. ²⁰So, dear children, keep yourselves away from false gods.

water This probably means the water of Jesus' baptism.

blood This probably means the blood of Jesus' death.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

The Son ... safe The Greek says literally, "The one who was born from God keeps him (or himself) safe."

2 John

From the Elder.*

To the lady* chosen by God,, and to her children:

I love all of you in the truth.* Also, all those people who know the truth love you. ²We love you because of the truth—the truth that lives in us. This truth will be with us forever.

³Grace (*kindness*), mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from his Son, Jesus Christ. We receive these blessings through truth and love.

⁴I was very happy to learn about some of your children. I am happy that they are following the way of truth, like the Father (*God*) commanded us. ⁵And now, dear lady, I tell you: We should all love each other. This is not a new command. It is the same command we had from the beginning. ⁶And loving means living the way he commanded us to live. And God's command is this: that you live a life of love. You heard this command from the beginning.

⁷Many false teachers are in the world now. These false teachers refuse to say (*confess*) that Jesus Christ came to earth, and became a man. A person who refuses to say (*confess*) this fact is a false teacher and an enemy of Christ. ⁸Be careful! Don't lose the reward that you have

worked for. Be careful, so that you will receive all of your reward.

⁹A person must continue to follow only the teaching of Christ. If a person changes the teaching of Christ, then that person does not have God. But if a person continues following the teaching of Christ, then that person has both the Father (*God*) and the Son (*Christ*). ¹⁰If a person comes to you, but does not bring this teaching, then don't accept him into your house. Don't welcome him. ¹¹If you accept him, then you are helping him with his evil work.

¹²I have much to say to you. But I don't want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to come visit you. Then we can be together and talk. That will make us very happy. ¹³The children of your sister* who was chosen by God, send you their love.

Elder This is probably John the apostle. "Elder" means an older man. It can also mean a special leader in the church (like in Titus 1:5).

lady This might mean a woman. Or, in this letter, it might mean a church. If it is a church, then "her children" would be the people of the church.

truth The truth or "Good News" about Jesus Christ that joins all believers together.

sister Sister of the "lady" in verse 1. This might be another woman or another church.

3 John

From the Elder.*

To my dear friend Gaius that I love in the truth*:

¹My dear friend, I know that your soul is doing fine. So I pray that you are doing fine in every way. And I pray that you are feeling well. ²Some brothers in Christ, came and told me about the truth* in your life. They told me that you continue to follow the way of truth. This made me very happy. ³It always gives me the greatest joy when I hear that my children are following the way of truth.

⁴My dear friend, it is good that you continue to help the brothers in Christ. You are helping brothers that you don't even know! ⁵These brothers told the church (*believers*) about the love you have. Please help them to continue their trip. Help them in a way that will please God. ⁶These brothers went on their trip to serve Christ. They did not accept any help from people who are not believers. ⁷So we should help these brothers. When we help them, we share with their work for the truth.*

⁸I wrote a letter to the church. But Diotrephes will not listen to what we say. He always wants to be their leader. ⁹When I come, I will talk about what Diotrephes is doing. He lies and says evil things about us. But that is not all he does! He refuses to help those brothers who are working to serve Christ.

Diotrephes also stops those people who want to help the brothers. He makes those people leave the church (*group of believers*).

¹⁰My dear friend, don't follow what is bad; follow what is good. The person who does what is good is from God. But the person who does evil has never known God.

¹¹All the people say good things about Demetrius. And the truth* agrees with what they say. Also, we say good about him. And you know that what we say is true.

¹²I have many things I want to tell you. But I don't want to use pen and ink. ¹³I hope to visit you soon. Then we can be together and talk. ¹⁴Peace to you. The friends (*believers*) here with me send their love. Please give our love to each one of the friends there.

Elder This is probably John the apostle. "Elder" means an older man. It can also mean a special leader in the church (like Titus 1:5).

truth The truth or "Good News" about Jesus Christ that joins all believers together.

Jude

From Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James.

To all those people who have been called by God. God the Father loves you, and you have been kept safe in Jesus Christ.

¹All mercy, peace, and love be yours.

God Will Punish People Who Do Wrong

¹Dear friends, I wanted very much to write to you about the salvation we all share together. But I felt the need to write to you about something else: I want to encourage you to fight hard for the faith that God gave his holy people.* God gave this faith once, and it is good for all time. "Some people have secretly entered your group. These people have already been judged guilty for the things they are doing. Long ago the prophets,* wrote about these people. These people are against God. They have used the grace (*kindness*) of our God in the wrong way—to do sinful things. These people refuse to accept Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

¹I want to help you remember some things that you already know: Remember that the Lord saved his people by bringing them out of the land of Egypt. But later the Lord destroyed all those people who did not believe. "And remember the angels who had power but did not keep it. They left their own home. So the Lord has kept these angels in darkness. They

are bound with everlasting chains. He has kept them to be judged on the great day. "Also remember the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* and the other towns around them. They are the same as those angels. Those towns were full of sexual sin and wrong doing. They suffer the punishment of eternal fire. Their punishment is an example for us to see.

"It is the same way with these people who have entered your group. They are guided by dreams. They make themselves dirty with sin. They reject God's authority (*rule*) and say bad things against the glorious angels.* "Not even the archangel* Michael did this. Michael argued with the devil about who would have the body of Moses. But Michael did not dare to condemn the devil with criticizing words. But Michael said, "The Lord punish you." "But these people criticize things they don't understand. They do understand some things. But they understand these things not by thinking, but by feeling, the way dumb animals understand things. And these are the things that destroy them. "It will be bad for them. These people have followed the way that Cain* went. To make money, they have given themselves to following the wrong way that Balaam went. These people have fought against God, like Korah did. And like Korah, they will be

Sodom and Gomorrah Cities God destroyed to punish the evil people that lived there.

the glorious angels Literally, "the glories" or "the glorious ones."

archangel The leader among God's angels or messengers.

Cain The son of Adam and Eve who killed his brother Abel (Gen. 4:1-16).

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

prophets People who spoke for God. They often told things that would happen in the future.

destroyed. ¹²These people are like dirty spots in the special meals you share together. They eat with you and have no fear. They take care of only themselves. They are clouds without rain. The wind blows them around. They are trees that have no fruit when it is time and are pulled out of the ground. So they are dead two times. ¹³They are like wild waves in the sea. The waves make foam. These people do shameful things like the waves make foam. These people are like stars that wander in the sky. A place in, the blackest darkness has been kept for those people forever.

¹⁴Enoch, the seventh descendant* from Adam, said this about these people: "Look, the Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy angels. ¹⁵The Lord will judge every person. The Lord is coming to judge all people and to punish all people who are against God. He will punish these people for all the evil things they have done against God. And God will punish these sinners who are against God. He will punish them for all the bad things they have said against God."

¹⁶These people always complain and find wrong in other people. They always do the evil things they want to do. They boast about themselves. The only reason they say good things about other people is to get what they want.

A Warning and Things to Do

¹⁷Dear friends, remember what the apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ said before. ¹⁸The apostles said to you, "In the last times there will be people who laugh about God." These people do only the things they want to do—things that are against God. ¹⁹These are the people who divide you. These people do only what their sinful selves want. They don't have the Spirit.*

²⁰But dear friends, use your most holy faith to build yourselves up strong. Pray with the Holy Spirit.* ²¹Keep yourselves in God's love. Wait for the Lord Jesus Christ with his mercy to give you life forever.

²²Show mercy to those people who have doubts. ²³Save other people. Take those people out of the fire. Be careful when you show mercy to some people. Hate even their clothes that are dirty from sin.

Praise God

²⁴He (God) is strong and can help you not to fall. He can bring you before his glory without any wrong in you and give you great joy. ²⁵He is the only God. He is the One who saves us. To him be glory, greatness, power, and authority through Jesus Christ our Lord for all time past, now, and forever. Amen.

descendant Someone born into the family of a person after that person dies.

apostles Men that Jesus chose to be his special helpers for telling his Good News to the world.

Spirit, Holy Spirit Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

Revelation

John Tells About This Book

1 This is the revelation* of Jesus Christ. God gave Jesus these things to show his servants what must happen soon. Christ sent his angel to show these things to his servant John. ²John has told everything that he saw. It is the truth that Jesus Christ told him; it is the message from God. ³The person who reads the words of this message from God is blessed (*happy*). And the people who hear this message and do the things that are written in it are blessed. There is not much time left.

John Writes Jesus' Message to the Churches

¹From John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia*:

Grace (*kindness*) and peace to you from the One (*God*) who is, who *always*, was, and who is coming; and from the seven spirits before his throne; ²and from Jesus Christ. Jesus is the faithful witness. He was first among those to be raised from death. Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth.

Jesus is the One who loves us. And Jesus is the One who made us free from our sins with his blood (*death*). ³Jesus made us to be a kingdom. He made us to be priests who serve God his Father. To Jesus be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

revelation An opening, uncovering, or making known of truth that has been hidden.

Asia The western part of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

⁷Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Every person will see him, even the people who pierced* him. All people of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.

⁸The Lord God says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega.* I am the One who is, who *always*, was, and who is coming. I am the All-Powerful."

⁹I am John, and I am your brother in Christ. We are together in Jesus, and we share these things: suffering, the kingdom, and patient endurance. I was on the island of Patmos* because I was faithful to God's message* and to the truth of Jesus. ¹⁰On the Lord's day the Spirit* took control of me. I heard a loud voice behind me. It sounded like a trumpet. ¹¹The voice said, "Write in a book all these things you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

¹²I turned to see who was talking to me. When I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. ¹³I saw someone among the lampstands who

pierced When Jesus was killed, he was stuck with a spear in the side (John 19:34).

Alpha ... Omega First and last letters in the Greek alphabet, meaning the beginning and the end.

Patmos A small island in the Aegean Sea, near the coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

was "like a Son of Man."* He was dressed in a long robe. He had a golden sash (*belt*) tied around his chest. "His head and hair were white like wool—wool that is white as snow. His eyes were like flames of fire. "His feet were like brass that glows hot in a furnace. His voice was like the noise of flooding water. "He held seven stars in his right hand. A sharp two-edged sword came out of his mouth. He looked like the sun shining at its brightest time.

"When I saw him, I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He put his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid! I am the First and the Last. "I am the One who lives. I was dead, but look: I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.* "So write the things you see. Write the things that happen now and the things that will happen later. "Here is the hidden meaning of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and the seven golden lampstands that you saw: The seven lampstands are the seven churches. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.

Jesus' Letter to the Church In Ephesus

2 "Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus:

"The One who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands is saying these things to you. "I know what you do. You work hard, and you never quit. I know that you don't accept evil people. You have tested those people who say that they are apostles* but are really not. You found that they are liars. "You continue to try without quitting. You endured troubles, for my name. And you have not become tired of doing this.

"But I have this against you: You have left the love you had in the beginning. "So remember where you were before you fell. Change your hearts and do the things you did at first. If you don't change, I will come to you. I

will take away your lampstand from its place. "But there is something you do that is right: You hate the things that the Nicolaitans* do. I also hate what they do.

"Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches. To the person who wins the victory I will give the right to eat the fruit, from the tree of life. This tree is in the garden of God.

Jesus' Letter to the Church In Smyrna

"Write this to the angel of the church in Smyrna:

"The One who is the First and the Last is saying these things to you. He is the One who died and came to life again. "I know your troubles, and I know that you are poor. But really you are rich! I know the bad things that some people say about you. Those people say they are Jews. But they are not true Jews. They are a synagogue (*group*) that belongs to Satan (*the devil*). "Don't be afraid of the things that will happen to you. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison. He will do this to test you. You will suffer for ten days. But be faithful, even if you have to die. If you continue faithful, then I will give you the crown of life.

"Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches. The person who wins the victory will not be hurt by the second death.

Jesus' Letter to the Church In Pergamum

"Write this to the angel of the church in Pergamum:

"The One who has the sharp two-edged sword is saying these things to you. "I know where you live. You live where Satan (*the devil*) has his throne. But you are true to me. You did not refuse to tell about your faith in me even during the time of Antipas. Antipas was my faithful witness* who was killed in your city. Your city is where Satan lives.

Nicolaitans Religious group that followed wrong ideas.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. He brings God's message (truth) to God's people.

faithful witness A person who speaks God's message truthfully, even in a time of danger.

like ... **Man** These words are from Dan. 7:13. "Son of Man" is a name Jesus called himself.

Hades Place where people go after death.

apostles Men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

¹¹“But I have a few things against you: You have people there in your group, who follow the teaching of Balaam. Balaam taught Balak how to make the people of Israel* sin. Those people sinned by eating food offered to idols* and by doing sexual sins. ¹²It is the same in your group. You have people who follow the teaching of the Nicolaitans.* ¹³So change your hearts! If you don’t change, I will come to you quickly and fight against those people with the sword that comes out of my mouth.

¹⁴“Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches!

“I will give the hidden manna* to every person who wins the victory. I will also give that person a white rock. On this rock a new name is written. No person knows this new name. Only the person who gets the rock will know the new name.

Jesus' Letter to the Church in Thyatira

¹“Write this to the angel of the church in Thyatira:

“The Son of God is saying these things. He is the One who has eyes that blaze like fire and feet like shining brass. This is what he says to you: ²“I know the things you do. I know about your love, your faith, your service, and your patience. I know that you are doing more now than you did at first. ³But I have this against you: You let that woman named Jezebel do what she wants. She says that she is a prophet.* But she is leading my people away with her teaching. Jezebel leads my people to do sexual sins and to eat food that is offered to idols.* ⁴“I have given her time to change her heart and turn away from her sin. But she does not want to change. ⁵And so I will throw her on a bed

of suffering. And all the people who do the sin of adultery* with her will suffer greatly. I will do this now if they don’t turn away from the things she does. ⁶I will also kill her followers. Then all the churches will know that I am the One who knows what people feel and think. And I will repay each of you for the things you have done.

⁷“But you other people in Thyatira have not followed her teaching. You have not learned the things that they call Satan’s (*the devil’s*) deep secrets. This is what I say to you: I will not put any other burden on you. ⁸Only continue the way you are until I come.

⁹“I will give power to every person who wins the victory and continues until the end to do the things I want. I will give that person power over the nations:

¹⁰ ‘He will rule them with an iron rod.

He will break them to pieces
like clay pots.’

Psalms 2:9

¹¹This is the same power I received from my Father. I will also give that person the morning star. ¹²Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches.

Jesus' Letter to the Church in Sardis

3 “Write this to the angel of the church in Sardis:

“The One who has the seven spirits and the seven stars is saying these things to you. I know the things you do. People say that you are alive. But really you are dead. ²Wake up! Make yourselves stronger while you still have something left. Make yourselves stronger before it dies completely. I find that the things you do are not good enough for my God. ³So don’t forget what you have received and heard. Obey it. Change your hearts and lives! You must wake up, or I will come to you and surprise you, like a thief. You will not know when I will come. ⁴But you have a few people in your group, there in Sardis who have kept

Israel The Jewish nation (people).

idols Statues that people worshiped as gods.

Nicolaitans Religious group that followed wrong ideas.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. He brings God’s message (truth) to God’s people.

manna Food from heaven that God gave his people in the desert (Ex. 16:4-36).

prophet Jezebel was a false prophet. She claimed to speak for God, but she didn’t really speak God’s truth.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

themselves clean. Those people will walk with me. They will wear white clothes, because they are worthy. ⁷Every person who wins the victory will be dressed in white clothes like these people. I will not take away that person's name from the book of life. I will say that he belongs to me. I will say this before my Father and before his angels. ⁸Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches.

Jesus' Letter to the Church in Philadelphia

¹"Write this to the angel of the church in Philadelphia:

"The One who is holy and true is saying these words to you. He holds the key of David. When he opens something, it cannot be closed. And when he closes something, it cannot be opened. ²I know the things you do. I have put an open door before you. No person can close it. I know that you are weak. But you have followed my teaching. You were not afraid to speak my name. ³Listen! There is a synagogue (*group*) that belongs to Satan (*the devil*). Those people say they are Jews, but they are liars. Those people are not ⁴true Jews. I will make those people come before you and bow at your feet. They will know that you are the people I have loved. ⁵You followed my command to endure patiently. So I will keep you from the time of trouble that will come to the whole world. This trouble will test the people who live on the earth.

⁶"I am coming soon. Continue the way you are now. Then no person will take away your crown (*reward*). ⁷The person who wins the victory will be a pillar* in the temple* of my God. I will do that for the person who wins the victory. That person will never again have to leave God's temple. I will write the name of my God on that person. And I will write the name of the city of my God on that person.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. He brings God's message (truth) to God's people.

pillar One of the tall, carved stones used to hold up the roof of a building.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

That city is the new Jerusalem.* That city is coming down out of heaven from my God. I will also write my new name on that person. ⁸Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches.

Jesus' Letter to the Church in Laodicea

¹"Write this to the church in Laodicea:

"The Amen* is the One saying these things to you. He is the faithful and true witness. He is the ruler of all that God has made. This is what he says: ²I know what you do. You are not hot or cold. I wish that you were hot or cold! ³But you are only warm—not hot, not cold. So I am ready to spit you out of my mouth. ⁴You say you are rich. You think you have become wealthy and don't need a thing. But you don't know that you are really terrible, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. ⁵I advise you to buy gold from me—gold made pure in fire. Then you can be truly rich. I tell you this: Buy clothes that are white. Then you can cover your shameful nakedness. I also tell you to buy medicine to put on your eyes. Then you can truly see.

⁶"I correct and punish those people that I love. So start trying hard! Change your hearts and lives! ⁷Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If a person hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person. And that person will eat with me.

⁸"I will let every person who wins the victory sit with me on my throne. It was the same with me. I won the victory and sat down with my Father on his throne. ⁹Every person who hears these things should listen to what the Spirit* says to the churches."

John Sees Heaven

4 Then I looked, and there before me was an open door in heaven. And I heard the same voice that spoke to me before. It was the voice that sounded like a trumpet. The voice said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must

Jerusalem The spiritual city God built for his people.

Amen Used here as a name for Jesus, it means to agree strongly that something is true.

happen after this.” ²Then the Spirit* took control of me. There before me was a throne in heaven. Someone was sitting on the throne. ³The One who sat on the throne looked like precious stones, like jasper and carnelian. All around the throne was a rainbow the color of an emerald. ⁴Around the throne there were 24 other thrones. There were 24 elders* sitting on the 24 thrones. The elders were dressed in white, and they had golden crowns on their heads. ⁵Lightning flashes and noises of thunder came from the throne. Before the throne there were seven lamps burning. These lamps are the seven Spirits of God. ⁶Also before the throne there was something that looked like a sea of glass. It was clear like crystal.

In front of the throne and on each side of it there were four living things. These living things had eyes all over them, in front and in back. ⁷The first living thing was like a lion. The second was like a cow. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle. ⁸Each of these four living things had six wings. These living things were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day and night these four living things never stop saying:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God
All-Powerful. He always was, he is,
and he is coming.”

⁹These living things give glory and honor and thanks to the One who sits on the throne. He is the One who lives forever and ever. And every time the living things do this, ¹⁰the 24 elders* bow down before the One who sits on the throne. The elders worship him who lives forever and ever. The elders put their crowns down before the throne and say:

¹¹ “Our Lord and God!
You are worthy to receive glory and
honor and power.
You made all things.

Everything existed and was made
because you wanted it.”

5 Then I saw a scroll* in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. The scroll had writing on both sides. The scroll was kept closed with seven seals. ²And I saw a powerful angel. The angel called in a loud voice, “Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?” ³But there was no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth who could open the scroll or look inside it. ⁴I cried and cried because there was no one who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. ⁵But one of the elders* said to me, “Don’t cry! The Lion (*Christ*) from Judah’s family group has won the victory. He is David’s descendant. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals.”

⁶Then I saw a Lamb standing in the center of the throne with the four living things around it. The elders* were also around the Lamb. The Lamb looked like it had been killed. It had seven horns and seven eyes. These are the seven spirits of God that were sent into all the world. ⁷The Lamb came and took the scroll from the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. ⁸After the Lamb took the scroll, the four living things and the 24 elders* bowed down before the Lamb. Each one of them had a harp.* Also they were holding golden bowls full of incense.* These bowls of incense are the prayers of God’s holy people (*believers*). ⁹And they all sang a new song to the Lamb:

“You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were killed;
and with your blood (*death*) you bought
men for God from every tribe,
language, race of people, and
nation.

¹⁰ You made these people to be a kingdom,
and you made these people to be
priests for our God.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. He brings God’s message (truth) to God’s people.

elders These are probably great leaders of God’s people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

scroll A long roll of paper or leather used for writing.

harp A musical instrument with strings.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

And they will rule on the earth."

"Then I looked, and I heard the voices of many angels. The angels were around the throne, the four living things, and the elders.* There were thousands and thousands of angels—there were 10,000 times 10,000. "The angels said with a loud voice:

"The Lamb who was killed is worthy to receive power, wealth, wisdom and strength, honor, glory, and praise!"

"Then I heard every living thing that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. I heard every thing in all these places. I heard them all saying:

"All praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever to the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb!"

"The four living things said, "Amen!"* And the elders* bowed down and worshiped.

6 Then I watched while the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. I heard one of the four living things speak with a voice like thunder. It said, "Come!" "I looked and there before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse held a bow. The rider was given a crown. And he rode out, defeating the enemy. He rode out to win the victory.

"The Lamb opened the second seal. Then I heard the second living thing say, "Come!" "Then another horse came out. This was a red horse. The rider on the horse was given power to take away peace from the earth. He was given power to make people kill each other. This rider was given a big sword.

"The Lamb opened the third seal. Then I heard the third living thing say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse. The rider on the horse held a pair of scales in his hand. "Then I heard something that sounded like a voice. The voice came from where the

four living things were. The voice said, "A quart of wheat for a day's pay. And three quarts of barley for a day's pay. And don't hurt the oil and wine!"

"The Lamb opened the fourth seal. Then I heard the voice of the fourth living thing say, "Come!" "I looked and there before me was a pale colored horse. The rider on the horse was death. Hades* was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth. They were given power to kill people by using the sword, by starving, by disease, and with the wild animals of the earth.

"The Lamb opened the fifth seal. Then I saw some souls under the altar.* They were the souls of those people who had been killed because they were faithful to God's message* and to the truth they had received. "These souls shouted in a loud voice, "Holy and true Lord, how long until you judge the people of the earth and punish them for killing us?" "Then each one of those souls was given a white robe. They were told to wait a short time longer. There were still some of their brothers in the service of Christ who must be killed like they were. Those souls were told to wait until all of this killing was finished.

"Then I watched while the Lamb opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun became dark like black cloth made from hair. The full moon became red like blood. "The stars in the sky fell to the earth like a fig tree drops its figs when the wind blows. "The sky was divided. It was rolled up like a scroll.* And every mountain and island was moved from its place.

"Then all the people hid in caves and behind the rocks on the mountains. There were the kings of the world, the rulers, the generals, the rich people and the powerful people. Every person, slave and free, hid himself. "The people said to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us. Hide us from the face of the One

elders These are probably great leaders of God's people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

Amen When a person says, "Amen," it means that person agrees strongly with something.

Hades Place where people go after they die.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

scroll A long roll of paper or leather used for writing on.

who sits on the throne. Hide us from the anger of the Lamb! ¹⁷The great day for their anger has come. No person can stand against it."

The 144,000 People of Israel

7 After this happened I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth. The angels were holding the four winds of the earth. They were stopping the wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ²Then I saw another angel coming from the east. This angel had the seal of the living God. The angel called out with a loud voice to the four angels. These were the four angels that God had given the power to hurt the earth and the sea. The angel said to the four angels, ³"Don't hurt the land or the sea or the trees before we put the sign on the people who serve our God. We must put the sign on their foreheads." ⁴Then I heard how many people were marked with the sign. There were 144,000. They were from every family group of the people of Israel.*

⁵ From Judah's family group 12,000 were marked with the sign,

from Reuben's family group 12,000,
from Gad's family group 12,000,

⁶ from Asher's family group 12,000,
from Naphtali's family group 12,000,
from Manasseh's family group 12,000,

⁷ from Simeon's family group 12,000,
from Levi's family group 12,000,
from Issachar's family group 12,000,

⁸ from Zebulun's family group 12,000,
from Joseph's family group 12,000,
from Benjamin's family group 12,000.

The Great Crowd

⁹Then I looked, and there were many, many people. There were so many people that a person could not count them all. They were from every nation, tribe, race of people, and language of the earth. These people were standing before the throne and before the Lamb

(Jesus). They all wore white robes and had palm branches in their hands. ¹⁴They shouted with a loud voice, "Victory belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." ¹⁵The elders* and the four living things were there. All the angels were standing around them and the throne. The angels bowed down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God. ¹⁶They said, "Amen*! Praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power, and strength belong to our God forever and ever. Amen!"

¹⁷Then one of the elders* asked me, "Who are these people in white robes? Where did they come from?"

¹⁸I answered, "You know who they are, sir."

And the elder* said, "These are the people who have come out of the great suffering. They have washed their robes* with the blood of the Lamb. Now they are clean and white. ¹⁹So now these people are before the throne of God. They worship God day and night in his temple.* And the One (God) who sits on the throne will protect them. ²⁰Those people will never be hungry again. They will never be thirsty again. The sun will not hurt them. No heat will burn them. ²¹The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd. He will lead them to springs of water that give life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

The Seventh Seal

8 The Lamb opened the seventh seal. Then there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ²And I saw the seven angels who stand before God. They were given seven trumpets.

³Another angel came and stood at the altar.* This angel had a golden holder for incense.*

elder(s) These are probably great leaders of God's people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

Amen When a person says, "Amen," it means that person agrees strongly with something.

washed their robes Meaning they believed in Jesus so that their sins could be forgiven.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

incense Special dried tree sap used for a sacrifice. It was burned to make a sweet-smelling smoke.

Israel The Jewish nation—God's chosen people in the Old Testament.

The angel was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all God's holy people (*believers*). The angel put this offering on the golden altar before the throne. "The smoke from the incense went up from the angel's hand to God. The smoke went up with the prayers of God's people." Then the angel filled the incense holder with fire from the altar. The angel threw the incense holder on the earth. Then there were flashes of lightning, thunder and other noises, and an earthquake.

The Seven Angels Blow Their Trumpets

"Then the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to blow their trumpets.

"The first angel blew his trumpet. Then hail and fire mixed with blood was poured down on the earth. And one third of the earth and all the green grass and one third of the trees were burned up.

"The second angel blew his trumpet. Then something that looked like a big mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea. And one third of the sea became blood. "And one third of the living things in the sea died, and one third of the ships were destroyed.

"The third angel blew his trumpet. Then a large star, burning like a torch, fell from the sky. The star fell on one third of the rivers and on the springs of water. "The name of the star is Wormwood.* And one third of all the water became bitter. Many people died from drinking the water that was bitter.

"The fourth angel blew his trumpet. Then one third of the sun and one third of the moon and one third of the stars were struck. So one third of them became dark. A third of the day and night was without light.

"While I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying high in the air. The eagle said with a loud voice, "Trouble! Trouble! Trouble for the people that live on the earth! The trouble will begin after the sounds of the trumpets that the other three angels will blow."

9 The fifth angel blew his trumpet. Then I saw a star fall from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the deep hole that leads down to the bottomless pit. "Then the star opened the hole leading to the bottomless pit. Smoke came up from the hole like smoke from a big furnace. The sun and sky became dark because of the smoke from the hole. "Then locusts* came down to the earth out of the smoke. They were given the power to sting, like scorpions.* "The locusts were told not to hurt the grass on the earth or any plant or tree. They could hurt only the people who did not have the sign of God on their foreheads. "These locusts were given the power to give pain to the people for five months. But the locusts were not given the power to kill the people. And the pain that the people felt was like the pain that a scorpion gives when it stings a person. "During those days people will look for a way to die, but they will not find it. They will want to die, but death will hide from them.

"The locusts* looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore things that looked like crowns of gold. Their faces looked like human faces. "Their hair was like women's hair. Their teeth were like lions' teeth. "Their chests looked like iron breastplates. The sound their wings made was like the noise of many horses and chariots hurrying into battle. "The locusts had tails with stingers like scorpions.* The power they had to give people pain for five months was in their tails. "The locusts had a king. The king was the angel of the bottomless pit. His name in the Jewish language* is Abaddon. In the Greek language his name is Apollyon (*Destroyer*).

"The first great trouble is past. There are still two other great troubles that will come.

"The sixth angel blew his trumpet. Then I heard a voice coming from the horns on the golden altar* that is before God. "The voice

locusts Insects like grasshoppers. Sometimes many locusts came and ate all the plants (Ex. 10).

scorpions Insects that sting with a strong poison.

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

Wormwood Name of a very bitter plant, used here to give the idea of bitter sorrow.

said to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Free the four angels who are tied at the great river Euphrates."¹³ These four angels had been kept ready for this hour and day and month and year. The angels were freed to kill one third of all the people on the earth.¹⁴ "I heard how many troops on horses were in their army. There were 200,000,000.

"In my vision* I saw the horses and the riders on the horses. They looked like this: They had breastplates that were fiery red, dark blue, and yellow like sulfur. The heads of the horses looked like heads of lions. The horses had fire, smoke, and sulfur coming out of their mouths.¹⁵ "One third of all the people on earth were killed by these three bad things coming out of the horses' mouths: the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur.¹⁶ "The horses' power was in their mouths and also in their tails. Their tails were like snakes that have heads to bite and hurt people.

"The other people on the earth, were not killed by these bad things. But these people still did not change their hearts and lives and turn away from the things they had made with their own hands. They did not stop worshiping demons* and idols* made of gold, silver, bronze, stone, and wood—things that cannot see or hear or walk.¹⁷ "These people did not change their hearts and lives and turn away from killing other people. They did not turn away from their evil magic, their sexual sins, and their stealing.

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 Then I saw another powerful angel coming down from heaven. The angel was dressed in a cloud. He had a rainbow around his head. The angel's face was like the sun, and his legs were like poles of fire.² The angel was holding a small scroll. The scroll was open in his hand. The angel put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land.³ The

angel shouted loudly like the roaring of a lion. After the angel shouted, the voices of seven thunders spoke.⁴ The seven thunders spoke, and I started to write. But then I heard a voice from heaven. The voice said, "Don't write what the seven thunders said. Keep those things secret."

"Then the angel I saw standing on the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven.⁵ "The angel made a promise by the power of, the One who lives forever and ever. He (*God*) is the One who made the skies and all that is in them. He made the earth and all that is in it, and he made the sea and all that is in it. The angel said, "There will be no more waiting!⁶ "In the days when the seventh angel is ready to blow his trumpet, God's secret plan will be finished. This plan is the Good News* God told to his servants, the prophets.*"

"Then I heard the same voice from heaven again. The voice said to me, "Go and take the open scroll that is in the angel's hand. This is the angel that is standing on the sea and on the land."

"So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. The angel said to me, "Take the scroll and eat it. It will be sour in your stomach. But in your mouth it will be sweet like honey."⁸ So I took the little scroll from the angel's hand. I ate the scroll. In my mouth it tasted sweet like honey. But after I ate it, it was sour in my stomach.⁹ Then I was told, "You must prophesy* again about many races of people, many nations, languages, and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given a measuring stick like a rod. I was told, "Go and measure the temple* of God, the altar,* and the people worshiping there.² But don't measure the yard outside the temple. Leave that alone. That has

Good News The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

prophets People who spoke for God.

prophesy To speak or teach things from God.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him. Here, John sees it pictured as the special building in Jerusalem for Jewish worship.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

vision A vision is something like a dream that God used to speak to people.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

idols Statues that people worshiped as gods.

been given to the people who are not Jews. Those people will walk on the holy city for 42 months. ³And I will give power to my two witnesses. And they will prophesy* for 1,260 days. They will be dressed in sackcloth.*" ⁴"These two witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. ⁵If a person tries to hurt the witnesses, fire comes from the mouths of the witnesses and kills their enemy. Any person who tries to hurt them will die like this. ⁶"These witnesses have the power to stop the sky from raining during the time they are prophesying. These witnesses have power to make the water become blood. They have power to send every kind of trouble to the earth. They can do this as many times as they want.

⁷When the two witnesses have finished telling their message, the animal will fight against them. This is the animal that comes up from the bottomless pit. The animal will defeat them and kill them. ⁸"The bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the street of the great city. This city is named Sodom* and Egypt. These names for the city have a special meaning. This is the city where the Lord was killed. ⁹People from every race of people, tribe, language, and nation will look at the bodies of the two witnesses for three and a half days. The people will refuse to bury them. ¹⁰People who live on the earth will be happy because these two are dead. They will have parties and send each other gifts. They will do these things because these two prophets (*witnesses*) brought much suffering to the people who live on the earth.

¹¹But after three and a half days God let life enter the two prophets again. They stood on their feet. All the people who saw them were filled with fear. ¹²Then the two prophets heard a loud voice from heaven say, "Come up here!" And the two prophets went up into heaven in a cloud. Their enemies watched them go.

¹³At that same time there was a great earthquake. One tenth of the city was destroyed. And 7000 people were killed in the earthquake. The people that did not die were very afraid. They gave glory to the God of heaven.

¹⁴"The second great trouble is finished. The third great trouble is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

¹⁵The seventh angel blew his trumpet. Then there were loud voices in heaven. The voices said:

"The kingdom of the world has now become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.*
And he will rule forever and ever."

¹⁶Then the 24 elders* bowed down on their faces and worshiped God. These are the elders who sit on their thrones before God. ¹⁷The elders said:

"We give thanks to you,
Lord God All-Powerful.
You are the One who is
and who always was.
We thank you because you have used
your great power
and have begun to rule!

¹⁸ The people of the world were angry;
but now is the time for your anger.
Now is the time for the dead people to
be judged.

It is time to reward your servants,
the prophets,*
and to reward your holy people,*
the people who respect you,
great and small.

It is time to destroy those people

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

24 elders These are probably great leaders of God's people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

prophets People who spoke for God.

holy people God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

prophesy To speak or teach things from God.

sackcloth A rough cloth of animal hair. People sometimes wore it to show sadness.

Sodom A town where very bad people lived. God punished them by destroying their city.

who destroy the earth!"

⁹Then God's temple* in heaven was opened. The holy chest that holds the agreement* that God gave to his people, could be seen in his temple. Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, an earthquake, and a great hailstorm.

The Woman and the Giant Snake

12 And then a great wonder appeared in heaven: There was a woman who was clothed with the sun. The moon was under her feet. She had a crown of twelve stars on her head. ²The woman was pregnant. She cried out with pain because she was about to give birth. ³Then another wonder appeared in heaven: There was a giant red snake there. The giant snake had seven heads with seven crowns on each head. The snake also had ten horns. ⁴The snake's tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and threw them down to the earth. The giant snake stood in front of the woman who was ready to give birth to the baby. The snake wanted to eat the woman's baby when it was born. ⁵The woman gave birth to a son, a male child. He will rule all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was taken up to God and to his throne. ⁶The woman ran away into the desert to a place that God prepared for her. In the desert the woman will be taken care of for 1,260 days.

⁷Then there was a war in heaven. Michael* and his angels fought against the giant snake. The snake and his angels fought back. ⁸But the snake was not strong enough. The giant snake and his angels lost their place in heaven. ⁹The snake was thrown down out of heaven. (The giant snake is that old snake called the devil or Satan. He leads the whole world into the wrong way.) The snake with his angels were thrown to

the earth.

¹⁰Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "The victory and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority (power) of his Christ* have now come. These things have come, because the accuser of our brothers has been thrown out. He is the one who accused our brothers day and night before our God. ¹¹"Our brothers defeated him by the blood (death) of the Lamb and by the truth they preached. They did not love their lives too much. They were not afraid of death. ¹²"So be happy you heavens and all who live there! But it will be bad for the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! The devil is filled with anger. He knows that he doesn't have much time."

¹³The giant snake saw that he had been thrown down to the earth. So he chased the woman who had given birth to the boy child. ¹⁴But the woman was given the two wings of a great eagle. Then she could fly to the place that was prepared for her in the desert. In that place she would be taken care of for three and one-half years. There she would be away from the snake. ¹⁵Then the snake poured water out of its mouth like a river. The snake poured the water toward the woman so that the flood would carry her away. ¹⁶But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that came from the mouth of the giant snake. ¹⁷Then the snake was very angry at the woman. The snake went away to make war against all her other children. Her children are those people who obey God's commandments and have the truth that Jesus taught.

¹⁸The giant snake stood on the seashore.

The Two Animals

13 Then I saw an animal coming up out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads. There was a crown on each of its horns. It had a bad name written on each head. ²This animal looked like a leopard, with feet like a bear's feet. It had a mouth like a lion's mouth.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him. John sees the heavenly temple pictured to be like the Jewish temple in the Old Testament.

holy ... agreement In the Most Holy Place of the Old Testament temple, there was a box that had in it the agreement God gave to his people (Ex. 25:10-22; 1 Kings 8:1-9; Heb. 9:4).

Michael The archangel—leader of God's angels (Jude 9).

Christ The "anointed one" (Messiah) or chosen of God.

The giant snake, on the seashore, gave the animal all of his power and his throne and great authority. ³One of the heads of the animal looked like it had been wounded and killed. But this death wound was healed. All the people in the world were amazed, and they all followed the animal. ⁴People worshiped the giant snake because he had given his power to the animal. And the people also worshiped the animal. They asked, "Who is as powerful as the animal? Who can make war against him?"

⁵The animal was allowed to say proud words and very evil things. The animal was allowed to use his power for 42 months. ⁶The animal opened his mouth to say bad things against God. The animal also said bad things against God's name, against the place where God lives, and against all those who live in heaven. ⁷The animal was given power to make war against God's holy people (*believers*) and to defeat them. The animal was given power over every tribe, race of people, language, and nation. ⁸All the people who live on earth will worship the animal. These are all the people since the beginning of the world whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. The Lamb is the One who was killed.

⁹If a person hears these things, then he should listen to this:

- ¹⁰ If any person is to be a prisoner,
then that person will be a prisoner.
If any person kills with a sword,
then that person will be killed
with a sword.

This means that God's holy people (*believers*) must have patience and faith.

¹¹Then I saw another animal coming up out of the earth. He had two horns like a lamb, but he talked like a giant snake. ¹²This animal stands before the first animal and uses the same power that the first animal has. He uses this power to make all the people living on the earth worship the first animal. The first animal was the one that had the death wound that was healed. ¹³This second animal does great

miracles.* He even makes fire come down from heaven to earth while people are watching. ¹⁴This second animal fools the people that live on the earth. He fools them by using the miracles that he has been given the power to do. He does these miracles to serve the first animal. The second animal ordered people to make an idol* to honor the first animal. This was the animal that was wounded by the sword but did not die. ¹⁵The second animal was given power to give life to the idol of the first animal. Then the idol could speak and order all the people who did not worship it to be killed. ¹⁶The second animal also forced all people, small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to have a mark on their right hand or on their forehead. ¹⁷No person could buy or sell without this mark. This mark is the name of the animal or the number of his name. ¹⁸A person who has understanding can find the meaning of the animal's number. This requires wisdom. This number is the number of a man. His number is 666.

The Song of the Redeemed

14 Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb. He was standing on Mount Zion.* There were 144,000 people with him. They all had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. ²And I heard a sound from heaven like the noise of flooding water and like the sound of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like people playing their harps.* ³The people sang a new song before the throne and before the four living things and the elders.* The only people that could learn the new song were the 144,000 who had been redeemed (*saved*) from the earth. No one else could learn the song. ⁴These 144,000 people are the ones who did not do wrong things with women. They kept themselves pure. They

idol A statue that people worshiped as a god.

Mount Zion Another name for Jerusalem, here meaning the spiritual city where God's people live with him.

harps Musical instruments with strings.

elders These are probably great leaders of God's people.

They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

miracles False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of the devil.

follow the Lamb every place he goes. These 144,000 were redeemed (*saved*) from among the people of the earth. They are the first people to be offered to God and the Lamb. ⁵These people were not guilty of telling lies. They are without fault.

The Three Angels

"Then I saw another angel flying high in the air. The angel had an eternal gospel* to preach to the people who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and race of people. ⁷The angel said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him praise. The time has come for God to judge all people. Worship God. He made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the springs of water."

⁸Then the second angel followed the first angel and said, "She is destroyed! The great city of Babylon is destroyed! She (*Babylon*) made all the nations drink the wine of her adultery* and of God's anger."

⁹A third angel followed the first two angels. This third angel said in a loud voice: "It will be bad for the person who worships the animal and the animal's idol* and gets the animal's mark on his forehead or on his hand. ¹⁰That person will drink the wine of God's anger. This wine is prepared with all its strength in the cup of God's anger. That person will be tortured (*hurt*) with burning sulfur before the holy angels and the Lamb. ¹¹And the smoke from their burning pain will rise forever and ever. There will be no rest, day or night, for those people who worship the animal and his idol or who get the mark of his name." ¹²This means that God's holy people (*believers*) must be patient. They must obey God's commandments and keep their faith in Jesus.

¹³Then I heard a voice from heaven. The voice said, "Write this: From now on, the dead people who were in the Lord when they died are blessed (*happy*)."

gospel The Good News that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

adultery Breaking a marriage promise by sexual sin.

idol A statue that people worshiped as a god.

The Spirit* says, "Yes, that is true. Those people will rest from their hard work. The things they have done will stay with them."

The Earth Is Harvested

¹⁴I looked and there before me was a white cloud. Sitting on the white cloud was One that looked like a Son of Man.* He had a gold crown on his head and a sharp sickle* in his hand. ¹⁵Then another angel came out of the temple.* This angel called to the One who was sitting on the cloud, "Take your sickle* and gather from the earth. The time to harvest has come. The fruit of the earth is ripe." ¹⁶So the One that was sitting on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth. And the earth was harvested.

¹⁷Then another angel came out of the temple* in heaven. This angel also had a sharp sickle. ¹⁸And then another angel came from the altar.* This angel has power over the fire. This angel called to the angel with the sharp sickle. He said, "Take your sharp sickle and gather the bunches of grapes from the earth's vine. The earth's grapes are ripe." ¹⁹The angel swung his sickle over the earth. The angel gathered the earth's grapes and threw them into the great winepress of God's anger. ²⁰The grapes were squeezed in the winepress outside the city. Blood flowed out of the winepress. It rose as high as the heads of the horses for a distance of 200 miles.

The Angels with the Last Plagues

15 Then I saw another wonder in heaven. It was great and amazing. There were seven angels bringing seven troubles. These are the last troubles, because after these troubles God's anger is finished.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. He brings God's message (truth) to God's people.

Son of Man This name is from Dan. 7:13-14. Jesus used this name when talking about himself.

sickle Farming tool with a curved blade used to cut grain.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

²I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire. All the people who had won the victory over the animal and his idol* and over the number of his name were standing by the sea. These people had harps that God had given them. ³They sang the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

“Great and wonderful are the
things you do,
Lord God All-Powerful.

Right and true are your ways,
King of the nations.

⁴ All people will fear you, O Lord.
All people will praise your name.
Only you are holy.

All people will come and worship before
you,
because it is clear that you do the things
that are right.”

⁵After this I saw the temple* (the tabernacle of witness*) in heaven. The temple was opened. ⁶And the seven angels bringing the seven troubles came out of the temple. They were dressed in clean shining linen cloth. They wore golden bands tied around their chests. ⁷Then one of the four living things gave seven golden bowls to the seven angels. The bowls were filled with the anger of God, who lives forever and ever. ⁸The temple was filled with smoke from the glory and the power of God. No one could enter the temple until the seven troubles of the seven angels were finished.

The Bowls Filled with God's Anger

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple.* The voice said to the seven angels, “Go and pour out the seven bowls of God's anger on the earth.”

¹The first angel left. He poured out his bowl on the land. Then all the people who had the

mark of the animal and who worshiped his idol* got sores that were ugly and painful.

²The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea. Then the sea became blood like the blood of a dead man. Every living thing in the sea died.

³The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and the springs of water. The rivers and the springs of water became blood. ⁴Then I heard the angel of the waters say to God,:

“You are the One who is and who
always was.
You are the Holy One.

You are right in these judgments
you have made.

⁵ The people have spilled the blood of
your holy people (*believers*)
and your prophets.*

Now you have given those people blood
to drink.

This is what they deserve.”

⁶And I heard the altar* say:

“Yes, Lord God All-Powerful,
your judgments are true and right.”

⁷The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun. The sun was given power to burn the people with fire. ⁸The people were burned by the great heat. Those people cursed the name of God. God is the One who had control over these troubles. But the people refused to change their hearts and lives and give glory to God.

⁹The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the animal. And darkness covered the animal's kingdom. People bit their tongues because of the pain. ¹⁰People cursed the God of heaven because of their pain and the sores they had. But the people refused to change their hearts and turn away from the bad things they did.

¹¹The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. The water in the river was dried up. This prepared the way for the kings from the east to come. ¹²Then I saw three

idol A statue that people worshiped as a god.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

tabernacle of witness The tent God told his people to build after they left Egypt. It was a place for worship and a symbol of God's living with them. (Read Ex. 25-27 and 35-38.)

prophets People who spoke for God.

altar Place where sacrifices or gifts are offered to God.

unclean (*evil*) spirits that looked like frogs. They came out of the mouth of the giant snake, out of the mouth of the animal, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.* ¹⁴These evil spirits are the spirits of demons.* They have power to do miracles.* These evil spirits go out to the kings of the whole world. They go out to gather the kings for battle on the great day of God the All-Powerful.

¹⁵"Listen! I will come like a thief comes! Happy is the person who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him. Then he will not have to go without clothes, and people will not see the things he is ashamed for them to see."

¹⁶Then the evil spirits gathered the kings together to the place that is called Armageddon in the Jewish language.*

¹⁷The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air. Then a loud voice came out of the temple* from the throne. The voice said, "It is finished!" ¹⁸Then there were flashes of lightning, noises, thunder, and a big earthquake. This was the worst earthquake that has ever happened since people have been on earth. ¹⁹The great city split into three parts. The cities of the nations were destroyed. And God did not forget to punish, Babylon the Great. He gave that city the cup filled with the wine of his terrible anger. ²⁰Every island disappeared and there were no more mountains. ²¹Giant hailstones fell on the people from out of the sky. These hailstones weighed about 100 pounds each. People cursed God because of this trouble of the hail. This trouble was a terrible thing.

The Woman on the Animal

17 One of the seven angels came and spoke to me. This was one of the

false prophet A person who says he speaks for God but does not really speak God's truth.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

miracles False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of the devil.

Jewish language Aramaic, the "Hebrew" language in the first century.

temple God's house—the place where God's people worship and serve him.

angels that had the seven bowls. The angel said, "Come, and I will show you the punishment that will be given to the famous prostitute.* She is the one sitting over many waters." ²The kings of the earth sinned sexually with her. The people of the earth became drunk from the wine of her sexual sin."

³Then the angel carried me away by the Spirit* to the desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a red animal. The animal was covered with bad names written on him. The animal had seven heads and ten horns. "The woman was dressed in purple and red. She was shining with the gold, jewels, and pearls she was wearing. She had a golden cup in her hand. This cup was filled with terrible (*evil*) things and the uncleanness of her sexual sin. ⁴She had a title written on her forehead. This title has a hidden meaning. This is what was written:

THE GREAT BABYLON

MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES

AND THE EVIL THINGS OF THE EARTH.

⁵I saw that the woman was drunk. She was drunk with the blood of God's holy people. She was drunk with the blood of those people who told about their faith in Jesus.

When I saw the woman, I was fully amazed. ⁶Then the angel said to me, "Why are you amazed? I will tell you the hidden meaning of this woman and the animal she rides—the animal with seven heads and ten horns. ⁷The animal that you saw was once alive. But that animal is not alive now. But that animal will be alive and come up out of the bottomless pit and go away to be destroyed. The people that live on the earth will be amazed when they see the animal. They will be amazed because he was once alive, is not alive now, but will come again. These are the people whose names have never been written in the book of life since the beginning of the world.

⁸You need a wise mind to understand this. The seven heads on the animal are the seven hills where the woman sits. They are also seven kings. ⁹Five of the kings have already died.

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

One of the kings lives now. And the last king is coming. When he comes, he will stay only a short time. ¹¹The animal that was once alive, but is not alive, now is an eighth king. This eighth king also belongs to the first seven kings. And he will go away to be destroyed.

¹²The ten horns you saw are ten kings. These ten kings have not yet received their kingdom. But they will receive power to rule with the animal for one hour. ¹³All ten of these kings have the same purpose. And they will give their power and authority to the animal. ¹⁴They will make war against the Lamb. But the Lamb will defeat them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. He will defeat them with his chosen and faithful followers—the people that he has called.”

¹⁵Then the angel said to me, “You saw the water where the prostitute* sits. These waters are the many peoples, the different races, nations, and languages in the world.” ¹⁶The animal and the ten horns (*ten kings*) you saw will hate the prostitute. They will take everything she has and leave her naked. They will eat her body and burn her with fire. ¹⁷God made the ten horns want to do his purpose: They agreed to give the animal their power to rule. They will rule until the things God has said are completed. ¹⁸The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

Babylon Is Destroyed

18 Then I saw another angel coming down from heaven. This angel had much power. The angel's glory made the earth bright. ¹The angel shouted with a powerful voice:

“She is destroyed!

The great city of Babylon is destroyed!
She (*Babylon*) has become
a home for demons.*

That city has become a place for every
unclean spirit to live.

That city has become a place for every
unclean and hated bird.

³ All the peoples of the earth have drunk
the wine of her sexual sin and of
God's, anger.

The kings of the earth sinned sexually
with her,
and the businessmen of the world grew
rich from the great wealth of her
luxury.”

“Then I heard another voice from heaven
say:

“Come out of that city, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins.
Then you will not get any of the bad
things that will happen to her.

⁵ That city's sins are stacked (*piled*) up
as far as heaven.

God has not forgotten the wrong things
she has done.

⁶ Give that city the same as she gave
to others.

Pay her back twice as much as she did.
Prepare wine for her that is twice as
strong as the wine she prepared
for others.

⁷ She (*Babylon*) gave herself much glory
and rich living.

Give her that much suffering
and sadness.

She says to herself, ‘I am a queen
sitting on my throne.’

I am not a widow*.

I will never be sad.’

⁸ So these bad things will come to her
in one day: death, sad crying, and
great hunger.

She will be destroyed by fire,
because the Lord God who judges her is
powerful.”

“The kings of the earth who sinned sexually
with her (*Babylon*) and shared her wealth will
see the smoke from her burning. Then those
kings will cry and be sad because of her
death.” ¹⁰The kings will be afraid of her

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

demons Demons are evil spirits from the devil.

widow A widow is a woman whose husband has died.

suffering and stand far away. The kings will say:

"Terrible! How terrible, O great city,
O powerful city of Babylon!
Your punishment came in one hour!"

¹¹ And the businessmen of the earth will cry and be sad for her (*Babylon*). They will be sad because now there is no one to buy the things they sell. ¹² They sell gold, silver, jewels, pearls, fine linen cloth, purple cloth, silk, and scarlet cloth, all kinds of citron wood, and all kinds of things made from ivory, expensive wood, bronze, iron, and marble. ¹³ Those businessmen also sell cinnamon, spice, incense, frankincense, myrrh, wine, and olive oil; fine flour, wheat, cattle, sheep, horses, carriages, and the bodies and souls of men.

¹⁴ "O Babylon, the good things you wanted are gone from you.
All your rich and fancy things have disappeared.
You will never have those things again."

¹⁵ The businessmen will be afraid of her suffering and stand far away from her (*Babylon*). These are the men who became rich from selling those things to her. The men will cry and be sad. ¹⁶ They will say:

"Terrible! How terrible for the great city!
She was dressed in fine linen, purple,
and scarlet cloth.
She was shining with gold, jewels, and
pearls!

¹⁷ All these riches have been destroyed in
one hour!"

Every sea captain, all the people who travel on ships, the sailors, and all the people who earn money from the sea stood far away from Babylon. ¹⁸ They saw the smoke from her burning. They said loudly, "There was never a city like this great city!" ¹⁹ They threw dust on their heads. They cried and were sad. They said loudly:

"Terrible! How terrible for the great city!

All the people who had ships on the sea
became rich because of her wealth!
But she has been destroyed in one hour!
²⁰ Be happy because of this, O heaven!
Be happy, God's holy people (*believers*)
and apostles* and prophets*!
God has punished her because of the
things she did to you."

²¹ Then a powerful angel picked up a large rock. This rock was as big as a large millstone.* The angel threw the rock into the sea and said:

"That is how the great city of Babylon
will be thrown down.

That city will never be found again.

²² The music of people playing harps and
other instruments,
flutes and trumpets, will never be heard
in you again.
No workman doing any job will ever be
found in you again.
The sound of a millstone* will never be
heard in you again.

²³ The light of a lamp will never shine in
you again.
The voice of a bridegroom* and bride
will never be heard in you again.
Your businessmen were the world's great
men.

All the nations were tricked by your
magic.

²⁴ She (*Babylon*) is guilty of the blood
(*death*) of the prophets*
and of God's holy people (*believers*),
and of all the people who have been
killed on earth."

People in Heaven Praise God

19 After this I heard what sounded like
many, many people in heaven. The
people were saying:

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.
prophets People who spoke for God.
millstone A large, round stone used for grinding grain.
bridegroom A man ready to be married.

"Hallelujah (*Praise God*)!

Victory, glory, and power belong to our God.

² His judgments are true and right.

Our God has punished the prostitute.*

She is the one who made the earth evil with her sexual sin.

God has punished the prostitute

to pay her for the blood (*death*) of his servants."

³ Those people in heaven also said:

"Hallelujah (*Praise God*)!

She is burning and, her smoke will rise forever and ever."

⁴ Then the 24 elders* and the four living things bowed down. They worshiped God, who sits on the throne. They said:

"Amen, Hallelujah (*Praise God*)!"

⁵ Then a voice came from the throne. The voice said:

"Praise our God, all you people who serve him!

Praise our God, all you people small and great who honor him!"

⁶ Then I heard something that sounded like many, many people. It sounded like the noise of flooding water and like loud thunder. The people were saying:

"Hallelujah (*Praise God*)!

Our Lord God rules. He is the All-Powerful.

⁷ Let us rejoice and be happy and give God glory!

Give God glory, because the wedding of the Lamb (*Jesus*) has come.

And the Lamb's bride (*the church*) has made herself ready.

⁸ Fine linen was given to the bride for her to wear.

The linen was bright and clean."

(The fine linen means the good things that God's holy people (*believers*) did.)

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Those people who are invited to the wedding meal of the Lamb are blessed (*happy*)!" Then the angel said, "These are the true words of God."

¹⁰ Then I bowed down before the angel's feet to worship him. But the angel said to me, "Don't worship me! I am a servant like you and your brothers who have the truth of Jesus. So worship God! Because the truth of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*"

The Rider on the White Horse

¹¹ Then I saw heaven open. There before me was a white horse. The rider on the horse is called Faithful and True. He is right in his judging and in making war. ¹² His eyes are like burning fire. He has many crowns on his head. He has a name written on him, but he is the only one who knows the name. No other person knows the name. ¹³ He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is the Word of God. ¹⁴ The armies of heaven were following him. They were riding white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ A sharp sword comes out of the rider's mouth. He will use this sword to defeat the nations. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron. He will squeeze the grapes, in the winepress of the terrible anger of God the All-Powerful. ¹⁶ On his robe and on his leg was written this name: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun. The angel said with a loud voice to all the birds flying in the sky, "Come together for the great supper of God. ¹⁸ Come together so that you can eat the bodies of kings and generals and famous men. Come to eat the bodies of the horses and their riders and the bodies of all people, free, slave, small, and great."

prostitute(s) Women paid by men for sexual sin.

24 elders Elder means "older." These are probably great leaders of God's people. They may be the leaders of the twelve Jewish family groups, plus the twelve apostles of Jesus.

prophecy Teaching from God, given by a person who speaks for God.

¹⁹Then I saw the animal and the kings of the earth. Their armies were gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. ²⁰But the animal was captured. Also the false prophet* was captured. This false prophet was the one who did the miracles* for the animal. The false prophet had used these miracles to trick the people who had the mark of the animal and worshiped his idol.* The false prophet and the animal were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹Their armies were killed with the sword that came out of the mouth of the rider on the horse. All the birds ate these bodies until the birds were full.

The 1000 Years

20 I saw an angel coming down out of heaven. The angel had the key to the bottomless pit. The angel also held a large chain in his hand. ²The angel grabbed the giant snake (that old serpent). The giant snake is the devil (or Satan). The angel tied him with the chain, for 1,000 years. ³The angel threw the snake into the bottomless pit and closed it. The angel locked it over the snake. The angel did this so that the snake could not trick the people of the earth until the 1,000 years were ended. After 1,000 years the snake must be made free for a short time.

⁴Then I saw some thrones and people sitting on them. These were the people who had been given the power to judge. And I saw the souls of those people who had been killed because they were faithful to, the truth of Jesus and the message* from God. Those people did not worship the animal or his idol.* They did not receive the mark of the animal on their foreheads or on their hands. Those people became alive again and ruled with Christ for 1,000 years. ⁵(The other dead people did not

live again until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first raising of the dead. ⁶Blessed (*happy*) and holy* are those people who share in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over those people. Those people will be priests for God and for Christ. They will rule with him for 1,000 years.

⁷When the 1,000 years are ended, Satan (*the devil*) will be made free from his prison in the bottomless pit. ⁸Satan will go out to trick the nations in all the earth—Gog and Magog. Satan will gather the people for battle. There will be so many people that they will be like sand on the seashore. ⁹Satan's army marched across the earth and gathered around the camp of God's people and the city that God loves. But fire came down from heaven and destroyed Satan's army. ¹⁰And Satan (the one who tricked those people) was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur with the animal and the false prophet.* There they will be tortured (*punished*) day and night forever and ever.

People of the World Are Judged

¹¹Then I saw a large white throne. I saw the One who was sitting on the throne. Earth and sky ran away from him and disappeared. ¹²And I saw the people that had died, great and small, standing before the throne. And the book of life was opened. There were also other books opened. These dead people were judged by the things they had done. These things are written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead people that were in it. Death and Hades* gave up the dead people that were in them. Each person was judged by the things he had done. ¹⁴And Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. ¹⁵And if a person's name was not found written in the book of life, then that person was thrown into the lake of fire.

false prophet A person who says he speaks for God but does not really speak God's truth.

miracles False miracles—powerful acts done by the power of the devil.

idol A statue that people worship as a god.

message The news that God has made a way for people to have their sins forgiven and live with God.

holy God's people are called holy because they are made pure through Christ, and they belong only to God.

Hades Place where people go after they die.

The New Jerusalem

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared. Now there was no sea. ²And I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven from God. This holy city is the new Jerusalem.* It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. ³I heard a loud voice from the throne. The voice said, "Now God's home is with people. He will live with them. They will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. 'God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain. All the old ways are gone.'"

⁴The One that was sitting on the throne said, "Look! I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted."

⁵The One on the throne said to me: "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega,* the Beginning and the End. I will give free water from the spring of the water of life to any person who is thirsty. ⁶Any person who wins the victory will receive all this. And I will be his God, and he will be my son. ⁷But the people who are cowards, people who refuse to believe, people who do terrible things, people who kill, people who sin sexually, people who do evil magic, people who worship idols,* and people who tell lies—all those people will have a place in the lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

⁸One of the seven angels came to me. This was one of the angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last troubles. The angel said, "Come with me. I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." ⁹The angel carried me away by the Spirit* to a very large and high mountain. The angel showed me the holy city, Jerusalem. The city was coming down out of

heaven from God. ¹⁰The city was shining with the glory of God. It was shining bright like a very expensive jewel, like a jasper. It was clear as crystal. ¹¹The city had a large high wall with twelve gates. There were twelve angels at the gates. On each gate was written the name of one of the twelve family groups of Israel.* ¹²There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. ¹³The walls of the city were built on twelve foundation stones.* On the stones were written the names of the twelve apostles* of the Lamb.

¹⁴The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod made of gold. The angel had this rod to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁵The city was built in a square. Its length was equal to its width. The angel measured the city with the rod. The city was 12,000 stadia* long, 12,000 stadia wide, and 12,000 stadia high. ¹⁶The angel also measured the wall. It was 144 cubits* high, by people's measurement. That was the measurement the angel was using. ¹⁷The wall was made of jasper. The city was made of pure gold, as pure as glass. ¹⁸The foundation stones* of the city walls had every kind of expensive jewels in them. The first cornerstone was jasper, the second was sapphire, the third was chalcedony, the fourth was emerald, ¹⁹the fifth was onyx, the sixth was carnelian, the seventh was yellow quartz, the eighth was beryl, the ninth was topaz, the tenth was chrysoprase, the eleventh was jacinth, and the twelfth was amethyst. ²⁰The twelve gates were twelve pearls. Each gate was made from one pearl. The street of the city was made of pure gold. The gold was clear like glass.

²¹I did not see a temple* in the city. The Lord God All-Powerful and the Lamb (*Jesus*)

new Jerusalem The spiritual city where God's people live with him.

Alpha ... Omega The first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, meaning the beginning and the end.

idols Statues that people worship as gods.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Also called the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ.

Israel The Jewish nation—God's chosen people in the Old Testament.

foundation stones The large rocks that are used as the bottom or the first part in a building.

apostles The men Jesus chose to be his special helpers.

stadia One stadion was a distance of about 200 yards. It was one-eighth of a Roman mile.

cubits A cubit is about half a yard, the length from the elbow to the tip of the little finger.

temple A building where people worship God.

are the city's temple. "The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it. The glory of God gives the city light. The Lamb (*Jesus*) is the city's lamp. "The peoples of the world will walk by the light given by the Lamb. The kings of the earth will bring their glory into the city. "The city's gates will never close on any day, because there is no night there. "The greatness and the honor of the nations will be brought into the city. "Nothing unclean will ever enter the city. No person who does shameful things or tells lies will ever enter the city. Only the people whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life will enter the city.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life. The river was bright like crystal. The river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. "It flows down the middle of the street of the city. The tree of life was on each side of the river. The tree of life makes fruit twelve times a year. It gives fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing all the people. "Nothing that God judges guilty will be there in that city. The throne of God and the Lamb (*Jesus*) will be in the city. God's servants will worship him. "They will see his face. God's name will be written on their foreheads. "There will never be night again. People will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun. The Lord God will give them light. And they will rule like kings forever and ever.

"The angel said to me, "These words are true and can be trusted. The Lord is the God of the spirits of the prophets.* God sent his angel to show his servants the things that must happen soon."

"Listen! I am coming soon! The person who obeys the words of prophecy* in this book will be blessed."

"I am John. I am the one who heard and saw these things. After I heard and saw these things, I bowed down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed these things to me. "But the angel said to me, "Don't worship me; I am a

servant like you and your brothers the prophets.* I am a servant like all the people who obey the words in this book. You should worship God!"

"Then the angel told me, "Don't keep secret the words of prophecy* in this book. The time is near [for these things to happen]. "Let the person who is doing wrong continue to do wrong. Let the person who is unclean continue to be unclean. Let the person who is doing right continue to do right. Let the person who is holy continue to be holy."

"Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring rewards with me. I will repay each person for the things he has done. "I am the Alpha and the Omega,* the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

"Those people who washed their robes* will be blessed. They will have the right to eat the food from the tree of life. They can go through the gates into the city. "Outside the city are the dogs (*bad people*), people who do evil magic, people who sin sexually, people who murder, people who worship idols,* and people who love lies and tell lies.

"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to tell you these things for the churches (*groups of believers*). I am the descendent from the family of David. I am the bright morning star."

"The Spirit* and the bride say, "Come!" Every person who hears this should also say, "Come!" If a person is thirsty, let him come; that person can have the water of life as a free gift if he wants it.

"I warn every person who hears the words of the prophecy* of this book: If a person adds anything to these words, then God will give that person the troubles written about in this book. "And if any person takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, then God will take away that person's share of the tree of life

Alpha ... Omega The first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, meaning the beginning and the end.

washed their robes Meaning they believed in Jesus so that their sins could be forgiven.

idols Statues that people worship as gods.

Spirit The Holy Spirit. Called the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Comforter. Joined with God and Christ, he does God's work among people in the world.

prophets People who spoke for God.

prophecy A message or teaching from God, given by a person who speaks for God.

and of the holy city, which are written about in this book.

²⁰Jesus is, the One who says that these things are true. Now he says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹The grace (*kindness*) of the Lord Jesus be with all people.